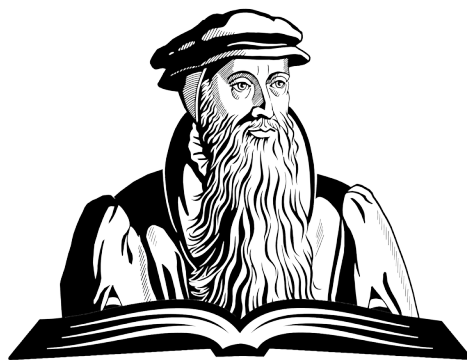

VIDEO LECTURE MODULE: BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

30 LECTURES

Lecture Presenter: Robert D. McCurley M.Div.



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

John Knox Institute of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

© 2019 by John Knox Institute of Higher Education

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means for profit, except in brief quotations for the purposes of review, comment, or scholarship, without written permission from the publisher, John Knox Institute, P.O. Box 19398, Kalamazoo, MI 49019-19398, USA

Unless otherwise indicated all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

Visit our website: www.johnknoxinstitute.org

Rev. Robert McCurley is the minister of the Gospel at Greenville Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC, a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing). www.freechurchcontinuing.org

Module

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

30 LECTURES

ROBERT D. MCCURLEY M.DIV.

21 CHAPTERS OLD TESTAMENT · 9 CHAPTERS NEW TESTAMENT

Old Testament Lectures:

1. Introduction	1
2. Creation	7
3. Fall.	13
4. Noah	18
5. Abraham	23
6. Patriarchs I.	28
7. Patriarchs II	33
8. Exodus	38
9. Sinai	43
10. Tabernacle	49
11. Sacrifices.	55
12. Priesthood	61
13. Inheritance.	66
14. David	71
15. Psalms.	75
16. Solomon	80
17. Temple	84
18. Kingdom	89
19. Prophets	94
20. Exile	99
21. Restoration.	104

New Testament Lectures:

22. Incarnation	109
23. Atonement	114
24. Resurrection	119
25. Pentecost	123
26. Church	128
27. Union	134
28. Application.	138
29. Mission.	143
30. Glory.	147

Lecture 1

INTRODUCTION

Lecture Theme:

The *whole* Bible reveals the Lord Jesus Christ and the message of salvation in the gospel of his grace. We trace the unfolding of this revelation of God in Christ throughout the stages of the history of redemption found in the Old and New Testaments.

Text:

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself... And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:27, 44).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 1

How do we interpret and preach the Old Testament? How is the Old Testament related to the New Testament? And more specifically, how is the Old Testament related to Christ and the message of salvation and the gospel? What relevance does the Old Testament have for the contemporary Christian? And what are the primary themes that run through the whole Old Testament and New Testament, and how do they apply to us today? The purpose of this course is to equip you with a deeper understanding of the Bible and with a fuller knowledge of God Himself as He reveals Himself in the Scriptures. So, if you wish to know God better and if you want a better grasp of the message of the Scriptures, these lectures aim to benefit you.

This course is introductory, not exhaustive, but it is intended to furnish you with a foundation that you can build upon in your further studies of the Bible. You can give a man a fish day after day after day, or you can provide the equipment and teach him how to fish for himself. This course provides the tools and training on how to study the theology of the Scriptures for yourself. You’ll need to commit yourself to the priority of this lifelong pursuit. But before we start laying the building blocks, let me begin by providing you with a specific example to illustrate how this course may be of help to you. In I Kings 10, and the parallel passage in II Chronicles 9, we read about a great monarch, the Queen of Sheba, traveling a long distance to interview King Solomon. The details of that interview are fascinating. But what are we to make of this story? What was God’s purpose for including it in the Bible? How do we understand its message, and how does it relate to us today? Well, this class aims at helping with those kinds of questions. I want you to hold on to those questions about I Kings 10 in your mind. We’re going to come back to them and answer them at the end of this first lecture.

We need to begin by defining some of our terms to understand better the purpose and the scope of this course on biblical theology. What exactly does this course cover? Let’s consider, first of all, the word “theology” (What

does that mean?), and then the significance of the word “biblical,” and then what the two words together mean in the context of this course. So first of all, the word “theology.” The word “theology” in its most basic and simple definition is the study of the knowledge of God. It answers: Who is God? and what has He done? You may be wondering to yourself, ‘Is this essential? Is this knowledge essential?’ One writer put it this way: “Whatever comes to mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you.” Consider the display of the glory of God. God is chiefly concerned with His own glory, and He’s been pleased to display that glory to mankind. Biblical Christianity is a God-exalting and God-centered religion. God’s glory sits at the very center of everything.

The history of the universe exists for the display of God’s glory, from its creation in the opening chapters of Genesis, about which the psalmist says, “the heavens display the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1). So, from the beginning in Genesis to the culmination and conclusion of the history of the universe in Revelation 21:23, where we read, “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Mankind itself exists for the glory of God.

Westminster Shorter Catechism question one explains man’s primary purpose in life. It says, “What is the chief end of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Throughout the history of redemption in the Bible, God provides an unfolding of His glory to His people, which culminates in the incarnation of Christ, as we shall see in what follows. Knowing God is therefore the greatest priority in the whole world, and God said so Himself. Listen to the words of Jeremiah, “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. And so, knowing God is the greatest priority in the world. It’s also the greatest longing and desire of every true believer. We see this all the way through the Scriptures.

Let me give you some examples. If you look at Moses, what does Moses say? He says, “Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight” (Exodus 33:13). He goes on, “And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory” (Exodus 33:18). We find the same thing later on in David. In one of the Psalms he says, “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life.” Why? “To behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple” (Psalm 27:4). If you fast-forward to the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ says something similar. He says, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” That’s in John 17:3. And then lastly, think further on into the New Testament of the words of the apostle Paul. He tells us about his passion. He says, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:8). He goes on, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Philippians 3:10). So, knowing God is our priority.

We also need to understand that the knowledge of God is revealed to us in Christ. Christ is the fullest and the final revelation of God. The Bible describes Christ as the One “Who is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15) and, elsewhere, “who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,” in Hebrews 1:3. So, our knowledge of God is tied to His revelation of Himself in the person and work of Christ. So, to be God-centered is also to be Christ-centered. “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among you,” John says, “and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). He goes on, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (verse 18). Now we will discuss more about this knowledge of Christ and where it is found in a moment, but let’s also note that the knowledge of God has practical consequences. This knowledge of God in Christ is not merely theoretical or a purely intellectual matter. It has practical consequences. As the 17th century Dutch reformed theologian, Petrus van Mastricht, said, “Theology is the knowledge of living unto God through Christ.” When the Christian looks by faith on the glory of God in Christ, that sight transforms him into the likeness of Christ. Paul says, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD” (II Corinthians 3:18). You’ll see something similar in I John 3:2–3.

So, theology, the knowledge of God, is inherently practical. It produces the fruit of the gospel, the fruit of gospel holiness, in the life of every believer. And most of all, it leads us to worship this God of glory. And to see and to know Him, after all, is to adore Him. So, we learn first of all something about what we mean by theology and why it's important. But then, secondly, let's consider together the word "biblical." The title of our course is "Biblical Theology." The Bible provides this knowledge of God. So, we know that God makes Himself known, but He makes Himself known through the Scriptures. The Bible is the Book by God about God. It's God's Book about Himself. The knowledge of God and of His provision of salvation depends on communication from God to man, what we call "revelation." "Revelation" means unveiling, to unveil something. The Bible gives God's unveiling of the knowledge of Himself to lost mankind. This, of course, includes the gospel, God's plan and path to reconciliation with God.

Consequently, the focus of this course is on the study of the Bible. The Bible has divine authority because its Author is God Himself, the Holy Spirit, as we see in II Timothy 3:16. And so, every word of all 66 books of the Holy Scriptures are fully inspired by God, incapable of a single error in any part, and provide us with a complete reliable record of Who God is and what He has done to secure the salvation of His people. When we read of the unfolding of redemption, we are reading of God's own infallible and inerrant revelation of these historical events, but that means we need to know the whole Bible. We need the whole Bible to have the whole revelation of Who God is. The Bible presents a consistent, a unified, message in one indivisible book from Genesis to Revelation. It presents one God, one way of salvation, one people of God, all in one glorious story about the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ. The whole Bible, therefore, is the Christian Scriptures.

The Bible begins, as you probably know, with the Old Testament. There are some people today [who] think that knowing the New Testament is all that we need to learn about Christ and about salvation. And they may know what the Old Testament says, but they may not know how full it is of Christ and the gospel. We need the whole Bible because without the Old Testament we would have an incomplete knowledge of Christ. For example, it's actually in the book of Psalms that we learn the most about Christ's own internal experience upon the cross. We hear more about that in the Psalms than we do in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. After all, the Old Testament makes up about three quarters of the Bible. No one can survive without three quarters of what God provides in Scripture. The Old Testament is also necessary for understanding the New Testament since the New Testament does not, indeed cannot, repeat all that is already found in the Old Testament. So, rightly understanding the Old Testament prevents us from misunderstanding the New Testament.

In fact, when the New Testament refers to the Scriptures, most of the time it's pointing back to the Old Testament. The Old Testament was the Bible that both Christ and the early Christians read and memorized and studied, with the New Testament books being added by God subsequently. When Paul told Timothy, "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" (II Timothy 3:15), it was through the Old Testament that Timothy came to know Christ and salvation. The knowledge of the Old Testament is essential to understanding the New Testament. The New Testament presupposes—if you will, it builds upon the Old Testament—all of the themes and the language and the doctrines and the principles, as well as the historic events, that we find in the Old Testament. Thus, in reading the New Testament, it's no surprise we're often reminded of, and indeed pointed to, the Old Testament. But likewise, we need the New Testament to rightly interpret the Old Testament. So, when we read the Old Testament, it is always in light of its fulfillment in the New Testament. The importance of this will become evident in our studies together.

The whole Bible is necessary, and the whole Bible provides the knowledge of salvation in Christ, Old Testament and New Testament, Genesis to Revelation. The gospel, of course, is the message of good news about Christ and what He did to reconcile His people to God. We see this summarized, for example, in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 1 and Question 2, which says, "How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou, enjoying this comfort, mayest live and die happily?" The answer is: "Three; the first, how great my sins and miseries are; the second, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance." The gospel is central to the whole Bible, Old and New Testament. Paul asserted, "But we preach Christ crucified, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." The apostle Paul preached both the person and the work of Christ from the whole Bible.

This is important because in John 14, 15, and 16, we learn that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to take the things of Christ and to show them to us. The role of the Spirit is to magnify the Son, and so we have to be in dead earnest, we have to be concerned about preaching the person and work of Christ through the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. The New Testament itself teaches us that the Old Testament Scriptures are the Word of God about Christ and the gospel. Listen to Christ's testimony to the Old Testament Scriptures. He says, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which speak of me" (John 5:39). But in the same passage, Jesus challenges the Pharisees and says, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (verses 46–47). After Christ's resurrection, we find Him walking on the road to Emmaus and talking to two of his disciples, and we read of Jesus's encounter with them. It says this, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he," that is Christ, "expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). Later on, in that same passage (Luke 24), it says, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (verse 44). So, if you love the Lord Jesus Christ, then you should love the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is not just a compilation of interesting stories, nor can it be confined simply to a list of moral lessons. Its grand message proclaims Christ and the salvation which He provides, which demonstrates the relevance of the Old Testament to every Christian today. For example, see how Paul draws the connection between the Old Testament and Christ and the New Testament Gentile believer. He says to the church in Galatia, in Galatians 3:29, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." We will explore this further in a future lecture. Think of what Peter says along this line. He says, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (I Peter 1:10–12).

Think about that for a second. If the Old Testament prophets themselves searched and studied diligently their own predictions to learn about the salvation that is provided in Christ, then how much more should we search and study the Old Testament to learn about salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, especially since we can now read them in light of their full New Testament fulfillment? The great Protestant reformer, Martin Luther, concluded rightly. He said this: "Therefore, he that would correctly and profitably read Scripture should see to it that he finds Christ in it. Then, he finds life eternal without fail. On the other hand, if I do not so study and understand Moses and the prophets so as to find that Christ came from heaven for the sake of my salvation, became man, suffered, died, was buried, rose and ascended to heaven, so that through Him I enjoy reconciliation with God, forgiveness of all my sins, grace, righteousness, and life eternal, then my reading in Scripture is of no help whatsoever to my salvation." And that brings us then to the last major point under this topic of what we mean by "biblical," and this is important for the scope of this course.

We need to think for a moment about the biblical history of redemption. God did not provide the final product of His revelation all at once. He revealed that in consecutive periods throughout the history of the Bible from Genesis to the Gospels to Revelation. God chose to redeem His people through a history of redemption, not simply in one large act. The history of redemption, or what we could call salvation history, is the gradual unfolding of God's plan to save His people in Christ, beginning in Genesis and, through a progression of historical acts, leading to the full light of Christ's coming and the New Testament exposition of His person and of His work. Just as God is the Author of Scripture, God is also the Sovereign Who decreed and directed the history that is recorded in the Bible. History is His story. We have an inspired record of real and true events in which God revealed Himself.

God's redemptive revelation chronologically unfolded with greater and greater clarity, with greater fullness over a period of time recorded throughout the Bible. What does that mean for us? Well, it means that we have to relate any given passage or any given Bible story to the message of Scripture as a whole. We must see the relationship of all of the parts of the Old Testament to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby, of course, to the Christian. So, this course pursues the study of the biblical history of redemption, the unfolding of the revelation of God in Christ and of His salvation through the whole Bible. We learn about God, about God revealed in Christ, and about what Christ did to save His people from their sins.

But now, let's return to our questions about the interview between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon in I Kings 10 and in II Chronicles 9 because this will help us illustrate how all that we've said about theology and about the Bible and about the history of redemption applies in this particular instance. What are we to make of this story, the story of the Queen of Sheba and Solomon? What was God's purpose for including it in the Bible? How do we understand its message? How does it relate to us? How do the Queen of Sheba and Solomon relate to us? Well, applying what we've learned in this lecture, other Scriptures help open this up and show how it relates to Christ and, therefore, to the Christian. This example demonstrates how this course will be of help to you in studying your Bible.

So, if you go back to I Kings 10, the Queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon from far, far, far away. She came to Jerusalem. She saw his wisdom. She heard him answer her questions. She saw his house and his food and all of the prosperity. She saw the blessing that came to his servants, and she saw the house of the Lord. But notice in I Kings 10, her response. If you look at the end of verse 5, it says, "there was no more spirit in her." Now, in the Hebrew language, that word "spirit" can also be translated "breath," like the breath that comes out of our lungs. In other words, in I Kings 10:5, what is being said is that all that she saw of Solomon, all that she heard from Solomon, took her breath away. If you go on, in verse 7, we read these words, "Howbeit" (these are the words of the Queen) "Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard," she says. Therefore, in verse 8, "happy are thy servants." And then in verse 9, "Blessed be the LORD thy God which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever."

You see, this is not simply an isolated story. It sits within a broader context of God's plan of redemption in history. And so, we must connect some dots in order to be informed by the Bible as a whole. So, we start with God's promise to David that his seed would sit upon his throne forever. We'll discuss this more later in the course, but you must realize that this promise is fulfilled in Christ. In Isaiah 11, for example, in verse 1, we see something prophesied of Christ. It says, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." You turn to the New Testament, and Christ said of Himself at the end of the Bible, Revelation 22, "I am the root and the offspring of David" (Revelation 22:16). Think back to when the angel appeared to Mary. We're told, "And the Lord God shall give unto him," that is Christ, "the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32). Later on, Peter preaching at Pentecost said, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, . . . being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:29-30). We'll see this over and over in the New Testament.

Paul wrote about it to the Romans in Romans chapter 1. And so, Solomon was David's son and heir to the throne, but Solomon pointed forward to David's greater Son to come: the Lord Jesus Christ Who would be the King of Kings and Whose eternal kingdom would surpass all others. Solomon's reign of peace would be surpassed by the kingdom of the Prince of Peace. You compare this to Psalm 72. The title to that Psalm is "A Psalm for Solomon." You'll notice that it includes references to Sheba in verses 10 and 15, but we need to recognize that this Psalm points to Christ's glorious reign and its fulfillment in Christ's coming kingdom, which shall, in the words of that song, "have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (verse 8). Read the thrilling description of Christ at the end in verses 17-19, which conclude with these words, "And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen."

And now, turning to back to the New Testament, all of this is brought together. Christ Himself says these words, "The Queen of the South," that's the Queen of Sheba, "the Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them." Why? "For she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Luke 1:31), speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, this is looking at the history of redemption. The whole Bible is the revelation of God in Christ and of the message of salvation and the gospel. So, having drawn from our knowledge of the rest of Scripture and the big picture of God's purpose in biblical history, we return to I Kings 10. And when we return to I Kings 10, we do so with expectations of learning about Christ and His kingdom. We must read that text, I Kings 10, and ministers of the gospel must preach that text in light of the spiritual realities.

God has given us the greatest King of Peace, Christ Jesus, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge far beyond Solomon. And we, as His creatures, must come as it were from afar to hear His wisdom as it is found in His Word, and to see and know the glory of His person and of His kingdom. If we do so, it will truly take our breath away. In the end, when the Christian arrives in heaven to behold this King, to behold the Savior, we will then say with the Queen of Sheba that the half was not told us, as He, Christ, will exceed all our expectations. So, for the Christian, to be servants of this King is the most blessed and happiest position and occupation of all. We should bless God for setting Christ upon His throne and so manifesting His love toward His redeemed people. Do you see this? Do you see that I Kings is all about Christ? All about His redemption? All about His kingdom and the blessings that flow to His people? Thus, it is exceptionally relevant for today's Christian. As I said at the beginning of this lecture, this is an example to illustrate what this course offers in helping us in our study of the Bible. In the remainder of these lectures, we will explore the theology of the Bible by proceeding through the history of redemption, beginning with the first chapters of Genesis and concluding with the coming consummation of history in Revelation chapters 21 and 22.

Lecture 2

CREATION

Lecture Theme:

In the work of creation, God lays the foundation for the revelation of himself and prepares us for the greater glory of the new creation in Christ.

Text:

“For by him [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16–17).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 2

If you want to erect a building, you have to first lay a solid foundation. And the taller the building, the more substantial the foundation must be. The opening of the Bible provides the groundwork for everything else that follows. Therefore, you must understand clearly the theology of the first few chapters of Genesis in order to make sense of the remainder of the Bible. Think with me about a few questions. Where is Christ in the opening chapters of Genesis? How does the world before the entrance of sin prepare the way for the salvation from sin? Who is man? And what is the basis for his relationship with God? How is the first book of the Bible, Genesis, related to the last book of the Bible, Revelation? And how is the theology of Genesis woven throughout the rest of Scripture? In this lecture, we will explore what God reveals to us about the world before sin, in Genesis 1 and 2. We'll learn about God, about man, then about man's relationship to God, and finally, and perhaps most importantly, about the ultimate destination of redeemed man, with God.

So first of all, what does God reveal about Himself? Well, if you open your Bible to Genesis 1:1, you'll see that the Bible opens with God Himself, in the beginning, God. Well, this comes as no surprise because as we saw in the first lecture, the Bible is God's book about Himself, the revelation of His own glory. And we see, from the first verse, that God existed before the beginning. That is to say, God is eternal. Now, when you think of eternal, don't think merely in terms of God existed for a long time, maybe an infinitely long period of time in the past, and into an infinitely long time in the future. No, it's more than that. God is eternal. That means He's actually outside of time, outside of time and space. He created and brought into existence time and space. Before the universe was created, all that existed was God and the perfect fellowship of the Three Persons of the Godhead. And you can think about any attribute of God. Think, for example, about His love. God did not begin becoming loving when He created the world.

He's eternally love. That's who He is, not just what He does. And that love was exhibited eternally between the Persons of the Trinity. We also see that God sovereignly decreed the work of creation. Now, what do we mean by decreed the work of creation? Well, the shorter catechism in Question 7 helps us here. It says, "the decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." We see from the first verse of the Bible that God has a plan, and He brings to pass everything that happens in history from the beginning to the end. We also learn about what God is like: His attributes. We've already mentioned the fact that He's eternal, and we've mentioned the fact that He's sovereign. He decrees all things. What else do we see? Well, let me give you some more examples. We see His power in bringing the universe into existence out of nothing. Paul notes this in Romans 1 verse 20, "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."

We also learn that God is good. You'll see the repeated words in chapter one: "And God saw that it was good." What He created was good because He is good. We see as well His wisdom: all of the intricacies of creation are set on display. If you read Isaiah 40, this is underlined. But what about the Trinity? I mean, after all, the Trinity is a fundamental doctrine, and it's a doctrine with practical consequences. What is more practical for the Christian than prayer? And yet, we rely on the doctrine of the Trinity, on the Trinity Itself in prayer. We pray to the Father through the Son by the help of the Holy Spirit. Contrary to what some think, the doctrine of the Trinity does not begin in the New Testament. We find it throughout the Old Testament, including the opening of Genesis, though of course we have a fuller and a clearer revelation of it in the New Testament. And so, it's no surprise to see, for example, the pronouns that are used in Genesis 1 verse 26: "And God said, let us make men in our image, after our likeness." There's the plural. We already see this in the first three verses of the first chapter.

There's a reference to God the Father in verse one; there's a reference to the Holy Spirit in verse two. It says, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." And we see a reference to the Son in verse three: "God said, Let there be light." Christ is, of course, the Eternal Word. Now you may be wondering to yourself, is it right to include Christ here? Well, the New Testament casts further light on these opening verses in Genesis one. Notice how the opening words of the gospel of John are nearly identical to Genesis 1:1, but in John, it substitutes "Christ" for "the Word." It says, "In the beginning was the Word." This places Christ in the opening verses of Genesis. And it goes on, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Christ, the Eternal Son, spoke the universe into existence. If you go to the gospels, you'll see how on one occasion He actually stills the wind and the waves by His command, by speaking, "Peace be still" (Mark 4:39).

Well, who can do this? Who can do this? Their Creator, the Creator of the winds and the waves, Who commanded them into existence. He's the One who can do that. Paul reinforces this when he writes, "For by Him were all things created." That is by Christ, "were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17). Notice that the text does not say most things. Christ created all things. He was before all things, and it is by Him that all things consist; and for Him, not for anything or anyone else, but for Christ, all these things exist. So we can conclude that Christ first appears in Genesis one, not in Matthew one. This is Christ's world. He created the universe that He would later enter through His incarnation, in order to redeem it and raise it above and beyond how it began, as we'll see toward the end of this lecture. You should also consider God's works, because in Genesis one and two, we also learn that God acts.

And He reveals things about Himself through His works, through what He does. Now, this sets our expectation for the rest of our study of Scripture. God reveals Himself in His works. Genesis one teaches us to look for God to reveal Himself in the acts of history, biblical history. This will be very important in our future lectures on the rest of the Bible. God reveals Himself both in His words and His works, but His words and His deeds always go together. You see here that God spoke the universe into existence, again verse three, "And God said." In Psalm 33 verse 6 and verse 9, we read, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made;... For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Consider a few of the characteristics of Christ's work of creation. Well, we

learn that matter, the physical stuff of this world, is not eternal. It began to exist at creation. We also see that it is created out of nothing. By the word “nothing,” we mean “not anything.” And He created the world with His long term plan in mind. Well, what do I mean by that?

Well, we read that He created the birds, and He created the lilies and flowers of the field. He created the sheep and so on. And He did this from the beginning, because He intended to utilize all of these things, to teach us spiritual lessons. Later on the Lord Jesus Christ will say, “Consider the birds, how the Lord feeds them. Consider the lilies of the field, how they clothe the fields.” He’ll speak of His people as His sheep. It’s not as if the Lord Jesus was subsequently finding a lesson in these particular things in creation. No, from the beginning, He created them to convey, to teach us these spiritual lessons. We also see that Christ chose to create the universe in six normal days. Indeed, we sing about this as well, in Psalm 104. He chose to create the whole universe in six normal days. And we know that’s the case for a few reasons. The word “day” in Genesis one is qualified by the words evening and morning, thereby limiting the timeframe. We also see that “day” is used on the fourth day, to determine the period governed by the sun, which is to say a regular day. We also note that every time “day,” the word “day,” is used in the Bible in conjunction with a numerical adjective, that is, with a word like “first,” “second,” and a “third” day, and so on, it is always a literal day.

And the plural word “days,” the days of creation, always means literal days throughout the entire Old Testament. Perhaps most significantly though, in Exodus 20 verse 11, where we find the 4th commandment in the 10 Commandments, man’s work week is patterned after God’s work week. Another characteristic that we should highlight is that the world was created good. The view that physical matter is inherently evil is not biblical. So under this first point, we’ve been answering the question, what does God reveal about Himself? Secondly, what does God reveal about man? What does God reveal about man? Well, we see that man is the pinnacle of God’s creation. Though God made a great variety among people, they share everything that is essential and held in common. Paul preaching in Acts 17 says, and God “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the Earth” (verse 26). The reason this is the case, chiefly, is because man is made in the image of God, unlike all the other creatures. Again, in Genesis 1 verse 26, “And God said, Let us make men in our image, and after our likeness.”

So the question is, “What does it mean to be made in God’s image, for man to be made in God’s image?” This is a pressing question for many reasons, but one reason is the impact of the entrance of sin. Does man continue to be the image of God after the fall? Well, to answer that question, we must see that there are two aspects to the image of God, a broader and a narrower aspect. The broad aspect of man being made in the image of God, refers to the fact that man is a rational, moral creature, refers to man’s rational and moral nature, which is something that is maintained after the fall. So if you go to Genesis 9:6, you’ll see the Lord speaking of murder as an attack on the image of God. Man is still the image of God in that context. If you go to the New Testament, James 3 verse 9, you’ll see that cursing man is sinful, among other reasons, because it’s an attack on the similitude of God. We’ll see the same thing in First Corinthians 11, in verse 7. So there’s this broader aspect of man being the image of God, as a moral, rational creature, but there’s also a narrower aspect.

And the narrower aspect is spiritual knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. And this is lost after the fall, but it is regained in Christ at conversion. Paul speaks about this in places like Colossians 3, and Ephesians 4, and Romans 8, and so on. The image of God is defaced, if you will, in this sense. That spiritual knowledge, righteousness, and holiness is lost, but God makes a way for all of that to be recovered. This becomes very important for our understanding of the significance of the Christian being renewed and conformed into the likeness and image of Christ, which we will explore in a later lecture. We also learn that man has two parts to his nature: a body and a soul. The soul is also sometimes called a spirit. “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul,” Genesis 2 verse 7. Well, this is yet another building block for our study of the rest of the Bible. When we turn to consider man’s salvation, for example, after the fall, we’ll learn that Christ came to save the whole person, body and soul.

That, at death, the believer’s body is laid in the grave, still in union with Christ, and his soul immediately goes into the presence of God. And we learn about the resurrection, that, at the end of time, the Lord will resurrect the bodies, the physical bodies of His people. Why? Because Christ came to save the whole person, our bodies and our souls. Another thing that we learn about man, is that he is created male and female. And so,

gender distinctions and role relationships were established before the fall. Man was created before the woman, and man was given headship over the woman before sin ever entered into the picture. It's not as if male headship is a result of sin; it was prior to the fall. And you'll notice, then, as you go on in your study of the Bible, that the New Testament appeals all the way back to creation to establish the roles of men and women in the church. You see this in First Corinthians 11 verses 8 and 9, and First Timothy 2 verse 13, for example. On a similar note, God created the marriage relationship, man being created male and female.

He also established the covenant of marriage for the purpose of illustrating the relationship between Christ and His Bride, the Church. You'll sing about this in the Psalms; you'll hear the prophets talk about this in many places. You come to the New Testament, for example, in Ephesians 5, all the way to the end of the Bible. In Revelation 21, the new Jerusalem descends from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband; and so, this marriage relationship between one man and one woman brought into a covenant engagement illustrates the relationship between Christ and His Bride from the beginning. We also see that man was given dominion over the creatures. Man was God's vice region. Well, this too becomes important, and for example, it is connected to salvation in Christ. So, if you fast forward to the book of Psalms, in Psalm 8 verse 6, we're taught to sing, "Thou madest him," that is man, "to have dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou has put all things under his feet." Well, this may puzzle you. Why? Because it doesn't seem to be the case. It doesn't seem as if man actually does have dominion over everything and all things have been put under his feet.

Well, if that puzzles you, and if it raises a question, turn even further forward to Hebrews chapter 2 verses 8 and 9, because this very question comes up. We read, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet", that is man's feet, "For in that he put all in subjection under him. He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him." You see, that same question is arising, "But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus," the text goes on. It is in Christ that this dominion is secured, and it is through Christ that the dominion that God gave to man, is brought forward. What else do we see about man? What else does God reveal to us? Well, we see that man was given permanent creation ordinances, so from the beginning of the world, there are certain ordinances at creation that are set in place, and there are four of them. I'll mention them briefly. The first is marriage; we've already referred to that in Genesis 2 verses 23 and 24. This is something that is to continue throughout the ages. In connection with that, we have procreation: the conceiving and birth of children.

In Genesis 1 verse 28, the Lord calls Adam and Eve to be fruitful and to multiply. The third creation ordinance is labor, or work. We see this in Genesis 2, for example, verses 15, 19, and 20. Work did not come as a result of the fall. It did not come as a result of sin. God created man to labor from the beginning, and that will continue through the end of time. The difference, of course, is that now, after the fall, he labors under the sweat of his brow, and many other difficulties and inconveniences. The fourth creation ordinance is Sabbath observance, and we see this in Genesis 2 verses 2 and 3. Notice again that the Sabbath is established before sin and before the fall. You'll learn later that it's also included as the fourth commandment in the 10 Commandments, that permanent standard of right and wrong for all men in all ages. But if you go into the New Testament, the moral obligation to observe and keep the Sabbath, one day in seven, continues to the end of time.

In Hebrews chapter 4 verse 9, we read, for example, "There remaineth therefore a rest." And the word "rest" there is different in the Greek from the other words that are translated, "rest," around it. It actually means Sabbath-keeping. There remaineth therefore a Sabbath-keeping to the people of God. What are we seeing in Hebrews 4? The weekly Sabbath, even in the New Testament, continues as a signpost, if you will, pointing to the eternal Sabbath that is found in heaven. So, this creation ordinance of a weekly Sabbath, begins in Genesis chapter 2. It continues through the Old Testament and the New Testament, even in the heaven itself. What does that mean? It means there is only one place where there is no Sabbath, and that is in hell. All of these are building blocks for the rest of the Bible. They're answering for us the basic questions about what God reveals to us about man. Thirdly, what does God reveal concerning man's relationship to God? We learn that God and His glory is dwelling in the midst of His people, that man was made for fellowship with God. We see that in Eden, where God is walking with Adam in the cool of the day.

We see it later on, throughout the Bible, God establishing the tabernacle where He dwells in the midst of His people, later on the temple, both of which show the glory of God. You'll read about it all the way through

the prophets, for example, in Zechariah 2, in verse 10, “Io, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.” We see it most importantly in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is Emmanuel, God with us, Christ coming and dwelling in the midst of His people and showing His glory. We see it throughout the New Testament church, and again, all the way into Revelation; at the end, in Revelation 21 verse 3, we read, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them.” That brings us to consideration of the Covenant of Works. You see, there is a great distance between God and man. So, God chose to voluntarily condescend to relate to man by way of a covenant.

Now, the word “covenant” and the idea of covenant is a very weighty biblical doctrine, and we’re going to be considering it at great length later, but a covenant includes a solemn engagement between two or more parties, with stipulations and conditions, and accompanying blessings and curses. It also often brings with it signs and seals, to confirm that covenant. This concept of covenant becomes a dominant theme through the rest of the Bible, and we’ll be considering it in detail in the future. But the first covenant is what theologians call the Covenant of Works, or the Covenant of Life. It was a unique covenant made with Adam, between God and Adam, with Adam as the representative of the human race before the fall. You’ll notice that God required of man perfect and personal obedience. He commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in chapter 2 verse 17, threatening him with the curse, not only him, but also his posterity, the curse of death, if he did eat of it. He also held out the promise of eternal life to Adam and his posterity upon condition of obedience. Now, you may ask yourself, well where do we see the promise of this covenant?

We see the curse; where do we see the promise? Notice the reference to the Tree of Life. It was a sign, a sacrament, a visible representation of the promise. In other words, the presence of the Tree of Life held out the prospect or promise of permanent eternal life. We can verify this by where we see the tree again in Scripture. Let me direct your attention to the last place that we see it, the last chapter of the Bible. We read, “In the midst of the street of it,” this is describing Heaven, “and on either side of the river, was there the Tree of Life, which bear 12 manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2). Earlier in that same book, Revelation 2 verse 7, we read, “To him that overcometh,” that is to the Christian, “to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” In the next lecture, we will explore the important relationship between Adam, as the representative of his posterity, and Christ, as the representative of His people, places like First Corinthians 15 and Roman 5.

In order to understand the work of the last Adam, Christ, you have to comprehend the work of the first Adam. God’s salvation does not bring about a return to Eden. It provides something far, far superior, and that brings us to our last point in this lecture. What God reveals about the preparation for the superiority of the new creation. We’ve been pointing out some of the building blocks provided in Genesis for the remainder of our studies of Scripture. In this last point, we will show the exciting ways in which God builds on this foundation in the remainder of the Bible. Notice, first of all, God’s provision for a redeemer, and for redemption, was present at the beginning. We read that Christ was “foreordained before the foundation of the world,” First Peter 1 verse 20. He is described as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” Revelation 13 verse 8. Along these lines, the theologian Jonathan Edwards said, that the world was “doubtless created to be a stage upon which this great and wonderful work of redemption should be transacted.”

Notice that God created Heaven, the abode of God and angels, from the beginning. In other words, He made a place, from the beginning, to bring His redeemed people. In the words of Jesus, “the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,” Matthew 25 verse 34. Do you see that? Who was the first person to enter Heaven? Well, the first martyr, Abel, who Hebrews 11 verse 4 tells us was saved by faith. We also see that when God later describes the salvation obtained through faith in Christ; and in the gospel, He employs the language of creation. Paul says, “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” literally in the Greek, “He is new creation.” We find this theme everywhere in the New Testament. We read, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” that’s pointing us back to Genesis, “hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” Second Corinthians 4 verse 6.

God is the Author of Salvation. The Spirit of God, Who breathed into man and made him a living soul, gives new life by regenerating the believer. Now, we could go on and on and on, but we’ll return to this later. Lastly, and to this point, consider the new heavens and the new Earth. The first world will not remain as it was first created.

And the fact is, God never intended, from the beginning, that it would. In fact, the whole cosmos is waiting for the grand finale at the end of time, where God will bring to consummation His work of redeeming His people. We read, for the earnest expectation of the creature, or creation, waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. The world suffers, the whole world suffers under the curse. Paul goes on, “Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:21). Genesis 1 and 2 provide the foundation for what is to come. The new heavens and new Earth, and my friends, this will far excel what Adam ever knew in Eden.

Now, we must wait to unpack this later, but you should know that God has saved the best for last. As we saw in the first lecture, all of creation exists for God’s glory. In the next lecture, we will take up the tragedy of man’s fall into sin, and God’s plan of salvation to recover him.

Lecture 3

FALL

Lecture Theme:

By their Fall, mankind lost communion with God and came under his wrath and curse. But God entered into a covenant of grace to deliver his people from sin and to bring them salvation through Christ.

Text:

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:21–22).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 3

The word “gospel” means good news, the good news of salvation found in Christ alone. But you cannot understand and appreciate the good news without first grasping the bad news about sin. Let me illustrate this. If you went to see a doctor when you felt perfectly strong and healthy, and the doctor told you that he was going to immediately take you in for a surgery that would result in a long and painful recovery, you would obviously object. But what if he first told you that he had discovered you have a terrible, life threatening disease. You would be alarmed and desperate to know if there was a remedy. If he then told you that surgery would cure the disease, you would cherish that as good news.

Understanding the bad news magnifies the good news. God’s plan for redeeming His elect people is set against the back drop of the historical event of the fall of mankind recorded in Genesis 3. Though mankind was created for fellowship with God and for glorifying Him, by their fall man lost that communion and came under God’s wrath and curse. So what does man’s fallen, sinful nature include, and what are the ramifications? What is the relationship of Adam and Christ, and how does this deepen our understanding of redemption? Where do we first discover the gospel news of salvation in the Bible? Where does Christ first appear as the promised Savior to come? How does God’s Word after Adam’s first sin set the trajectory for the whole history of redemption in the Old Testament and New Testament?

In this lecture, we will discover the radical changes that come as a result of the fall of mankind and God’s provision of the first gospel promise to deliver His people from their sins. Let’s first consider together the entrance of sin. As we saw in the first lecture, God is the uncreated Creator who made all things good and created them for His own glory. God owns what He creates, including mankind. Man is therefore accountable to God and under His authority. As we will see, sin erupts in this world from rebellion against God Himself. Man is at fault, not

God. In James 1 verse 13 we read, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man."

Notice what we learn about the first temptation in Genesis 3. The devil appears on the scene in the form of a serpent, to tempt man, to break fellowship with God and to depart from a right relationship with Him through disobedience. Now this image of the serpent is carried all the way through to Revelation chapter 12 in verse 9, where we read, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."

We are told the serpent was more subtle or cunning than any other beast. He aims to work by deceit, by crafty deception. Notice that his aim is to subvert God's authority. He attacks the word of God. In verse 1, he says, "Yea, hath God said." Throughout the history of the world, the devil aims to undermine God's holy Word and revelation to man. Specifically, he distorts and twists God's Word. We read, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1). Well, God did not say every tree of the garden. He only prohibited them from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In this temptation, Satan is actually attacking and misrepresenting God Himself: His sovereignty, His goodness, His wisdom and His love. He is saying, in essence, God is not good to you. He does not seek your best interests, does not provide for you. He then explicitly lies; he says, "Ye shall not surely die" in verse 4. In doing so, he seeks to murder man. We see this confirmed by Jesus in His words to the Pharisees. He says, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

From the beginning we learn Satan's tactics, which he continues to employ throughout history. This is why Paul says in 2nd Corinthians 11 in verse 3, "But I fear, lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty or cunning, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Genesis 3 teaches us today to beware. To remain vigilant against Satan's deceptive devices. We also learn about the nature of sin. Adam and Eve responded to this temptation by disobeying God's command. Adam disbelieved God's word and believed the devil's lie. We learn here what sin is at its core: it is not being or doing what God requires. And what He requires is found in the revelation of His Word.

Sin is transgressing God's law or not conforming ourselves to it. 1st John 3:4 confirms this, "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." There are two sides to this coin. There are sins of commission: doing what the law forbids. And there are sins of omission: not doing what God's law demands. Ultimately, because the law reflects the character of God, to violate the law is to attack God Himself. The results are catastrophic misery. All the miseries of this life are traced back to the presence of sin. As we read elsewhere, the way of the transgressor is hard.

We also learn about the curse of death. God is just. He pronounces a curse on Adam and Eve, on the earth, and on the serpent. But we will focus on the first. Man's sin results in God's curse for his disobedience, just as God had warned them. Now, you may be wondering to yourself then why doesn't Adam immediately drop dead? Well, we need to understand the kind and extent of death that this included. Note three things. It was, first of all, a spiritual death that involved the corruption of Adam's soul. In Paul's words, man is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). He lost communion with God and can no longer do anything that pleases God. He is dead to doing good. He can only sin. We'll see more about this in the next lecture.

So first of all there's this spiritual death. Secondly, there's physical death. His body will also die. In the genealogy from Adam to Noah that is given to us in Genesis 5, we have repeated over and over and over the words, "And he died." Like the repeated gong of a bell, ringing out the death toll.

Thirdly, there was eternal death. The sentence of eternal death. His soul and his body are under the wrath and curse of God and will suffer the pains of hell for all of eternity. God reveals Himself as the infinitely just Judge. Romans 1 verse 18 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Sin must be weighed, if you will, against the object sinned against, the one who is sinned against. The least sin is against an infinite God, and therefore it warrants an everlasting punishment.

Lastly under this first point, we see something about how Adam lost communion with God. Tragically, by their fall, mankind, all of mankind, lost communion with God. The heart of the curse is separation from God.

Man's sin brought guilt, a guilty sentence against the objective standard of God's Word. It brought defilement or pollution. The guilt and pollution brought shame. So Adam hid himself from God's presence. He covered his nakedness with fig leaves. He was now distant, alienated, at enmity with God. Shame and disgrace are the opposite of glory and honor.

Think of Paul's words in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Notice the word "glory." Furthermore, man is thrust out of God's presence. In Genesis 3 verse 24, we read of the great expulsion, "So he," that is God, "drove out the man; and he placed at the east gate of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Man is cut off from the presence of God. Later in Isaiah 59:2 we read, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Secondly, we must consider the long-term consequences of sin, and this brings us to the Covenant of Works. We learned in the previous lecture that God had entered into a Covenant of Works with Adam before the fall. So Adam's sin takes place in the context of a covenant, a covenant relationship with God. You'll notice that Genesis 1, 2 and 3 do not use the word "covenant," but all the elements of a covenant are present. And later on, it is referred to as a covenant, for example in Hosea 6:7 where the word "man" can also be translated as "Adam." And this shouldn't surprise us because God's covenant with David in 2nd Samuel 7 does not use the word either, but it does later on in chapter 23 of that book.

We saw last time that God's stipulation, His requirement, was obedience to God's command. The blessing of the promise of life was held out in the tree of life upon condition of obedience, and the threat of the curse of death for disobedience. In sinning, Adam broke the covenant and reaped the curse of the covenant. So, the Covenant of Works was shattered by Adam, as representative of his posterity. But we need to explore further Adam's significance because that is essential for understanding the rest of the theology of the Bible, including the place of Christ.

I want to consider, for a few moments, a few truths that we learn later on in the Bible because these points are important for our understanding of the place of Adam in the history of redemption. These points provide building blocks for understanding the development of the theology of the Bible. First of all, Adam did not just sin for himself. He sinned as the representative, as a federal head of the whole human race. What Adam did was for himself and all of his posterity. That means Adam's first sin had consequences for the history of humanity. Scripture teaches that the guilt of Adam's first sin passed down to his posterity. Romans 5 verses 12–19 talk about this, but we cannot consider that passage in detail here.

The question is 'how is the guilt of Adam's first sin passed to his posterity?' The answer is a very important theological concept called "imputation." You'll see Paul use this word, imputation, a few times in Romans 4, so you need to know it. Imputation is a legal term meaning "to attribute to," or "to credit to one's account," "to reckon." So, the guilt of Adam's first sin was imputed to his posterity. It was credited to their account, and the recipients are morally accountable for it. In Adam, that is in union with Adam as our federal head, all men sinned. Therefore, the effects of the curse, namely death, fall upon all men.

The theology of imputation is important for other reasons. You'll discover three imputations in the Bible, all of which are related to the heart of the gospel. The first is the one that we're considering here, the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. The second one is the imputation of the sins of God's elect people to Christ. And then thirdly, we have the imputation Christ's righteousness to His elect people. In 2nd Corinthians 5 verse 21 it says, "For he hath made him," that is Christ, "to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

If you think that the imputation of Adam's first sin to us seems unfair, then you must say the same thing about the imputation of sin to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to His people. Furthermore, we learn that the sin and corruption that is found in Adam has come to all men, as descending from him by ordinary generation. We are all born in the state of sin, and that sinful nature is the source of all of our actual sins or transgressions. So consider for a moment the question, "Are we sinners because we sinned, or do we sin because we are sinners?" The answer is the latter. We sin because we are sinners. We're born with a sinful nature.

Lastly, under the second point, we need to consider the relationship of Adam to Christ. As we've already seen, our relationship to Adam bears very important implications for the Christian's relationship to Christ. We

read in 1st Corinthians 15 verses 21 to 22, “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Just as Adam represented his seed, so Christ represents His chosen people. Christ not only undoes what Adam did wrong. So, Adam began in a state of perfection, and he fell from that estate into a position of demerit. Christ not only comes to redeem His people from that, raising them back up, if you will, to the position of Adam before the fall. He does do that.

But Christ also goes on to do what Adam failed to do. Meeting the demands of personal, perfect obedience on behalf of His people. So whereas Adam should have obeyed and been raised to eternal life, he disobeyed and fell. Christ comes, raises not only back up to the position of Adam, but does for us what Adam failed to do. Thus, enabling us to inherit the promise of eternal life. We have the beginnings of preparation for Christ here and the provision of justification by faith in Christ, which we’ll consider more fully toward the end of this course.

Thirdly, we need to consider the first gospel promise. This brings us to the point of the first gospel promise. Perhaps you have seen the sun go down and darkness descends. But then one lone star appears in the sky, shining against the backdrop of that black sky. This is what happens in Genesis 3 verse 15 where we see the very first gospel promise after the fall, a promise that will be fulfilled in Christ. It says, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise their head, and thou shall bruise his heel.” So here is Christ again, in Genesis 3, this time as represented as the Savior.

A Puritan, John Owen, noted that Genesis 3:15 provides “in embryo the whole doctrine of salvation for sinners.” So it is the first light, if you will, on the new horizon of God’s grace. We’ll highlight four things under this point.

First of all, this promise is the seed of the Covenant of Grace. We’ve noted that Adam broke the first covenant, the Covenant of Works. We also noted that due to the distance between God and man, the Lord must condescend to relate to man by way of a covenant. So now a new covenant is necessary, a covenant that addresses the new context of man’s fall into a state of sin. Theologians call this the Covenant of Grace, through which God provides for the salvation of His people.

And we find this first seed of the Covenant of Grace right here in Genesis 3:15. Notice that once again God takes the initiative in establishing the covenant on His end. We see God seeking Adam out; then we hear, “And I will put enmity.” That’s the Lord. Through the remainder of the Bible, we will watch this seed of the Covenant of Grace take root and go down. God will unfold and expand His revelation of the Covenant of Grace through the remainder of the history of redemption. Our understanding of the one, the single Covenant of Grace will become clearer and clearer through God’s covenant with Noah, and then Abraham, and then Moses, and David until it comes to its fullest expression in the new covenant. See, there is a dominant continuity that is traced from Genesis 3:15 all the way through to Revelations 22, revealing God’s plan of redemption through His Covenant of Grace. We only see a glimmer of light here in Genesis 3:15, but God will build on this in our future studies as you will see.

Shorter Catechism question 20 summarizes these truths. It says, “God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity elected some to everlasting life did enter into a Covenant of Grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.” This will result in the restoration of fellowship with God. Christ would crush the head of the serpent. In the words of Colossians 2:15, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

But in the process, Christ’s heel would be bruised. This is a reference to His work upon the cross. Christ would be made curse. Christ would take the place of His people and subject Himself to death and to judgment and to the wrath of God. This original curse provides the background for God’s coming salvation, the salvation of His people through Christ. In Galatians 3 verse 13 it says, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made cursed for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.”

We see a subtle pointer to this in Genesis 3 verse 21, “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.” God removed man’s attempt to cover his own shame, and God clothed them with His own provision. Now skins, of course, imply the death of animals. The shedding of blood and sacrifice was necessary to cover their guilt and shame. This is confirmed by the divinely approved sacrifices in the very next chapter, chapter 4. As we read in Hebrews 2 verses 14 and 15, “that through death he might destroy him

that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

We also have to trace this promise, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent further because it also provides us with a charter of the Church. Genesis 3:15, the first gospel promise, also provides this charter for the Church. Notice that there are three contrasts in this verse. First of all, the contrast between the serpent and the woman. That ended the alliance that led to mankind’s fall and brought about the restoration of fellowship with God. And of course, fellowship with God brings enmity with sin and Satan.

The second contrast is Christ and Satan. Christ, of course, is the woman’s seed who would crush the serpent’s head, while the serpent shall bruise his heel. But thirdly, there is a contrast between the church, the woman’s seed, and the world, Satan’s seed. This represents a great division. The rest of Genesis draws lines of distinction between the woman’s faithful seed and the serpent’s rebellious seed, separating the lines, if you will, of Seth and Cain, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau. The seed of the woman ultimately, of course, leads to Christ. This also sets the context of enmity and war between the church, under Christ, and the world, under Satan’s dominion, traced all the way through redemptive history. Fellowship with God requires separation from fellowship with sin, the world, and the devil.

In 2nd Corinthians 6 verse 14 we read, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” You must understand the theology provided in Genesis 3 to make sense of the rest of the history of redemption. This is, after all, a charter for Christ’s Church. Compare Genesis 3:15 to 1st John 3 verse 8 and verse 10: “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.” It goes on, “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” You see the relationship between Christ and the Church and the devil and the world.

So, we see that the promise of Christ in Genesis 3:15 extends to the triumph of Christ’s people over the devil. Paul draws on this in Romans 16 in verse 20, where he tells the Romans, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” He’s drawing on that passage in Genesis 3, and you see this further in places like Revelation 12.

We also need to consider where this leads. So, finally we can trace the grand reversal of the curse to the end of time, where it is transformed into a blessing. In other words, this points us to heaven where there will be no more curse, but rather permanent fellowship for God’s people with their Lord.

And so, from Genesis 3 where we see the pronouncement of the curse, we’re led to the Cross where we see Christ bearing the curse and sins of His people and removing that enmity with God and restoring fellowship with the Lord. And that, in turn, leads ultimately to the consummation in heaven itself. In Revelation chapter 22 verses 3 and 4 it says, “And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.”

In heaven, there is no more sin. And therefore, there is no more suffering, no death, no pains and no miseries. In Revelation 21 verse 4 it says, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain: for the former things are passed away.” In heaven, God’s people rejoice in the restoration of permanent, sinless fellowship with God that exceeds all that was known in the Garden of Eden.

You can see how in all of these lectures we are tying the theological threads together, and we’re tracing these themes through the Scripture as a whole. In the next lecture, we will explore how God builds on these themes during the time of Noah.

Lecture 4

NOAH

Lecture Theme:

God displays his glory in salvation through judgment.

Text:

“For if God spared not...the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly... The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pet. 2:4, 5, 9).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 4

The story of Noah’s Ark and the worldwide flood may be one of the best known stories in the Old Testament. It certainly captivates the minds of children, but it is a sobering account of God’s unparalleled destruction of the world. It seems as if so much happens, so much goes wrong between the time of Adam and Noah. At the flood, the world is forever changed, but God provides a central message of hope in this story in which God further discloses the nature of His plan of salvation.

So, what is the theological significance of Genesis 4 and 5? What do we learn about man’s fallen condition at the time of Noah? Are judgment and salvation opposed to one another? Or does salvation come through judgment? How does God’s covenant with Noah after the flood advance God’s plan of redemption and point us forward to what follows in biblical history?

In this lecture, we will see what God reveals to us about Himself, about His people, and His salvation and we will do so by looking at the periods before the flood, during the flood, and after the flood. The Lord intertwines the themes of grace and wrath, demonstrating that salvation must come through judgment.

So, first of all, let’s consider the period before the flood. Before the flood, God reveals the division and separation between the trajectory of the two seeds that are mentioned in Genesis 3:15. We find the first distinction between the church and the world in Genesis 4, followed by two lines leading to the days of Noah. We’ll consider those two lines under this first point.

Consider first of all the line of the godly seed. We know from Genesis 3:15 that it is through the godly line that the Mediator will come. Genesis 4 is the first major outworking of the promise of Genesis 3:15. The struggle between the two seeds begins over God’s appointed worship. Cain becomes the first hypocrite apostate, and Abel, the first believing martyr. We discover several characteristics of God’s Church before the flood. We see that

God's revelation of His appointed worship is given in Genesis 4 in the end of verse 4, "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering." We must come to God on His terms, according to His appointed worship, not our preferences or creativity or innovation. Hebrews 11:4 says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."

Now we know that faith is a response to God's Word. Romans 10:17 teaches us that, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." So, Abel was obviously responding to God's Word and offering to God the worship that He commanded, though it's not recorded explicitly in Genesis 4. We also see God's appointed institution of sacrifice. This becomes the foundation for what follows, and this will be expanded into a more elaborate institution under Moses. All of this points, of course, to Christ's sacrifice and the truth that without shedding of blood is no remission.

The word Abel actually means "vanity," a theme that is expounded for us in the book of Ecclesiastes. After the death of Abel, the line of the godly seed goes through Seth. We read, "His name is Seth: for God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel" (Genesis 4:25). After the birth of Seth's son Enos, we read, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (Genesis 4:26). The godly assembled to worship God. The church now emerged visibly for the first time in contrast to the surrounding world. If you read further, Enoch is one more link in the godly chain leading to Noah. Genesis 5:22 and then again in verse 24, we read, "And Enoch walked with God." Verse 24, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."

The Hebrew word for walk indicates a daily interaction, so think, for example, of Deuteronomy 6:7 where, you're to teach your children diligently God's Word in rising up and lying down and going in the way. That's what's intended. Hebrews 11:5 says, speaking of Enoch, "that he pleased God," so spiritual fellowship with God continued. Enoch lived in the presence of God. Similarly, this testimony continues in Genesis 6:9, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Later, God demands the same of Abraham. "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1).

What else do we learn? We learn from Jude 14 that God's Word continued to sound forth through the prophecy of Enoch. It was, of course, God's Word of judgment on the ungodly. And God's Word continued to be proclaimed through Noah as is seen in 2 Peter 2:5, where he is described as a preacher of righteousness. And so, the faithful, the godly seed, assembled around the ordinances of God, the purity of God's worship, God's Word by prophecy and by sacrifice.

Secondly, under this first point, we also learn some things about the line of the ungodly seed. The seed of the serpent unfolds through the line of Cain. Notice 1 John 3:12, and look at the words, "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one," who was of that wicked one, "and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous." In Cain we see the first defection from God's appointed worship, his rejection of sacrifice by blood, and we see the first case of church discipline, Cain's expulsion from the assembly of the true worshipers of God. In Genesis 4:16 it says, "And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD." John Owen, a Puritan, described this as "a divinely ordained and displayed type, an example for all future reformation of the church."

The first murder leads to more murder by Lamech, and he boasts over that murder in Chapter 4. The opening verses of Genesis 6 show the corruption that came from the intermingling, the bringing together of the church and the world. Some descendants of Seth, the sons of God, intermarried with those of Cain, the daughters of men, and the results were spiritually devastating. Again, John Owen says, "In all ages, free association with the wicked leads to the downfall of the church." In Genesis 6:3, God's Spirit began to withdraw His presence and blessing as a result, and this opened the way to God's determination to destroy the world with a flood. The floodgates of iniquity led to the floodgates of judgment. God's principle of godly separation had been violated and replaced with an unholy alliance between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

That brings us to Noah's day where we read in Genesis 6:5, "And 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." Notice six things that are described about sin in this verse. We see that first of all, sin is innate. It's inborn. You'll notice this later on in Chapter 8:21, "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." And so, sin is innate or inborn, described as the wickedness of man in Chapter 6:5.

Secondly, we see the intensity of sin. He says that it is “great.” Thirdly, the totality of sin: “every imagination.” Fourthly, we see the perverse creativity of sin. It’s described as “imagination.” This is building on the concept that man is creative in his work as one made after the image of God. Fifthly, the inwardness of sin, the thoughts of his heart. And then sixthly, sin is exclusive. It is only evil. To this we can add one more, and that is, seventhly, that sin is habitual. You see the word “continually.” There’s a lot packed into that one verse. Sin is universal because fallen man is born in sin. We read about this all through the Old Testament and in the New Testament as well. Consider Romans 3:9–23, for example. Natural man’s estimation of himself is grossly inflated. He cannot boast in anything without depriving God of His honor. And let me give you two brief examples.

One from the Old Testament, Nebuchadnezzar, who in his pride was lifted up and took glory to himself, and the Lord humbled him and sent him into the fields like an ox. And in the New Testament, we see Herod in Acts 12. He was praised as a god, and he received that praise, and God smote him, and he was eaten with worms and died.

In Genesis 6:5, we have one of the earliest and clearest verses of the doctrine of Total Depravity. Now, by total, the word ‘total’ does not mean that man is as wicked as he possibly could be. Rather, ‘total’ means that every aspect of man’s nature is impacted by sin. Man’s corruption is extensive, but not necessarily intensive. The unbeliever is totally, not utterly, depraved. All of his faculties are affected, and we could list a long string of Scriptures from the New Testament to establish the fact that his mind and understanding are affected and fallen in sin. His emotions, his conscience, his will, and we could go on. The moral inability of the natural man is because he’s a slave to sin. He is, in the words of the New Testament, spiritually dead. He’s blind, and he’s powerless. He’s also ignorant. So, natural man is not just sick or dim-sighted or weak or somewhat knowledgeable; he’s totally depraved. The unbeliever is in a position of bondage, not freedom. Slavery, not liberty. He does not have the inherent ability of freedom of will to do good or to come to God or exercise saving faith without divine intervention.

It would be helpful at this point to summarize the doctrine of the Freedom of the Will as it’s seen throughout redemptive history since that’s the purpose of our course. This will help us better understand Genesis 6 against the backdrop of the big picture. We can divide up redemptive history into four sections and consider the freedom of man’s will under each of those.

First of all, we begin before the fall with Adam in the estate of innocency in the garden. There, what do we know about his will? Well, he was able not to sin, and therefore he had the ability to do both good and evil.

The second category is after the fall, and this is in reference to the unbeliever in his fallen sinful state. The Bible teaches us that he is not able not to sin. In other words, he only has the ability to do evil and not good.

Thirdly, we can think in terms of the category of a person after they are converted, after they are brought to faith in Christ, the believer. And the believer is able to sin and able not to sin. So, he has the ability to do good and evil.

The last category is in Heaven in reference to the believer. In Heaven, the believer is not able to sin. He only has the ability to do what is good and not evil. And so we find ourselves in Genesis 6:5 in that second category: the unbeliever is not able to do good. He’s only able to do what is evil. We can also distinguish very briefly between the sinfulness of sin on one hand, and the heinousness of sin on the other. And this is helpful especially when practical questions come up. If a person commits adultery, you might hear someone say, “Well, we’re all sinners. We’ve all sinned.” And that’s true, but it fails to recognize the distinction between the sinfulness of sin and the heinousness of sin.

So, while hating your brother in your heart is sinful, and murdering your brother with your hand is also sinful, the latter, murdering your brother, is more heinous. It’s a more heinous sin. And so, there are degrees of heinousness. We can go from thinking bad thoughts to maybe speaking angry words to maybe striking someone to ultimately murdering someone, and in each case, there’s an increase of the heinousness of the sin, though the sinfulness of each sin shares some equality.

The Bible portrays a high view of God, a low view of man, and consequently the necessity of salvation leading to humility and dependence. Man must be saved from himself, saved from sin, and saved from God’s wrath in Hell.

Secondly, we need to consider the period during the flood. The worldwide apostasy had reached an unparalleled height as you see in Chapter 6:11–13. And the old world ends with an apocalyptic storm to show how God’s blessing and gracious salvation will only come in the way of just judgment upon sin. This constitutes the end of an epoch, the end of the world as it was then known. Again, notice two things under this point. First of

all, the wicked are punished. God had warned them, calling them to repentance through Noah and through the preaching of Enoch.

But as Jesus said, “For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noe entered into the Ark and knew not until the flood came and took them all away.” You find that in Matthew 24 as well as Luke 17. It was as in the words of Proverbs 29:1, “He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

Contrary to what some skeptics say, this was a worldwide flood, not localized. It covered the whole earth. It was a universal catastrophe that God brought to pass by His word. This is confirmed in the words of Peter in 2 Peter 3:3–7, and that’s an important passage for understanding Noah. You should take time to read it. In fact, the New Testament draws a parallel between the universal flood and the final judgment of God. The flood is, if you will, an emblem of the final judgment to come, the consequence of sin in a pictorial form. So, I would encourage you to read that passage in 2 Peter 3:3–7.

Secondly, under this point, dealing with the period during the flood, we see that the believing are saved. Now, the need for God’s grace is evident from Genesis 6:17, “And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the Earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under Heaven; and everything that is in the Earth shall die.” That shows the need for God’s grace. There’s also an expectation of grace a little earlier on in Chapter 5:29, speaking of the birth of Noah. It says, “And he called his name Noah.” The name Noah means rest. “He called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us.”

But most importantly we see the experience of grace in Genesis 6:8, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” This presupposes that Noah also sought grace and longed for it. He found what he had sought. He was a just and upright man that was walking with the Lord. And so, in Genesis 8, we hear, “And God remembered Noah.” We also need to recognize that salvation came in the way of judgment. This is an important point. Noah was not just saved from water, but by means of water. This is what the Bible says in 1 Peter 3:20, “When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.”

Peter then draws a connection with the meaning of baptism and sanctification by means of Christ’s resurrection. Believers are saved by the death and resurrection of Christ, when the waters of God’s judgment went over Him. The water that purged the world of corruption saved those that were in the Ark. The wicked world threatened to swallow up or to destroy Noah. The flood destroyed the world, and at the same time, that same water saved the Church and separated her from the wicked world. In the words of Isaiah 1:27, “Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.”

So, God graciously instructs Noah to build an Ark, and Noah submits to God’s Word. God provided an Ark. God called them into the Ark. God shut them into the Ark. God remembers them in the Ark, and God brings them out of the Ark. The Ark pictured God Himself in Christ as the Refuge and Savior of His people. There we see the seed of the woman floated safely to salvation, while the seed of the serpent perished.

Thirdly, we have to consider the period after the flood. After the flood, God blessed Noah and reasserted His gospel promise in the Covenant of Grace. We read about this in Genesis 9. The pronouncement of God’s blessing on His people becomes a very important feature throughout the Bible right down to the very last words and the very last verse of Scripture in Revelation 22:21.

As we saw before, God is the one who initiates His covenant. In Genesis 9:9, we read, “And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you.” God is the author of the covenant with Noah. In the Noahic Covenant, you’ll notice the reference to creation demonstrating the coexistence of creation and redemption. This is for at least a couple reasons. God’s purposes in creation are upheld in order that redemption may proceed and unfold. God’s works of creation and providence serve God’s gracious purposes in advancing His plan of redemption in history. We also know that covenantal blessings will culminate at the renewal of the ordered existence of creation in the new Heavens and the new Earth, which we considered in a previous lecture.

So, we read in Genesis 9 of the promise of life, of God’s provision and of God’s preservation. These fresh covenant promises are accompanied by multiple sacrifices. You see them at the end of Chapter eight and the first section of Chapter nine. While most of the creatures came into the Ark two by two, the animals that God designated clean came by sevens. This was God’s provision for both sacrifice (these clean animals would be offered

in sacrifice) and for food which Noah would eat. We have the first mention of an altar in Genesis 8:20. God's Covenant of Grace is once again established with sacrifice and bloodshed, drilling into our minds early on in the Bible the expectation of Christ, Who would much later say at the time of the Lord's Supper, "This cup is the New Testament or new covenant in my blood which is shed for you."

You'll notice that God provides a perpetual sign of this Covenant of Grace, namely in a rainbow. We read in Chapter 9:13, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." This is repeated in verses 16 and 17.

Well, this is another building block because signs of the Covenant of Grace will become a staple feature in our future studies. We should also note, in reference to this covenant, the household principle; the expansion of the covenant promise includes the family of believers. Noah was himself a man of faith. He believed the gospel and was saved by faith in Christ. He believed God's Word. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7). Notice that God extends His covenant blessing to Noah as a believer and to his children. In Genesis 9:9, "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you." This household principle runs through the Old Testament and New Testament as we shall see. When Peter preaches the gospel in Acts 2:39, he says something very similar. He says, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children."

Now, inheriting covenant promises in covenant families was not synonymous, however, with true conversion and saving faith. That is, not all received the promise by faith. The seed of the serpent rose again from within the seed of the woman through Ham's rebellion and covenant breaking. And he was cut off from the assembly of God's people. You see that in Chapter 9:25-27. But let's also think about the way forward. We're considering what took place after the flood. After God's flood, the world starts again with Noah, but there is a continuity that remains. In Genesis 9, you see, for example, references to the continuation of the creation ordinances that we learned about in the second lecture on creation. We see the preservation of man as God's image, now protected by the death penalty for murder in Chapter 9:6. God's provisions of covenant promises of salvation also continue.

But in conclusion, I want to draw your attention to something important at the end of Genesis 9, something significant for our understanding and expectations regarding the history of redemption. In Chapter 9:26 and 27, we read, "And he said 'Blessed be the LORD God of Shem, and Cain shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.'" What do we see? Well, we see that Shem will build the tent. The descendants of Canaan will get into the tent through service. The book of Joshua gives us an example of how. But the children of Japheth will make the tent really large.

We see here already God's long-term plan in the history of redemption. God will use the Jews, the seed of Shem, to establish His Covenant and Church. And the Gentiles will come into it and greatly expand it in the future. The gospel promise will spread to the whole world. This is greatly enforced in God's promise to Abraham, which we'll consider in the next lecture. But it ultimately comes to fulfillment in the book of Acts and beyond. The future path of God's plan and the history of redemption is bright.

Well, we have learned that God displays the glory of His salvation in judgment. In the next lecture, we will continue with the revelation of God at the time of Abraham.

Lecture 5

ABRAHAM

Lecture Theme:

God condescends to call Abraham out of idolatry and into the way of faith and obedience in order to dispense gospel blessings to all nations.

Text:

“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. 3:8).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 5

The contemporary relevance of Abraham seems beyond dispute. We hear appeals to Abraham in the ongoing conflicts over the territories in Palestine, and in the broader disputes between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East, though neither of them [has] a true claim to Abraham. Christians also, and rightly, look to Abraham as the father of those who believe. We must stick to the Scriptures in our understanding of Abraham. It is essential that we study closely God’s revelation in the Bible, the theology He provides in this portion of the history of redemption.

How does the history of the two seeds progress and expand under Abraham? What theological themes does God provide in Abraham’s call? How does God’s covenant with Abraham once again advance God’s plan of redemption and point us forward to what follows in Biblical history? Why does the New Testament emphasize so strongly that Abraham is the father of all those that believe? Do we find in the Old Testament the same Gospel and way of Salvation that we discover in the New Testament?

In this lecture, we will expound some of the theological themes that God provides in the history of Abraham. We will consider them under the call of Abraham, the covenant with Abraham, and the coming Redeemer and redemption promised through Abraham. If you continue listening, we will conclude this lecture by examining one exciting incident in the life of Abraham that brings our themes together, and illustrates how we must connect a specific Bible story to God’s big plan in the history of redemption.

First of all, let’s consider the call of Abraham. The development of the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, that is the Church and the world, continues. In Genesis 10, we see the sweeping genealogy of Noah’s three sons and the origin of future nations. You notice that the seed of the serpent is represented through Ham, Cush, and Nimrod, who exalted himself before the Lord. And, through him the Canaanite people. As promised,

the seed of the woman is traced through Shem, down to Abraham, and through him to Isaac and Jacob, with Judah selected to bear the line to the Mediator.

For the time, God will channel His revelation of redemption through the Shemites. But, God registers this table of nations because in the fullness of time, redemption will return to them, as will be promised again to Abraham. In Genesis 11, we have the Tower of Babel. The proud and rebellious world sought to unify and exalt themselves to the heavens. God curses and foils their mischief by confusing their language and dispensing the nations throughout the world. Keep this in mind because in the latter unfolding of redemptive history, God will reverse this curse through the power of the Gospel at Pentecost in Acts 2, where all will hear God's revelation in their own tongue.

And this, of course, will lead to the ultimate description that we have of heaven, in Revelation 5, verses 9 and 10, "for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Well, consider how God includes this in His promise to Abraham. The Old Testament prophets will later tell us more.

Notice how Abraham is called out. God punished the world with the confusion of language, which resulted in the multiplication and distribution of man throughout the Earth. Now, we must consider how He continued His promise through one man, Abraham, the father of all believers. Moses, looking back on this, says, in Deuteronomy 32, verses eight and nine, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."

You may have noticed in the previous lecture, that I referred to the Old Testament, believing people of God as the Church. This is entirely appropriate. Stephen, speaking of Moses, in Acts 7 verse 38, says, "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness." Observe again, a point of continuity. We have one people of God, running through the Old Testament and New Testament. Beginning with Seth, to Shem, to Abraham, ultimately, expanded to include the Gentiles in the New Testament, as we'll see in a moment.

The New Testament word for "church" means, 'called out ones.' And, that is exactly what we see with Abraham in Genesis 12, verses one and following; God calls him out of Ur of the Chaldees, and separates him from the world. God calls him through the pronouncement of His divine Word. Notice again, God is revealing His glory. Going back to Stephen, in Acts 7, he says in verse 2, "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, get thee out of thy country."

God reveals Himself as Jehovah to Abraham. And, in chapter 15 verse one, He says, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Again, in chapter 17 verse one, "I am the Almighty God." God's name is the disclosure of His glory. God reveals Himself and His glory in the calling of Abraham.

We should also note something here about the doctrine of election. God sovereignly chose Abram. God is the One who initiates. He seeks Abram. It is not Abram that seeks Jehovah. God comes pronouncing His blessing of salvation to Abraham. It is also, once again, a call to separation. He is called out from his country and his father's house. He is called out of idolatry. Joshua 24 verse two especially highlights this, his being called out of idolatry. He's called to place his entire dependence upon God. John Owen says, "As God now intended to set up a new phase of the church through a visible separation from the world and its involvement in false religion and corruption, so he laid the foundation in the demonstration of faith, obedience, and holiness, of those called into it. And, through it, into the promises of the coming Messiah Himself."

Under this point regarding Abraham's call, notice his response of faith and obedience. This is especially underlined in Hebrews 11, that lengthy section on Abraham from verses 8 to 19. Abraham responded to God's Word of promise by receiving it and believing it. And, consequently, bearing the fruit of faith in obedience. Abraham does this several more times in the following chapters. The New Testament expounds, extensively, the saving faith of Abraham. He was a Gospel believer; we see it already in Genesis 15 verse six, "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." As Paul says, we have in Abraham a clear example of a believer justified by faith alone, in Christ alone. You can see Romans chapter four. We'll look at this more fully when we come to the New Testament.

Secondly, we must consider the covenant with Abraham. God's revelation, regarding the salvation of His people in Christ, expands more and more with each new step in Biblical history. The covenant promise of Genesis 3:15 becomes fuller and clearer in God's covenant with Noah, and even more, now, in God's covenant with

Abraham. This one Covenant of Grace will continue to unfold through Moses, David, and into the new covenant. The Abrahamic covenant provides the groundwork, and the language and focus of God's dealing with His people, in the history of redemption. What we find here carries over into the periods that follow.

Notice that God initiates His covenant in chapter 12, verse one and following. He explains the saving content in chapter 15. He confirms it, sacramentally, with signs and seals, in chapter 17, and concludes it in chapter 22. In each section, we see recurring components. Let me mention a few of them.

First of all, we find a promised land. So, first of all, there is a promised land, a place for His seed. Now, we must wait to expound this in a later lecture. But, note here that Abraham knew the physical land pointed to a spiritual inheritance in heaven. Hebrews 11 verse 10 says, "For he," that is Abraham, "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." So, the first component is a promised land. Secondly, we see a promised seed, His physical seed would include a seed of promise. A third component is a promised blessing. He was promised fruitfulness that will encompass the nations of the world.

Well, we only have time to touch on a few highlights regarding this covenant, but let me draw them to your attention. First of all, the core of the covenant promise is found in the words of chapter 17 verse seven, "I will establish my covenant," and then it goes on, "to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." He will be their God, and they will be His people. You need to imprint those words on your mind, because you will see this language, this core of the Covenant of Grace repeated, literally over, and over, and over, throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament, all the way to its final culmination in Revelation 21 verse three. This is important for showing the continuity of the Covenant of Grace through the whole Bible.

Secondly, it is a covenant ratified by blood. In Genesis 15, we have an elaborate vision in which God appeared in smoke and fire and passed between the pieces of slain animals, taking upon Himself solemn oaths and imprecations that He would fulfill His Word.

Thirdly, we see again that the Gospel promise in the Covenant of Grace includes the household principle. The promise to Abraham extends to his children. Again, verse seven of chapter 17 (Genesis), "And I will establish My covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." This element of the Covenant of Grace continues into the New Testament. As we saw last time, Peter uses nearly the same words as Genesis 17 verse seven when preaching the Gospel in Acts 2:39. And, he says, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children."

Fourthly, since the promise of the covenant is to his children, the sign and seal of the gospel promise, circumcision, is also given to his children in chapter 17 verse 11 (Genesis): "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." And then, He goes on to command that it be given to his sons and those in his household. In Romans four verse 11, Paul calls circumcision a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith.

But, the sign of the promise does not presume regeneration. Not all will receive the promise with faith. Both Ishmael and Isaac received the sign of the covenant, circumcision. But, Ishmael is an unbeliever, and Isaac is a believer. We see the same with Jacob and Esau. Nevertheless, the command to give the sign to his children was absolutely necessary. In chapter 17 verse 14, we read, "And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." We'll see this illustrated later, in Exodus four verses 24 to 26. God came to kill Moses for not circumcising his son. This will be important when we come to our study of the New Testament.

Thirdly, we must consider the coming Redeemer and redemption that is promised through Abraham. God's promise of blessing to Abraham extended through him to the whole world. We see that in Genesis 12 verse three at the end of the verse: "and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." This promise would only be fulfilled through the coming Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who is called the Son of Abraham in the very first verse of the first book of the New Testament, Matthew 1:1. Galatians 3 verse 14 says, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Later on, in verse 29, it says, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

And so, you can once again see this theme of the seed that is promised in Genesis 3:15. It's still being carried forward to Abraham and to Abraham's seed. And, it ultimately leads to Christ Himself, as you see in Galatians 3:14. And through Christ, that promise leads to Gentile believers and their children.

As you can see, the promise was never intended to be restricted to the Jews, that is, to physical blood lines, but extended to all those with sound and saving faith in the Gospel of Christ. In Romans 4 verse 13, we read, "For the promise that he," that is Abraham, "should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Therefore, Gentile believers are true children of Abraham and heirs of his promise. Galatians 3 verse 7, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Or, in verse nine, "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

All of this underlines for us the way in which God's revelation, during the period of Abraham, points us forward to the Redeemer, Christ, and to the redemption that would come through Him. But, we also need, I think, a specific example. And so, lastly, we will consider one exciting event in the life of Abraham to illustrate the dominant Gospel themes that run throughout, and to show how Bible stories are related to the context of redemptive history. In Genesis 22, God reveals Himself. So, He's disclosing something about Himself. He reveals Himself as Jehovah-Jireh, which means, "the LORD, our Provider."

I want to highlight, not what Abraham did, that is, not the trial and triumph of Abraham's faith in Genesis 22. Though, that is very important as well and deserves our consideration and exposition. But here, rather, I want to emphasize what God did in this story. Because, the big point of the text in Genesis 22, is that the Lord provides a sacrificial lamb, so that His people, Israel, may live. In verse two, God calls Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Now, this was much more than just a trial of nature, if you will. A trial that would be difficult for a father to have to sacrifice his much loved son. There's more than that. Remember, God had limited the promise of the Messiah, and had thereby, bound up the salvation of the world in the life and line of Isaac.

So, it appears that Abraham is being called to part with salvation, to part with Christ Himself. Now, Romans 4 verses 16 to 25, describe how Abraham, nevertheless, clung to God's promise. And, it's a beautiful passage. You can look, as well, at Hebrews 11, for more on that point. But, you'll know the story, the angel stops Abraham, and he receives back his son, as from the dead, if you will. And, God provides, instead, a ram out of the thicket as a substitute in the place of Isaac. Now, it's after this, it's after the provision of the substitute, the ram; it's after the deliverance of Isaac, that in verse 14, Abraham calls the name of the place, Jehovah-Jireh. And this means literally, the LORD, or Jehovah, will, or shall, provide.

Now, if you were like me, you might have expected the words 'God hath provided.' Right? Isaac has been delivered from the altar, the ram has been provided. God hath provided. But, that's not what it says. It says, "God will provide." It is future tense, rather than past tense. What's happening here? Abraham is looking beyond. He's standing on that mountain in Moriah, in the land of Moriah, and he is looking into the future. He has a ram, he has back his son, but he sees that in all of these things, he has a pledge of better things yet to come. He's looking forward, through Isaac's line, to God's coming substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. And, so he says, "God will provide."

It is this hour, this moment in Abraham's life, I am convinced, that Jesus refers to when He says in John 8, verse 56, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." Remember in chapter 22, Genesis 22 verse two, this event took place on a mountain in the land of Moriah. Now, follow this through God's revelation in Biblical history. It's in that exact same place that, later, David would offer a sacrifice on the threshing floor of Ornan. And then, later on yet, Solomon built the temple in Mount Moriah, and he raised an altar. And, on that altar, countless thousands, thousands and thousands of sacrifices over the centuries were offered in that same place, that same spot, on that altar.

It is the same place, Mount Moriah, over two thousand years afterward, two thousand years after Abraham, that the Lord Jesus Christ is crucified. You see? God did provide the lamb, so that His people could live eternally. Abraham was looking forward to what was yet to come. Little did he know it would transpire, relatively, in that same area. Consider God's Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, in contrast to Isaac. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of the Promise. Was Isaac a son of promise? Yes. Jesus is the greater Son of Promise. He is the Eternal Son that existed before Abraham. Was Isaac long waited for? Did he only come when Abraham and Sarah were in their advanced years? Yes. But, Christ is the long waited for Son, the Messiah to come, the Lamb of God.

We see in the New Testament, the opening of the New Testament, people like Anna and Simeon, looking for Him. Did Isaac have a supernatural birth? He was born when his mother was way past childbearing years. The Lord Jesus Christ, much more. He is conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Lord Jesus Christ, even more than Isaac, has meekness to submit to the sacrifice of Himself on behalf of His people.

The Lord Jesus Christ was foreordained from before the beginning. And, all of the Old Testament, sacrificial lambs pointed to the one and final Lamb of Sacrifice Who would bear away the sins of His people. We read in the New Testament, “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” That’s Romans five verses seven and eight.

You see here this fascinating and exciting story recorded for us in God’s inspired Word. In Genesis 22 is more than an interesting story. The content of that story is full of Christ, it is full of the Gospel, and it is full of the plan of redemption that God is unfolding in the history of the Bible. And, we must interpret and understand Genesis 22 in light of that. And, ministers must preach that passage in light of those spiritual realities, as well. It gives fresh light and color, and it also draws connections from the passage to Christ. But consequently, from the passage to Christ to us. And, we see the pressing relevance of a story, like the one found in Genesis 22, for the contemporary Christian. Christ was the object of Abraham’s faith. He remains the object of faith for every true believer today.

We’ve seen how important Abraham is to our understanding of God’s unfolding revelation of Himself and of salvation in Biblical history. We have learned that this inspired account of Abraham is directly related to every Christian today.

In the next lecture, we will consider the theology that God provides in the time of the patriarchs, after Abraham.

Lecture 6

PATRIARCHS I

Lecture Theme:

God's promise unfolds through many twists and turns, revealing bright revelations of God's glory and his plan of redemption.

Text:

“Who are the Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 9:4–5).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 6

When you read God's description of the Patriarchs in Hebrews 11, they sound like contemporary Christians. That is because there is one people of God, united under one Covenant of Grace and one Savior, throughout all history. We are connected to these fathers in one body, which is exactly what God states in the last verse of Hebrews 11, in verse 40 and into the beginning of chapter 12. Now, this of course confirms what we saw about our relationship to Abraham in the previous lecture. Hebrews 11 says, over and over and over again, “by faith,” “by faith,” “by faith.” “By faith Abel,” “By faith Enoch,” “By faith Noah,” and so on. They were men of faith, believers in the promises of God. They lived in the covenant and kept covenant, and they were agents of God's blessings.

So, what are the implications of this? Well, if you are a believer, the Old Testament provides a detailed account of your own family's history. You're reading the heritage of your spiritual family. More importantly, you read about the Lord, God's revelation of Himself and the salvation of His people. The period of the Patriarchs tells us of the unfolding promise and covenant of God. So, what is the theological significance, for example, of Sodom and Gomorrah? And how does it provide a pattern for biblical history? Why does Abraham die with little property after being promised a great land? How does Isaac teach us of Christ to come? What do we learn from Jacob about the doctrine of election? Why is Joseph so concerned about the burial of his bones on his deathbed? And lastly, how does the Covenant of Grace tie together Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the 12 tribes, Christ, and every Christian today?

In this lecture, we will expound some of the theological themes woven throughout the period of the Patriarchs. We will trace the unfolding of God's promise and consider the special ways in which Christ revealed Himself and His salvation. Let's begin where we left off with Abraham in our last lecture. Another event in his life that becomes a dominant theological theme in the remainder of Scripture relates to Sodom and Gomorrah. The

destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah shows God's anger, His wrath, His fury that is kindled against wickedness. God's judgment left the three cities wasted, desolate. The Bible says, full of brimstone, salt, and burning. And it left them without a single inhabitant. You'll remember, of course, about Lot, who fled from Sodom, and the New Testament tells us, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). She is an example of unbelief and disobedience. But the greatest sin to ignite God's fury was Sodom and Gomorrah's breach of the first commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. This is brought out in the prophets in a number of places.

Their gross perversion and immorality, which is what we think of, actually reflected a deeper spiritual adultery that brought their destruction. And God uses this revelation of Himself in dealing with them in righteous indignation and wrath as a model for the rest of history. In Deuteronomy 29 verse 23, God uses the example of Sodom and Gomorrah to warn Israel of what will happen to them if they break God's covenant. He says they will reap God's curses. Later on, God confronts Israel with this same image of Sodom and Gomorrah, this same warning. In fact, in Isaiah 1:10, He refers to Israel as Sodom and Gomorrah, and you see this further in places like Jeremiah, and more particularly in chapters 49 and 50, but it goes on. He says that He will do the same thing to the nation of Babylon in Isaiah 13. And then, in the New Testament, this theme continues. In Jude 7, God uses Sodom and Gomorrah to describe the wickedness of those that are mentioned in that text.

Even into Revelation chapter 11, the symbol of spiritual Babylon is called Sodom. But you should also notice that God's declaration that there were not enough righteous men in Sodom and Gomorrah to spare them from His judgment occurs right after the promise that Sarah will conceive and bear a son of promise, through whom God would provide a Savior in the face of judgment. When you come to the end of Abraham's life, where we're told (and we're told in several places) that he is a stranger and a sojourner, he received promises from God by faith, but when he died, the only land he possessed was a field and a cave for the burial of his wife Sarah. The fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham must continue to unfold. And that brings us, secondly, to Isaac.

From Abraham's loins, Isaac was appointed by God as the chosen son of promise. We're told in Genesis 18 in verse 19, "For I know him," that is Abraham, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." And this is exactly what Abraham did, he commanded his whole household. We'll see the fruit of that in Isaac, but you see it, for example, in his servants as well. Remember the account of Abraham sending his servant to a far distance to fetch a wife for his son Isaac. And, in the description that's given to us, the servant is obviously honoring not only Abraham, but the Lord, in all that he does.

In Genesis 26 verses 3 and 4, God repeats to Isaac all of the important elements of the covenant with Abraham, and tells Isaac that this covenant continues with him. So, you notice, the same Covenant of Grace is continuing from generation to generation, beginning in Genesis 3:15, through Noah, through Abraham, now to Isaac; and as we will see, it will continue to go on from there. But you should stop for just a moment and think with me because Scripture is a masterpiece. It provides us with an exciting treasure hunt, if you will. But you have to know, and you have to pay close attention to the details. Details are very important. You'll need to recognize the details of Genesis, really in order to understand the rest of the Bible. It's all tied together as one large story. So, let me provide just a single example for you.

Think with me of the seemingly insignificant details like the children born to various individuals: can this really be that important for understanding the Bible and its theology? Well, these sons end up becoming future people groups and nations, and knowing who is who is essential for understanding all that; you'll read, for example, in the prophets. We're told in Genesis that Ishmael will be the head of a family of 12 princes and become a great nation. The two incestuous sons of Lot become the Moabites and the Ammonites. God says, with regards to Jacob and Esau, that two nations were at war in the womb. Esau of course becomes the nation of Edom. And all of this is woven into, for example, the legislation in the law, the different categories of people; and the spiritual significance is expounded throughout the prophets.

This information has huge ramifications. The same could be said for the location of wells, and altars, and many other places which are alluded to later in the Bible. As with many of the lectures in this course, we must consider a vast time period in the material that is before us, where we're trying to consider everything from Abraham to Joseph. So, there are many important details that we must pass over, limiting ourselves to a few

main points. But remember that the purpose of this course is to provide you with some basic tools and training to equip you for your ongoing study of the Scriptures.

We especially find in Isaac the redemptive theme of submission, submission of a son to a father, and of Isaac, ultimately, to the Lord. You know that he willingly carried the wood to Mount Moriah. He willingly laid down his life on the altar. Remember that at this point, Abraham is elderly, and Isaac could have resisted him, but he didn't. At age 40, he submitted to his father in receiving the bride that his father had chosen. Now, all of this points us, of course, finally to the ultimate Son of Promise, to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who willingly and voluntarily shoulders the cross, and Who freely gives Himself and lays down His life on behalf of His people. His life was never taken from Him. It wasn't taken from Him by the Jews or Pilot or the soldiers or anyone else. And then in John 17, Christ speaks again of receiving His bride, the Church, as those whom the Father had given Him. All of this is illustrated in the life of Isaac, who demonstrates this theological theme of submission.

Thirdly, we need to consider Jacob. From Isaac, Jacob was chosen. Now, when you turn to Genesis 28 verses 13 to 15, we see a description of the Promised Land that God gives to Jacob, and it's interesting because it's really the same promise that God gave to Abraham in chapter 17, to Isaac in chapter 26, and now to Jacob in chapter 28. In verse 20, Jacob responds to this, and the word "if" can also be translated "when." In other words, we have to be clear in our minds that Jacob's response to God's promises and to the confirmation of His covenant is really a response of faith. He receives the promise with faith and responds with obedience to God. In the next two chapters, in chapters 29 and 30, God goes on to bless Jacob again.

All along, God is controlling the unfolding of His sovereign plan. In Jacob, the doctrine of election is especially highlighted. And we know this from the New Testament because when we turn to Romans chapter 9:10-13, we read about it. It says, "When Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (for the children being not yet born neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, 'The elder shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated.'" Paul writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to the church of Rome is going back to the same account of Jacob and Esau in the book of Genesis. And he's saying, 'We find here the doctrine of election.' The doctrine of election teaches, as we saw in an earlier lecture, that God is the One Who is sovereign and that He chooses, out of His own good pleasure, a people that He will save for Himself. And He chooses, correspondingly, those who will be left under the condemnation of His wrath in hell. Jacob and Esau, as Romans 9 tells us, had not done anything, there was nothing in them, that determined God's choice. The choice fell within the counsel of God Himself.

The prophets proclaim the same message. Isaiah refers repeatedly to God's people as 'Jacob my servant' and 'Israel my elect.' Interestingly, the same language is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, in Isaiah 42, in the opening of that chapter (verse 1) we read, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth," referring to the Lord Jesus. Now, Esau is an example of a covenant breaker. He had received the sign of the promise; he was circumcised. He had all of the benefits that had come to him as a result of being in the covenant, but we're told that he despised his birthright and God's blessing. And so, he traded it for a single meal. His earthly appetite was far greater than his appetite for spiritual things, for heavenly things. In the book of Hebrews 12:15-17, the author of Hebrews reaches back again into this story with regard to Esau and uses it as a warning to those within the New Testament church. That passage says, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

You'll remember that in this Covenant of Grace, there are both blessings and curses, and it corresponds to covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking. Esau is subjected to the curse that comes to those who forsake and despise God's covenant blessings. Esau goes on, of course, and disobeys his father and marries Ishmael's daughter, violating God's requirement of separation and His prohibition of intermarrying with those from outside His people among the seed of the serpent.

On the other hand, we have Jacob. Jacob received from Isaac the covenant blessings that came from God through Abraham. As we saw in Genesis 28, God confirms this Himself. And we see it especially in a dream, and

the dream, perhaps, is well known to you. God confirms this Himself in a dream regarding a ladder that reached from Earth to Heaven with angels ascending and descending on it, and as Jacob looks, Jehovah manifests Himself above, at the top of the ladder. And it is the God of Jacob's fathers that is manifest. And He repeats Abraham's promise to him of a land and of a seed and of blessing, which we saw in the previous lecture. Jacob calls the place Bethel, which means 'the House of God', 'the Gate of Heaven'. And, he was, of course, pointing beyond that little place; he was pointing beyond the land, ultimately, to what the land represents in the promise, ultimately the inheritance of God's people in heaven. Well, this dream would become a reality in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, in His incarnation. The Lord Jesus is the true house of God. He is Emmanuel, God with us.

And you'll notice how this comes out in the gospel of John chapter 1:51. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." And so, the Lord Jesus Christ is demonstrating the connection between what we see in Genesis 28 and Himself. In Genesis 32, the Angel of the Lord, whom we'll learn more about in the next lecture, appears to Jacob and wrestles with him. And within the context of that grappling match, Jacob says, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me" (verse 26). What's happening? He is still clinging to the promises of God in Christ, and he receives the blessing. And he calls the name of that place Peniel, which means 'the face of God' because he had come, as it were, face to face with the Lord. And, it is at that place that Jacob receives his new name, which was 'Israel.' Israel means 'one who prevails with the power of a prince,' one who prevails with God. And, as you should know, his new name, Israel, ends up becoming the name of the whole nation, all of his seed, which will grow into a great body that is greater in number than all the stars in the heavens. That brings us, fourthly, to Jacob's twelve sons, those who become the heads of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel.

To Jacob is born these twelve sons. It's interesting that when you move ahead into the New Testament, almost to the end of the Bible, the second to last chapter, in Revelation 21, we have this description of the people of God in heaven. And, it describes the new Jerusalem, and it descends from heaven, and it is a Bride adorned for her Husband and so on. And the Lord reveals some things to us about the nature of this new Jerusalem. And, He tells us in chapter 21 of Revelation, that it has 12 gates with the names of the 12 tribes written upon [them]. Once again, we're seeing the people of God in the Old Testament and New Testament joining together. Well, of these twelve sons, one son, Judah, has twins through Tamar. Tamar, at the time, was pretending to be a harlot. And, one of those twins is called Pharez, which means, 'a breach,' [which is] interesting again because when you come to the prophets, the Lord Jesus is described as the 'Repairer of the Breach.' But, this is the direct lineage to David. Ten generations later, David appears in this line, and then, of course, through him to the Lord Jesus Christ. And all of this is actually spelled out for us in the first chapter of the New Testament, in Matthew chapter 1. In Genesis 49:10, God makes clear that the line leading to the Mediator, the Messiah, the Christ, will come through Judah. It says, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." This is a reference pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who again is described in Revelation 5:5 as the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David. He is also described as the Lamb Who was slain, a suffering Servant.

At the end of Genesis, we have a whole section devoted to the remarkable story of Jacob's eleventh son, Joseph. He was the firstborn by his favorite wife Rachel. God's promise to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob is worked out in and through the life of Joseph. The story of Joseph is also full of beautiful portrayals of Christ and of His redemption. Joseph serves as a picture of the Mediator, a type of Christ, if you will. It's through Joseph that His people are kept alive. And you'll know, of course, if you've read the story of Joseph, there are many ups and downs in that story, many twists and turns, many dark providences. It doesn't look, at several points in that account, as if all is going to turn out well, but when he gets to the end in Genesis 50, Joseph tells his brothers that what they meant for evil in selling him into slavery, God intended for good. Indeed, He did. All of the difficulties and all of the trials that had accompanied his life were the very means that God used to ultimately bring about the salvation of the seed of the woman and the salvation of the whole family, and ultimately, preserve the twelve tribes of Israel in the centuries that would follow.

But the book of Genesis closes with Jacob and his sons outside the Promised Land. They've gone from Goshen and sought refuge within Egypt. Now, we know that God's word to Abraham all the way back in Genesis 15:13 was to be fulfilled. God said, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall

serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.” What does that mean? Well, it means that the end of the book of Genesis, the twelve sons of Jacob are staring into the face of 400 years of bondage in Egypt. Well, that’s a pretty bleak picture.

But I want you to notice the second to last verse in the book of Genesis. That’s chapter 50 and verse 25. Because even in those circumstances that we’ve just described, Joseph proclaimed that God would yet visit His people. And he commanded his sons and those that would come after him that they must carry up his bones from Egypt and take them back to be buried in the promised land of Goshen. Do you see what’s happening here? Even against the black backdrop, if you will, Joseph is still clinging by faith to the unfolding of God’s promise, and God says so in Hebrews 11:22, “By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.” The Lord is putting, once again, significance into this little detail that is so easy for us to pass over. Now, if you read ahead and go from Genesis to Joshua 24, you’ll find in verse 32 that the nation of Israel did exactly what Joseph asked. When they fled during the time of the Exodus, they took Joseph’s bones with them. And when they eventually, well over four hundred years later, found themselves in the Promised Land, they buried him in Shechem.

Now, that’s significant. Why is that significant? Why does the Lord highlight these sorts of details (most of which we’re not able to consider in this lecture)? Well, it comes back again to the promise. Right? We have a promise of seed. We have a promise of land. We have a promise of blessing that God has given to Abraham and his posterity. That land, as Hebrews 11 makes clear, served as a vivid picture, and the patriarchs knew it. It’s not just that we read this back into the Old Testament. Hebrews 11 makes clear [that] they saw this. That land was not just a piece of geography, or a piece of real estate, if you will. Rather, it was a tangible picture of what they knew was the ultimate fulfillment of promise in the inheritance God would give them in a heavenly country, in something far better. We’re actually going to look at this in detail when we come to the lecture entitled, “Inheritance,” but we see it already here. We see Joseph recognizes he needs to be planted, he needs to be buried, in the land of Promise because of all the significance that that has attached to it.

Well, in summary, we go back to Hebrews 11 and the end of that chapter and the beginning of chapter 12, which I mentioned in the opening segment of this lecture. Because the end of Hebrews, Hebrews 11, gives us this great catalogue of the patriarchs and others that followed them. But, it ties all of that to us. It says, “And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” Do you see that? The account given to us of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve sons of Jacob, Joseph and the others—they are all relevant to us, right now as they have ever been.

But, we do not first and foremost preach Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. But rather, we preach the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. We show how God uses, and God blesses and prospers His people in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and the covenant that He has established with His people. Having considered some of the highlights in the unfolding of God’s promise, we will look in the next lecture at three other figures that are found during patriarchs that will have relevance for the remainder of our studies in the Old Testament.

Lecture 7

PATRIARCHS II

Lecture Theme:

God provides revelations of his glory in Christ in unexpected places—outside the lineage of Abraham.

Text:

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 7

When you're reading a story in school, you will often discern the main plot lines and the development of the narrative, which will normally involve the main characters. But, you also find in many stories a supporting cast of other characters, interspersed throughout, who play an equally important role in the author's mind. This is also true in God's true and inspired account of the history of redemption in the Bible. Thus far, we have focused on the main themes and individuals in the line leading to the Messiah. But, God has also included other figures, whom He chose to use to reveal Himself and His salvation.

So, who is Melchizedek, for example? And why does he seem to appear and then disappear so quickly in Genesis? What relevance does he have to God's grand purpose and redemption? What about the several appearances of the angel of the Lord? Who exactly is this, and why is the answer important for our theological understanding of the Bible? And lastly, why does God include the book of Job, comprised of 42 chapters, and what role does Job play in the theology of the Bible? Thus far, we have focused on the main line from Shem to Abraham to the 12 sons of Jacob; but in this lecture, we will now turn to consider three important figures who fall outside the direct lineage of Abraham, all found during the same period of the Patriarchs. All three proved to be important for our understanding of the theology of the Bible, and they assist us in tracing the development of themes within the Bible as a whole.

So first of all, Melchizedek. Now you may be wondering to yourself, why should we consider Melchizedek important enough to include in this brief survey of the period of the Patriarchs, especially when he is only mentioned briefly in three verses in Genesis 14? Well, there are at least two reasons. First of all, Melchizedek is referred to in Psalm 110, and you need to know this. Psalm 110 is the Old Testament chapter that is most frequently quoted in the New Testament, quoted by Christ in the Gospels, the book of Acts, and throughout the

epistles. So, it's important for that reason. Secondly, God chose to use Melchizedek to reveal important things to us about the Lord Jesus Christ. As we see, for example in the book of Hebrews, Melchizedek shows us the glory of the Savior and helps us to understand how the Bible as a whole is tied together, both of which are important for this course.

Melchizedek was a real historical figure about which we know only a little. Some godly men believe that he was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ, but the words "after the order of Melchizedek" in Psalm 110, and the words "made like unto the Son of God," in Hebrews 7:3, over against, for example, language like "the Son of God is Melchizedek," these things persuade me that he was not Christ Himself, among other reasons. Melchizedek means literally, "King of righteousness," and Salem means "peace." The name Salem is part of the word Jerusalem, and though we cannot say for certain, it is possible that he was king of Jerusalem at the time, but there is more. We are told he is a priest, a priest of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. We're told that Abraham was blessed by him, and that Abraham paid tithes to him.

Now, it should not surprise us that this soon after the Tower of Babel there would still be others who are following the true God, even though they're surrounded by many unbelieving idolaters. David, writing in Psalm 110, speaks of the Lord, God the Father, saying to His Lord, Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, "Sit thou at my right hand" (verse 1). Now, the New Testament uses this phrase countless times in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Psalm confirms that Messiah will be both a king and a priest, unlike for example, the sons of Levi, who were only priests, or the sons of David, who were only kings. He will be a priest and a king, a priest after the superior order of Melchizedek, a better High Priest than Aaron and his descendants.

So, Melchizedek is a figure greater than Abraham, greater than Aaron, and greater than David, pointing forward to the superiority of Christ's kingship and priesthood. The book of Hebrews picks up this theme and expounds it at length, demonstrating the superior glory of Jesus as the Mediator, God's ultimate Priest-King. You should read carefully Hebrews chapter seven, because God says that Melchizedek, this vague figure, points forward to what would be fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. It notes that there is no mention of the genealogy of Melchizedek in Genesis, and it draws a comparison saying that "Christ is the eternal priest who lives forever." His ultimate ancestry derives from the God of eternity.

We will learn much more about Christ's Kingship and Priesthood later in our studies of the Old Testament. But we already see in Genesis 14 early on, and David saw in Psalm 110, that the One we are looking for and waiting for is not only a kingly ruler, but also a priest. We have a Savior Who is the promised King, Who subdues us to Himself and conquers His and all our enemies, but He is also a promised Priest. He will be the Supreme High Priest, Who offers up Himself as the supreme Sacrifice to save His people. Both of these, King and Priest, are joined in one Person. Those three obscure verses in Genesis 14 must be tied to the whole of Scripture. Melchizedek shows us that all that we need for our salvation is supplied in Jesus only.

Secondly, we need to consider the angel of the Lord. This is the second figure that is important for us in our study of the Patriarchs under this lecture. But in considering the angel of the Lord, we must first understand the broader concept of theophanies, which I will explain to you. During the period of the Patriarchs, we find an important way in which God reveals Himself, one we need to discuss in order to understand the theology of the Old Testament. Hebrews 1:1 says that, "God who at sundry times and diverse manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets," and then it goes on to speak about the Lord Jesus Christ. But it [refers] to these diverse manners, that God revealed Himself in during the days of the fathers. One of those diverse ways was through what we call Old Testament theophanies.

Now, the word theophany just means "an appearance of God"; theophanies refer to "appearances of God in visible form." A related word and concept is the word "Christophany," which refers to the appearance of God the Son, or Christ, in visible form. And I believe that we should view these two things, theophanies and Christophanies, as basically two words pointing to the same thing. I think that largely because it is the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, Who is the eternal Word that reveals God. Remember John 1 verse 18, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him." And remember that the Bible describes Christ as the One Who is the image of the invisible God in Colossians 1:15, and elsewhere, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," in Hebrews 1:3.

So, our knowledge of God is tied to His revelation of Himself, in the person and work of Christ. This is the position taken by most reformed theologians like Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards, and Bavinck and others. So, these revelations of God that we call theophanies are any temporary physical manifestations of God to men. For example, when God uses a human body or a human voice, and other forms, these would be theophanies. Now, they should not be confused with things like dreams and visions, which are impressed on the mind, but not to the eye. Also, and this is important, you should not confuse theophanies with the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament, which is a true and permanent union, in which the Son of God assumes to Himself a human nature. There are several examples of the Lord appearing with human form and behavior, but to better understand the role of theophanies, let's consider the most important Old Testament theophany: the angel of the Lord.

Understanding the broader concept of theophanies helps us, when turning to this specific example of a theophany in the angel of the Lord. Now we read about the appearance of the angel of the Lord in several places, and I'll mention a few. For example, he appeared to Hagar in Genesis 16. The angel of the Lord appeared to Abraham in Genesis 22 and Jacob in Genesis 32. He appears to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:2 and, later on, to men like Gideon in Judges chapter six. The word "angel" means "messenger," and so "angel of the Lord" could also be translated "messenger of the Lord." In other words, the angel of the Lord is not to be confused with the created angels that fill the heavens. Elsewhere, at the end of the Old Testament in Malachi 3:1, the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as the Messenger Angel of the Covenant.

So, the Angel of the Lord is the uncreated God Himself appearing in visible form. We know this for several reasons. First of all, He has the names of God. In Genesis sixteen, Jehovah is said to have spoken to Hagar, and she addressed him as God. Again, in Exodus 3 at the burning bush, the Angel of the Lord appeared and spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, calling Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and giving His name, "I Am That I Am." And so, we know that the angel of the Lord is God, appearing in visible form, first of all because He has the names of God. Secondly, He has the attributes of God. So, you think of the account of Hagar. There we see that the Angel of the Lord is Omniscient; He is all knowing, and we could multiply other examples. Thirdly, He receives the worship of God. The Angel of the Lord Receives Divine worship. This is seen in Exodus three.

But notice especially Joshua 5:14, and then notice the reaction in Judges 6 at the time of Gideon. The angel of the Lord is given divine worship, unlike the angels. You'll remember in Revelation chapters 18 and 19 when John attempts to give worship to the angels, they forbid him. And the angels say that they are like him, servants of the Most High. But that's not the case with the Angel of the Lord; He gladly receives this worship. So, the question is, what are the purposes of theophanies, and what is the purpose therefore, of the Angel of the Lord? This is helping us in our theological understanding of the theology of the Bible. Let me give you five very brief purposes of theophanies, like the Angel of the Lord.

The first one should be obvious. The first purpose is revelation. So, it was a mode of special revelation in the Old Testament. God was showing His people things about Himself. He wanted to disclose some aspect of God's character and will. Secondly, another purpose has to do with salvation. It was part of God's communication, these theophanies. The Angel of the Lord was part of God's communication of the good news of salvation to sinners through the Lord Jesus Christ. Each appearance has its own function within this grand scheme. Well, this already connects the importance of the Angel of the Lord to our whole series of lectures. It's about revelation, showing us who God is and what His will is, and it's about redemption or salvation, the story of God's plan of Gospel grace to His people. A third purpose is confirmation. Theophanies were usually personal appearances to key individuals in the unfolding of God's covenant of salvation, in order to confirm His Word to them.

A fourth purpose is consolation. It was through the Angel of the Lord that God granted comfort, along with this confirmation to His people. But then fifthly, "Angel of the Lord" and other theophanies have the purpose of building anticipation. The main purpose was anticipation of the Son of God coming in the flesh. In other words, it prepared the Church of the Old Testament for Christ's coming, Who would be Emmanuel, God with us. And so, we see that the Angel of the Lord is also important for us in our understanding of the theology of the Bible. Lastly, we need to consider Job. He is the last figure who we'll discuss in this lecture. And to be honest, he is one of my personal favorites from the period of the Patriarchs. The last figure we'll consider is Job, whom we read about in the book that bears his name.

The New Testament [refers] to him. For example, in James chapter 5:11, “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.” This inspired story provides us with another window into the revelation of God during the period of the Patriarchs. Now, some are tempted to pass over the book of Job or to treat it very briefly under the consideration of the Old Testament poetic books. But it’s a large book, it consists of 42 chapters. We cannot, I believe, overestimate its significance. Well, why? Because as we shall see, it clearly shows us the corresponding relationship between what transpires on earth, and simultaneously the events that are unfolding in the heavens. Earth is the stage, if you will, on which heavenly transactions are carried out, displaying God’s glory and His cosmic purposes through His people, and through His church.

Seeing this helps us understand many other different passages. In the New Testament, for example, we’re told that the angels rejoice over the repentance of a single sinner. Think about that for a moment. What’s happening on earth is corresponding to what’s happening in heaven. God in Heaven is choosing, and then He is coming to regenerate and to give faith to individual sinners on the earth. And it could be that there’s a very small obscure village in a very remote place, and just a small band of believers. There the congregation is listening to the preaching of God’s Word and the Gospel. And God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, on that occasion, saves a sinner in that small congregation in a very remote place.

The Bible says that at that moment, there are thunderous shouts of joy that fill the heavens from these powerful angelic beings, angels, who are rejoicing over the repentance of a single sinner. So, understanding this theological point in the book of Job helps us with other portions of Scripture. We’re told that Job, in Job chapter 1:1, was like this: “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” He was also wealthy. We’re told, “This man was the greatest of all the men of the east” (verse 3). I want to highlight three theological themes that are important for us in our study of Job. First of all, God’s providence in this world. Providence is God’s work of preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions.

God controls every detail of the universe, every molecule. John Calvin, the great reformer, writes, “If you pay attention, you will easily perceive that ignorance of providence is the ultimate of all miseries. The highest blessedness lies in the knowledge of it.” God provides an inspired commentary within the book of Job. In other words, He tells us not only what’s happening, but why it’s happening. He tells us at the beginning that Job was a God-fearing, upright man, and then God defends that view again at the end of the book. Contrary to the statements of Job’s three friends, not all suffering is God’s chastisement for personal sin. We learned that Job suffered because he was godly and because God chose to display His own glory through Job. And you’ll note that Job has this God-centered perspective. He doesn’t focus on the calamities, and they were huge calamities, that were immediately before his eyes. He looked past them, and he traced them to the ultimate hand of God.

We read in chapter one, the end of verse 20 and following, Job “fell down and worshiped and said, ‘Naked came out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.’ In all of this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” Augustine, the early church theologian, notes, “Job does not say the Lord gave and the devil took away, but the Lord hath taken away.” Now, think of how this helps us when we fast forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrows. He was not merely subjected to the hands of Judas, and the high priests, and Pilot, and Herod and the soldiers, or to the devil himself. God was orchestrating all the events in Christ’s suffering to secure the salvation of His people.

The apostles talk about this in Acts four, verses 27 and 28. “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” The second theological point is this: the believer’s life and story fits within God’s broader and bigger story. This is perhaps the most profound theological point of the book of Job. What is going on in this account? We discover that the big story is not found in this world at all. The book pulls back the curtain, and tells us of the transactions that are happening in the heavens. In order to make sense of these events on earth, you must find the answer before the presence of God. In chapter 1:8, God takes the initiative and boasts to Satan of Job as His trophy of grace.

God is setting Job on display before the unseen angels. Well, Satan objects to this, and he tells God that Job only loves the gifts that God gives, but doesn’t love the Giver, God Himself. But God triumphs over Satan’s

accusations, by bringing glory to His name, through demonstrating that Job esteems God above all else. His suffering shows that God is paramount to His people. You notice how in the early chapters, the events unfold, and the tension is building until we reach a crisis point in chapter two verse nine. Where we read “Then said his wife,” Job’s wife, “unto him, ‘Dost thou still retain thine integrity, curse God and die.’” No doubt Satan smiled at this point, and you can only imagine all of the eyes of myriads of angels glued on Job, holding their breath. What would happen?

Well then comes the answer in the very next words, in verse 10. Job says, “‘What? shall we not receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?’ In all of this, did not Job sin with his lips.” Well, I can imagine hundreds of thousands of angels cracking open the heavens with shouts, “Worthy the is the Lord of Hosts, worthy is God Almighty.” We’re told that Satan flees from God’s presence, defeated. Satan aims to demolish the believer’s love and delight in God. Our chief end is not our own comfort or prosperity. It is to glorify Him, and we do that even in suffering. We see the big picture in Job, but Job did not see what we do. He couldn’t see the things that are described for us in the heavens, in Job one and two. Remember, the world does not revolve around us. History is not all about us, but it is all about the Lord Jesus Christ, the unfolding of the display of His glory.

The last theological theme that we see in Job is Christ-centeredness, and we notice this in a few ways. Job sought fellowship with Christ. He says that he esteemed God’s Word more than his necessary food. Even when the Lord seemed far away to him, he affirmed in chapter 23, “But He,” that is God, “knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” We also see that he looked by faith, beyond this life, to Christ in glory. In Chapter nineteen, in verses 25 to 27, Job says, “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

We also find themes unique to Job, and we don’t have time to cover them here, but they’re traced out throughout the Bible. Let me provide you one brief example. We first find the language, “Darkness and the shadow of death,” in the book of Job. Indeed, it’s found 10 times in that book. This language is carried into the Psalms. You see it, for example, in Psalm 23:4, Psalm 44, Psalm 107 and so on. And you see the language carried throughout the prophets, in Isaiah, and in Jeremiah and in Amos. But it resurfaces again in the New Testament in beautiful ways, after the coming of Christ. In Matthew 4:16, we read, “The people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” Or at the end of Luke chapter one, “The dayspring visited us,” and then it goes on, “to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.”

Well, to understand this New Testament language, you must know the origin of that language in the Old Testament, just as the early Jewish Christians would have surely recognized. We need to know the Bible, and the details of the Bible, in order to put the pieces together. Job teaches us that the life of the individual believer in all ages must be connected to God’s grand plan to display His glory through His people before the whole of the heavens and the earth. This culminates on the last day, when God will reveal the masterpiece of His redeemed and perfected people.

Well, we have considered three important figures outside the lineage of Abraham, whom God chose to use for the revelation of Himself. In the next lecture, we will return to the line of Abraham, and specifically to the era of Moses, beginning with one of the greatest events in the Old Testament: the Exodus from Egypt.

Lecture 8

EXODUS

Lecture Theme:

God reveals his plan of redemption by delivering his people from bondage and displaying his glory to them—and through them.

Text:

“When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son” (Matthew 2:14–15).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 8

If you asked an Israelite en route to Canaan, who they were, they might say, “Well, I was in bondage in a foreign land, but I took shelter under the blood of the Lamb. Our Mediator led us out and delivered us. Now we are on our way to the promised land, but we are not there yet. But God is with us. We live by His grace, and He will not leave us until we reach our final destination.”

Does that sound familiar to you? That is exactly what the contemporary Christian says, but that is the message of the Exodus. We noted at the beginning of this course, that one way God reveals Himself is through His works, His acts, or what He does, all of which is tied to His Word. God reveals Himself by His deeds and through His Word about those deeds. We saw this in the great events of Creation and the Flood, for example. Well, this does not surprise us; God sovereignly governs all the details of history, unfolding His plan as He provides His inspired Word to record this revelation for us.

The historical event of the Exodus supplies another important disclosure of God’s glory in salvation. The rest of the Old Testament constantly points back to this event, and the New Testament traces out its implications for our understanding of the gospel, so we must be clear in our understanding of the theology of the Exodus because the Exodus is central to the Bible and to the gospel.

What is the purpose of the Exodus within the grand story of the history of redemption? How does God use the deliverance from Egypt to show Himself to His people and to the world? Why did God permit His people to be placed in bondage? How is the gospel theme of redemption rooted in this Old Testament account? What relationship does Moses have to Christ in this exodus story? Well, in this lecture, we will consider the theological themes surrounding the event of the Exodus. And first of all, we’ll begin by saying that God reveals Himself. Egypt was foretold to Abraham, this whole episode that provides the backdrop. Remember the words

in Genesis 15:13? “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.”

Well, it’s important for us, I think, necessary for us to see the connection of Genesis and Exodus. Because when God speaks to Moses, He repeatedly reveals Himself as “the God of the fathers” or “the God of your father,” “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” You also see reference to the seed drawing from Genesis and Exodus 1:7, “And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.”

The promise concerning Abraham’s seed was being fulfilled while they were in Egypt. They went from being a small band of 70 to filling the whole land of Egypt. Well, feeling threatened, Pharaoh enslaved them with bitter and hard bondage. This set the scene for redemption and deliverance. Pharaoh’s attempt to kill the baby males demonstrated the ongoing war between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. And remember, if you think forward to the parallel at the birth of Christ, when Herod seeks to kill the male children again, and Joseph, Mary’s husband, takes Jesus into Egypt, and then back out again. We don’t have time to consider all of the implications of that. Notice again the connection between word and deed.

In Exodus chapter one all the way through chapter 18, God speaks then acts. His Word, in other words, precedes the event. Both word and deed call for expectation, faith, and obedience. But under this first point, we especially need to highlight what we learn about the knowledge of God, what God is revealing to us about Himself, because the Exodus is not merely about deliverance. In fact, that is subordinate to the primary purpose of the revelation of the knowledge of God. He liberates Israel in a way that will show His glory. This is clear at the burning bush and what’s said there in Exodus three. It’s clear in Pharaoh’s own words. In Exodus 5:2, he says, “Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.”

God reveals Himself through the plagues, as the Sovereign over nature and His supremacy over the gods of Egypt. The deliverance would lead to a knowledge of God for Israel but also for Egypt. We’re told, “And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt” (Exodus 7:5).

This knowledge of God will not be limited just to Israel, nor just to Egypt, but it will spread to the world. In fact, later on in the book of Joshua, we hear about a harlot in a faraway place in the city of Jerusalem. And she says in Joshua 2 verses 9 and 10, “I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the waters of the Red Sea for you, when you came out of Egypt.”

Do you see the point? The Exodus is about theology, about the revelation of the knowledge of God. Let me give you a brief summary of some of what is revealed of God. We see things revealed to God’s own people. One of the beautiful examples of this is His name, the name of God that is proclaimed to His people. Now, God’s name is a very important theological concept because His name refers to the revelation of Who He is. In fact, it refers to all of the ways in which He reveals Himself in His attributes and in His Word and worship, in His works, as well as His titles and names. That’s why in the third commandment, it says, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” That’s why in the first petition of the Lord’s Prayer, we pray, “Hallowed be thy name.” You can see how important this is for our understanding of the Bible.

Well, in Exodus 3:14, God proclaims, “I AM THAT I AM... I AM sent me unto you.” This is the name Jehovah, the name for the covenant-keeping God. He is sovereign, and He keeps the promises of His covenant. All of that is encapsulated in this name. In fact, if you look more broadly at Exodus 3:1–22, you see the Lord telling us all sorts of things. He tells us about His presence in verses 1–4, His covenant in verses 5 and 6, His compassion in verses 7 and 9, His commission in verses 10–12, His faithfulness in verses 13–15, and His purposes in verses 16–22. But the revelation of this name, the name Jehovah, marks a change; and we should note that.

In Exodus chapter six verses two and three, it says, “And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, “I am the LORD,” I am Jehovah, “and I appeared unto Abraham and to Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.” You see during the Exodus, God is revealing more to us than we have seen previously. He also reveals things to His enemies. We’ve noted this already, but look as well at Exodus 4:5: “That they may believe that the LORD,” Jehovah, “God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.”

We see Him revealing Himself in His name. We saw earlier in the last lecture, He reveals Himself as the Angel of the Lord in several chapters in Exodus. We see references to His face and presence, and to the glory of the Lord. But, the last category in which the Lord reveals Himself is through His deeds, through signs and wonders that He attached to this act of redemption in the Exodus. Now, this is not something that is normative. I mean, some people have the concept that miracles happened all the time throughout the Bible, and they draw the wrong conclusion that these spectacular signs and wonders continue in the present era. But that's not the case. What happens is, during particular epochs, particular acts where God is accomplishing some important point of redemption, it is accompanied on those occasions by His signs and wonders. So, accompanying His saving acts. You see this in the gospels with the coming of Christ, the incarnation of Christ and all of His glorious work. It's accompanied by these signs and wonders.

The plagues, you should note, bring salvation through judgment. This is the theme we've touched on previously. They simultaneously bring judgment on Egypt, showing that Egypt is powerless as well as showing deliverance to Israel. And if you look at the plagues that are given to us, or the Passover, the Red Sea, the pillar of fire and cloud, the proclamation of the law, the provisions in the wilderness, even their arrival at the land, all of this is set on display. But now we need to turn to the redemption that reveals God's glory. That brings us secondly, to this theme of bondage.

The period of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob appeared glorious in many ways, but it concluded miserably in the bondage of Egypt. And everything seemed to contradict the plan and promises of God. Once again, the promises seem beyond their reach. Notice, think back to the promises that God gave to Abraham. Instead of the land, they're in Egypt. Secondly, instead of blessing, they're in slavery. And thirdly, instead of a seed, they're seeing Pharaoh's attempt to murder their male children.

Captivity in the foreign land of Egypt appears to present a challenge to God's covenant promises. But the experience of slavery became the context for a glorious revelation of God and of His salvation. We must after all, be redeemed from bondage and death, and brought to life in the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, in their affliction, they cried out in faith to God, Exodus two verse, the end of verse 23: "and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage." God's promise provided hope. And you see in the next verse these words, "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." Notice what we learn of God in these and the surrounding verses. God heard, God remembered, God looked, and God had respect unto them.

This is an important point in terms of the over-arching theme of redemption because what the Lord's people needed then and now is deliverance from sin. They needed deliverance from oppression and anguish. They also needed deliverance from idolatry. That's not mentioned until later in Joshua 24 and Ezekiel 23. But the captivity of Egypt and the Exodus out of Egypt demonstrate the captivity of the human race to the powers of evil and the absolute necessity of God's powerful work to redeem His people from slavery to sin. Salvation is about deliverance from bondage. The Israelites were slaves, and this reflected their spiritual condition and ours. Before coming to Christ, we are slaves to sin. Men serve sin. They're dominated and controlled by sin. They cannot get free from it or resist it.

Men are also enslaved to idols. Remember, an idol is anything that you love more than God. Well, this bondage provided the context for turning from unbelief with renewed faith in the promises of God. That brings us thirdly, to the theme of redemption.

Redemption means deliverance from bondage. The Greek words mean "to loose" or "to be released from bondage." It's the idea of being bought back out of slavery. In Exodus 14, verses 13 and 14, we read, "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you today: for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

And what do we find? Well, we discover that they are redeemed by blood, and this whole concept being redeemed by blood is the heart of the Exodus account. It deals with the material that covers the Passover. Now, we're going to consider the Passover under the lecture on sacrifices in detail and show how that was related to the Lord Jesus Christ. But note here that escape from judgment came through the shedding of blood. The previous

plagues made a distinction between Israel in the land of Goshen and Egypt. But the 10th plague, the final one, coincides with deliverance from Egypt. Israel itself had to be redeemed in this final sign.

The redemption of Israel's firstborn sons from death represents the redemption of the nation of Israel from Egypt. The Passover lamb represented a substitute, a substitutionary atonement: the lamb in the place of the Israelite's son. Well, it's obvious to see how this was teaching us about the provision of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lamb of God taketh away the sins of the world (John 1:29), the Lamb who was slain in the place of His own people, in order to redeem them, in order to deliver them out of the bondage of sin. In Isaiah 43:1 & 3 we read, "O Jacob." It goes on: "O Israel." It goes on again: "I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine... For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior: I gave Egypt for thy ransom."

You see the concept of ransom within the overarching view of redemption and salvation from bondage. Well, this reflects the spiritual condition of souls. The Lord's people once redeemed are told in Romans 6:14, "For sin shall not have dominion over you;" it shall not dominate or enslave you as a master. Hebrews 11:29 shows that the crossing of the Red Sea is a paradigm for Christian faith. Just as in Noah's day, He brought salvation through judgment. And again, it is with water. Israel passed over the Red Sea safely on dry ground. The Egyptians followed them, and the waters came crashing down, and they were drowned. Immersion was again a sign of God's judgment.

All of this sets forth the theme of the freedom that the Lord's people have in the Lord Jesus Christ: no longer slaves and in bondage, but now free to live in the grace of God unto the glory of God. God's people are taken from the kingdom of Satan and darkness and brought into the kingdom of Christ and of His light in the promised land, as it were. They are taken from the family of the devil as their master, to the family of God Himself.

But at this point, we have to note what I think is one of the most significant points in the story of the Exodus because it's one of the most significant points within God's grand story as a whole. And that is this: the goal of redemption is worship.

Now, we saw this in the early chapters of Genesis, and we've [referred] to it subsequently. But God's end is to bring a people to Himself that would be made in His likeness, that would serve Him in worship. Redemption is the means to that end. And you see this in the Exodus account. God will deliver them in order that they might worship Him, and that they might dwell with Him. Moses tells Pharaoh this in Exodus 4:23, "Let my son go, that he may serve" (could be translated, "worship") "me." This culminates on the other side of the Red Sea. And what is the result? Israel worships and celebrates God's deliverance with joy and gratitude. This is recorded for us in the inspired song of Moses in Exodus 15, which extols God's covenant faithfulness. This song is not only at the center of the Book of Exodus, [but] I think it's in many ways at the center of this whole story.

We read in that song in chapter 15:13 "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." The word "mercy" there is the Hebrew word, "Chesed." And it's an important Old Testament word for you to know. It refers to God's steadfast, unfailing covenant love for His people. It pops up elsewhere in the Old Testament in very important places with very important theological implications, but you'll see it as well in places like the Psalms. You'll find it repeated over, and over, and over in every verse of Psalm 136.

In John 5:24, we read, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." See the picture there to the Exodus? In Isaiah 51, verses 10 and 11, we read, "Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return and come with singing unto Zion."

Lastly, we need to consider the theological theme of mediator. Israel was redeemed from bondage through a mediator. Moses' ministry was to serve as a human instrument through which God would redeem His people. His role is to reveal and foreshadow the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see this several places in the New Testament. He is the deliverer, if you will. God's deliverer. He spent 40 years in Egypt, 40 years in the wilderness of Midian, and then 40 years in the wilderness with Israel after Sinai. And you notice the faith and obedience of Moses. In Hebrews 11, it says of Moses that he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. There's the picture of separation from the world again. Instead, he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people

of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. There's the theme of holiness, again. And, he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

There is Jesus at the very center of everything. Moses looked beyond Egypt, even beyond the afflictions that he would suffer with the Hebrews. He looked beyond everything else to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, my friend, we better do the same. In reading the account of Moses, our eyes need to be traced to the Lord Jesus Christ as well. Moses stood between God and His people. He also stood between God and the nations, really between God and the whole of creation at that point. When God had something to say, He said it through Moses. God did not speak directly to Pharaoh through a vision or something else. He sent Moses to stand before Pharaoh. Moses went before God and then came back to His people with God's Word. The miracles were also brought to pass through Moses.

There's a contrast, a connection, between Moses and Christ. Moses was a picture of the Mediator, Christ, to come. In Hebrews 3:3 it says, "For this man," Christ, "was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house." Moses pointed forward to a greater Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was fully God and fully man. Later in Exodus 32:32 we read, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." These are the words of Moses. You see the picture of a Mediator there? And yet unlike Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ had no sin. And yet what happens? He was immersed under the flood of God's wrath on behalf of His people.

The plagues of God came down upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses was not blotted out of God's Book, but Christ cried from the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The Lord Jesus Christ is the superior, the greater, the more glorious Mediator of which Moses could only point to in shadows. But we see here the theme of Mediator: God will redeem His people from bondage by the hand of His glorious Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

You notice that the Exodus was not just a physical redemption. It was a spiritual redemption. Egypt, after all, was a place of idolatry and wickedness, and Pharaoh was viewed as a god and a demonic oppressor. Israel will continue to look back to God's glorious redemption in delivering them out of Egypt. They will also experience later on a second exodus from the Babylonian captivity. But all of this points ultimately to the Lord Jesus Christ. At the beginning of the New Testament, in Matthew 2:14 we read, "When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son,'" the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then interestingly, at the Mount of Transfiguration, we read in Luke chapter nine, verse 30 and 31 these words, "And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses," note that, "... which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease..." Now, that word "decease" in the Greek is literally "Exodus": "who appeared in glory, and spake of his Exodus, which he should accomplish," that is Christ, "... at Jerusalem."

That Greek word is the word Exodus. What does that mean? Moses and Elijah were talking to Christ about His coming death, showing that what Christ would accomplish at the cross is the ultimate Exodus, the ultimate delivering of God's people out of the bondage of sin and death. We see again that this is more than an exciting story. God is revealing the person and work of Christ and the mighty salvation of His people. We must connect the Exodus, the event of the Exodus, to God's grand plan in the history of redemption.

In conclusion, the Bible describes the slavery of Egypt as a furnace of affliction—we see that language in Deuteronomy 4:20 and Isaiah 48:10, the bondage of the world from which God redeems His people and sets them ablaze with His glory.

In the next lecture, we will turn our attention to Mount Sinai and the giving of the law. God will say to them, "For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45).

Lecture 9

SINAI

Lecture Theme:

God gives his law to his chosen and redeemed people to reveal his own character, to bring them under his rule and to inform them how to live in holiness according to his will.

Text:

“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good . . . For we know that the law is spiritual . . . For I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Romans 7:12, 14, 22).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 9

When children first learn to write, they're often given a model of the shape of the letters or characters and told to trace the examples provided. In studying the model, they become more skilled in writing words themselves. This helps illustrate the topic of this lecture. Every true Christian has a keen interest in the pursuit of godliness, but what is it? Godliness means God-likeness, and God has summarized the revelation of His own character in the Moral Law summarized in the 10 Commandments. In Christ's earthly ministry, He conformed His own life to this perfect pattern, obeying completely the will of God. In the pursuit of godliness, the Holy Spirit progressively transforms the believer into the likeness of Christ. God's Moral Law, therefore, provides the pattern of God's holiness that is traced out in the gospel holiness of the believer.

We can ask ourselves some questions. What is God like? How does Who God is relate to what He requires of His creatures? Is the God of Sinai the same as the God of the New Testament? Does His moral requirement change or remain the same from the Old Testament to the New Testament? Is Sinai a detour from God's covenant with Abraham, or does it continue to build on the same promises? How do we distinguish between the different parts of the law, and how does the law relate to the contemporary Christian? Should every believer now say, “Oh, how I love thy law” (Psalm 119:97)?

The law of Moses informed Israel how their redeemed relationship with God should be molded by holiness and wisdom. God's law would also serve as a light to all the nations of the world, displaying the glory of God to all. We read in Deuteronomy 4 verses 6 and 8 these important words. “Keep therefore and do them,” referring to the law, “for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely, this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for.

What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgment so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

The law would reveal Who God is to His people, but that same law was to be set before all of the people and all of the nations of the world. Well, we need to begin in this lecture, first of all, by understanding the relationship of Sinai to Redemption and the Covenant of Grace. You may recall that while Moses was serving as a shepherd in the land of Midian, he encountered the Lord in the burning bush. This theophany occurred at Mount Horeb, which is another title for Mount Sinai, two words for the same mountain. The bush burned but was not consumed. Here, God revealed Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and informed Moses that he was God's chosen man to be sent to Pharaoh to deliver His chosen people out of Egyptian bondage and to bring them into the Promised Land. He promised Moses that He, God, would be with him.

Notice that He instructed him to bring His people, once delivered from Egypt, back to this mountain, Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai. Why? To serve or worship God upon this mountain, Exodus 3 verse 12 tells us. So, God's command to go and get His people and to bring them to worship Him at Sinai brings us to consider the significance of what transpired at this important place. It's so significant that we're actually going to consider it in this lecture and three more lectures to follow. Now, we need to be clear on some important connections because there are some Christians that have wrongly set the covenant with Abraham and the covenant with Moses in opposition to one another. They see the pattern with Abraham as gracious [but] Moses as a disruption of that pattern, forming harsh terms based on human merit. They make the same mistake in opposing Moses in the New Testament.

This is not what the Bible teaches, as I intend to prove. The continuity that we have observed so far in the unfolding of God's Covenant of Grace continues. The Mosaic Covenant being one more development in the history of revelation that connects Genesis 3:15 ultimately to the new covenant. To be clear, the Mosaic Covenant is part of the Covenant of Grace. This is important for understanding the relationship of the Old and New Testament, the Law and the Gospel, and understanding the work of Christ and the place of the law in the life of contemporary Christians.

Well, let me demonstrate to you, from the Scriptures themselves, how Sinai and the giving of the Law is set within the context of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace. We'll notice a handful of things here. First of all, God's first words at Sinai convey a message of redemption and the Covenant of Grace. In Exodus 19 verses 4 and 5, we read, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you onto myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." You see the connection of Redemption and the Covenant?

Secondly, God communicates the same emphasis of Gospel Redemption in giving the 10 Commandments. Immediately before the 10 Commandments, we read in Exodus 20 verse 2, "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." He is their God, the God Who saved and delivered them. As we saw in the lecture on Exodus, redemption from the bondage of Egypt foreshadowed the saving work of the coming Christ. Furthermore, the Law itself is also full of the message of the Gospel and Christ as Savior. As we will come to see in the next three lectures on the tabernacles, sacrifices, and the priesthood, all of these symbols convey wonderful theology about God's provision for forgiveness and reconciliation and fellowship with God. For that reason, I like to speak of the book of Leviticus as the gospel according to Leviticus.

Fourthly, we see that the law will constantly remind God's people of their inability to conform to God's standards of holiness and to love Him comprehensibly. Well, the conviction of sin is always a mercy; but notice, it is the law that also teaches them to avail themselves of the sacrifice as they repent and cast themselves on God's mercy. Next, do you remember the core of the Covenant of Grace? The words that we highlighted in previous lectures? Well, we see it repeated in the Mosaic Covenant. For example, in Leviticus 26 verse 12, "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." There it is. It's traced through the Mosaic Covenant in a few places.

In addition, in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy chapter 27 and 28, we see a greater revelation of the blessings and curses of the covenant. Covenant-breaking through unbelief and disobedience results in disqualification from the blessings and certain reaping of the curses, but even here, if Israel repents and turns back to the Lord, then they will again know the blessings of the covenant. We're told so in, for example, Leviticus 26 verses 40 to 45. Now, this is fundamental. This is essential, this whole notion of the relationship of God's people and

covenant with Him to the blessings and curses of the covenant. It's essential for understanding the later prophets. It's also important for understanding the background for the New Testament.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that this element is absent from the New Testament. Remember Ananias and Sapphira. Remember the grave warnings given in 1 Corinthians 11 about unworthy participation in the Lord's Supper, new covenant meal. Remember the language that is found in Hebrews, for example, chapter 6, 10 and 12, and remember the startling threats that Christ gave to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2 and 3. This is just to mention a few examples. Our understanding of the covenant blessings and curses provides the background for these New Testament passages. Well, there are many, many, many more connections that could be drawn to highlight the relationship of Sinai to Redemption and to the Covenant of Grace, but you'll have to pursue those in your further studies. Let me give you just one more example: Christ's words at the Institution of the Lord's Supper when He said, "For this is my blood of the New Testament," or the new covenant.

That's found in Matthew 26:28. That language is taken not from the Passover like you might have thought but rather from Mount Sinai. You see it in Exodus 24 verse 8. Well, this has interesting implications, but you'll discover many more connections in your future studies. We're only providing the basic building blocks in these lectures.

Under this first point, we see that the call to holiness and obedience comes within the context of redemption. God's covenant faithfulness to them in the Exodus is reinforced by revealing the details of God's Word that they must obey. They are still called upon to live by faith in the promises of God as they live under His rule and follow His pattern of Gospel holiness. This supplies continuity which carries over and continues into the New Testament.

Secondly, we need to consider the revelation of God Himself at Sinai. In this, we see further benefits to the development of God's revelation under Moses. We see a further revelation with regards to His name. You'll remember from the last lecture the significance of the name of God. It's a revelation of Who He is. It summarizes all the ways that God reveals Himself. We noted in the last lecture that God reveals a new name to Moses that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were unaware of. He showed Himself to be Jehovah. This is significant for the further disclosure of His glory as the God of the covenant. This name, capital L-O-R-D or Jehovah. It's printed in English Bibles with a capital L-O-R-D. This name Jehovah becomes the dominant name in the remainder of the Old Testament. Interestingly, when we come to the New Testament, Jesus will cite Old Testament passages, speaking about Jehovah, and will say that they have their fulfillment in Him, that they were in fact references to Him, leading us to the conclusion that Jesus is Jehovah. We'll develop that further when we come to the New Testament.

Unlike any other nation, God spoke to Israel directly out of fire for the first time in history. You see this in Deuteronomy 4. We also note some things about the revelation of God's character. I said at the beginning that the law reveals Who God is and what God requires. In both cases, it reveals, for example, His holiness. Remember the fire on the mount, on Mount Sinai, as well as at the bush. Moses is told, "You are on holy ground," at the bush. He tells His people at Sinai, "Do not come near or touch this mountain." The law reveals the character of God and His will for mankind. He says, "Be ye holy as I am holy." Now, this remains the standard into the New Testament as is seen in 1 Peter 1 verse 16. Peter quotes this Old Testament passage, "Be ye holy; for I am holy," and shows that it applies to the New Testament Christian.

Holiness is one of the most prominent words in the Bible to express the character of God. You think of that scene given to us in Isaiah 6:1-3 where the heavens are opened, and he sees the Lord upon His throne. What are the angels saying? They're saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty." What is holiness? Well, it consists of at least two parts. The first one is the one we often associate with holiness. That is purity. Holiness carries with it the idea of purity, of being without blemish or blame, of being sinless, but equally important is the concept of separation. Holiness is to be separate, so we will refer to the Bible as the Holy Bible. It's separate from all other books. We'll refer to the Lord's Supper as a Holy Supper, separated from all other meals, or the Sabbath as God's Holy Day. It's separated from the other six [days]. God's people even are called a holy people. They're separated from the rest of the world. So, God is separate from creation, from His people, from sin; and He is pure. God is holy. He redeemed His people to make them a holy people.

The law provides us a transcript, if you will, of God's holy character to guide the lives of His redeemed people. The laws of holiness emphasize the difference between a holy God and a sinful people. The redeemed are called to share in God's holiness by being separate and different from the rest of humanity. God alone, of course, has the

authority to define sin. When we refuse to call something sin that God calls sin, or when we call something sin that God does not call sin, we are usurping God's authority and taking it for ourselves.

Another revelation of God's character is His love. Now, this may come as a surprise to some of you, but it shouldn't. God is love, and we see His love in the law. We see His promise of love. Notice the words, "I am the Lord thy God." These words are found sprinkled throughout the 10 Commandments. Especially, you see them in the first four commandments, what we call the First Table of the Law. This is a promise of love: "I am the Lord thy God." How so? Well, what can He give more than Himself? This is an expression of love. Just as the promise is a promise of love, so His precepts are precepts of love. He says, for example, "Thou shall have no other gods before me." It's a call to have exclusive love for the Lord above and beyond all others. Rather than an antithesis between law and love, there is an inextricable connection between them. The New Testament bears this out.

In Romans 13 verse 10, we're told that "love is the fulfilling of the law." We're told that love, elsewhere, is expressed by obedience to the law. Jesus says, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). John repeats that in 1 John 5. Then, Jesus summarizes the entire law in terms of love. He says, "You want to understand all of the law and the prophets? It comes down to this. Love God. Love your neighbor" (Matthew 22:35-40): the law summarized in terms of love. This love is connected to another revelation of God's character: His jealousy. He is a jealous God. He describes Himself as the "Lord thy God." This is, as I say, repeated through the First Table of the Law. Notice in the second commandment the reference to Himself as a jealous God set within the context of making no graven images. There should be no competitors. Nothing and no one else that is to share the place that He has. We're only to worship Him as He has prescribed. God puts His name and claim on Jacob's seed: "thou art Mine."

Jealousy is the fire of love. Think of the words of the Song of Solomon in chapter 8 verses 6 and 7: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath the most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly condemned." In summary, under this point, imagine the scene, God revealing His glory. In coming to the mountain, it burned with fire, we are told. Notice the words in Deuteronomy 5 verse 24: "Behold, the LORD our God hath showed us," what? "Hath showed us His glory and His greatness." The people feared, of course. They were scared the fire would consume them.

Hebrews 12 [refers] to this. It says in verse 21 that even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake," but Hebrews 12 goes on. It says, "But ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God." Well, what does that mean? Does that lessen the fear of God that New Testament Christians are supposed to have? No. The chapter ends with verses 28 and 29 saying, "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."

In our next point, we need to consider the categories of the law. Understanding the different categories of law will help you make sense of the points of continuity and discontinuity between the Law and the New Testament. Some laws are permanent, and others are temporary at Sinai. You should realize, even the Old Testament believers understood these categories and distinctions. You'll find it in the book of Psalms where it speaks about not desiring sacrifice (Psalm 40:6; 51:16). You'll find it in historical books where obedience is more important than sacrifice, many, many places. Well, the church down through the ages has distinguished [among] three primary categories within the Law: Moral Law, Civil or Judicial Law, and Ceremonial Law. Let's consider them very briefly. First of all, we have the Moral Law. God's will is summarized in the Moral Law. The Moral Law is summarized in the 10 Commandments. Adam had the whole Moral Law when he was in the garden. Indeed, he broke it. All of those that followed him also had the Moral Law, but it is summarized and ratified, in writing, for the first time within the 10 Commandments.

This law is perpetual. It is permanent. It is the reflection of the character of God, and therefore, it cannot change. It applies to all men in all countries, in all ages. The Moral Law was reinforced and expounded in the New Testament by Christ and Paul and the other New Testament writers in many places. We'll consider the Moral Law more fully in a moment. The second category is Judicial Law, the civil case laws or political economic laws of Israel. These were sociopolitical laws applied to Israel's theocracy as a unique nation. The Westminster

Confession of Faith states that they expired with the State of Israel and are only obligatory as far as, “The general equity thereof may require.”

The third category is Ceremonial Law. This refers to all of the clean and unclean laws, the separation and purity laws. It refers to the laws governing the temple and the tabernacle worship, the priests and the sacrificial system, and so forth. These Ceremonial Laws pointed forward as shadows to the Person and work of Christ, and the results of that work in the New Testament. We’ll be expounding some of these ceremonial institutions and ordinances in the next three lectures, but you need to understand from the onset that these Ceremonial Laws have been fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, they are completely expired. They have been abrogated in the New Testament with Christ’s coming. We see this in many places throughout the New Testament, and we’ll look at it further in the lectures to follow, but let’s consider a little more fully what we learn about the Moral Law summarized in the 10 Commandments. This is primary, if you will. This is distinct from the rest of the Law.

John Owen says, “Heavenly teaching, the knowledge of God, had been gradually revealed and expanded on various occasions since the foundation of the universe, and now at length, it was brought together and systematized into one general and stable method of worship and obedience and presented to the church as a body of unified truth.” The 10 Commandments are called, in the Bible, “the 10 words.” See this, for example, in Exodus 34 and Deuteronomy 4, Deuteronomy 10: 10 words. That’s where we get the English word “decalog.” Decalog means 10 words. You’ll note that these 10 Commandments are written with the Lord’s finger on tables of stone (Deuteronomy 9:10). That itself shows something of their permanence and primacy. We’re also told that they’re set apart. Notice in Deuteronomy 5 verse 22, “These words, the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.”

As we see elsewhere, at a deeper level, those 10 words, the 10 Commandments, were the Covenant and testimony itself. That’s how they’re referred to in a few places in Exodus and Deuteronomy. Of course, those two tables of stone are placed inside the ark beneath, as it were, the feet of God. The 10 Commandments are divided into two basic portions. You have the First Table, Commandments 1–4, and the Second Table, commandments five to ten. The First Table refers to our duties as they relate to God, our duties to God. The Second Table, Commandments 5–10, speak to our duties toward man, to our fellow humans. You’ll notice that in the First Table, it all revolves around worship. In the first commandment, we’re told Who to worship. In the second commandment, we’re told how to worship Him. We’re only to worship Him as He has commanded or prescribed, not according to our own innovation. In the third commandment, we’re told why it is that we worship Him: we are to sanctify His name. Then, in the fourth commandment, we’re told when to worship Him: on His appointed Sabbath Day.

When Jesus in the gospel summarizes these 10 Commandments, He summarizes them as love to God and love to the neighbor, but notice that He says that the first and great commandment is our love to God (Matthew 22:37–38). He’s saying that the first four commandments are the first priority. They are to be given first place, as the first things in the Christian’s mind. While we cannot expound in detail here the 10 Commandments, instead, I refer you to the lectures by Reverend A.T. Vergunst on the 10 Commandments. I encourage you to listen to them.

Before we pass on from this point, notice the reference, again, to the finger of God in Exodus 31 and elsewhere. John Owen says, “Once the mind of God had been reduced to writing, each mortal and individual man to whom the Scriptures may come has God speaking to them no less directly than if he were hearing God speaking with His own voice to them, exactly as did Adam when he heard the voice of the Lord in the garden.”

Lastly, we need to consider the relevance of the law for today in order to connect the dots and help you situate the Moral Law within the big picture. We’ll lastly consider a few theological implications of the Moral Law for today. First of all, something about Christ and the law. What we discover is that the Lord Jesus Christ upheld and fulfilled the law. He reinforced the fact that the Moral Law was permanent and that He did not come to abrogate it. Notice the words of Matthew 5 in the Sermon on the Mount, verses 17 to 19. Jesus says, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily, I say unto you, ‘Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.’”

Then, in that same chapter, Jesus goes on to expound the 10 Commandments and to refute the Pharisees' distortion, their version of the law, but notice that He does not lessen the demands of the law. He strengthens them by showing that the original and right intention of the law applied to the heart, and not just the hand. It applies to our secret thoughts and motives, not just our outward actions. Christ, after all, was the Law-giver. He's the one at Mount Sinai Who's giving the Law to His people. The Lord Jesus Christ is the One who comes and keeps the law during His earthly ministry. Indeed, Christ subjects Himself to the curse of the law on behalf of His people, or we could say much more. But the law makes Christ more precious to us. He perfectly and fully obeyed all the Law's precepts for His people. We are united to Him Who did for us what we could never do for ourselves.

In the New Testament, Jesus and Paul confront the distortions of the use of the Moral Law. They're defending and upholding the right use of it. So, Paul, after refuting the use of the law as a means of justification, the idea that if I obey the law I can earn favor with God, wants us to be clear that we don't throw the law out altogether. He says in Romans 3 verse 31, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." That brings us to consider the Christian and the Moral Law. We see something in the Bible of the believer's love for the Law of God.

In the Old Testament, the psalmist says, "Oh, how I love thy law. It is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97). We read in Psalm 1, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." We read, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success." Those are God's words to Joshua in chapter 1.

Well, it's no wonder, if the law is showing us about God, and if the law is the pattern that God is shaping us into, of course, His people will delight in it; and so, it's no surprise we find the identical language in the New Testament. Paul writing in Romans 7 says, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (verse 12). He goes on later, "For we know that the law is spiritual" (verse 14), and again, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (verse 22). He sounds like the psalmist. Elsewhere, we read in the New Testament, 1 Timothy 1 verse 8, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." John speaks to this in 1 John 5 verse 3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

Perhaps it would be helpful for us to review very quickly the uses of the law. Historically, the church has identified three primary uses. The first use of the Moral Law of God is in restraining wickedness and maintaining order in the world. This is referred to as the civil use of the law. The proclamation of the law serves as a restraining influence against sin and the world. The second use of the law is in God revealing sin and terrifying the conscience. He awakens us to our neediness and drives us to Christ. This is referred to as the theological use of the law. This brings man under conviction of sin and makes him conscious of his inability to meet the demands of God's law. Thus, the law is, in Paul's words, the tutor, a school master to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). This continues to be true for the believer in his sanctification, as well as for the unbeliever in [his] conversion.

The third use of the law is given to instruct believers, those who are redeemed, and how to live a life of godliness out of love and gratitude for their redemption. This is referred to as the rule of life for the believer. This directs us to our duties as well as to the sins which we must put to death and avoid. It shows us what righteous living looks like. Our motivation for loving and keeping the law is one of gratitude and love for the redemption we have in the Lord Jesus. That love is demonstrated by obedience, and the standard of obedience is God's character as seen in the law. The law is a restrainer. The law is a revealer of sin, and the law is a rule of life. It does all of these things and more for us. It helps you understand, doesn't it, the relationship of law and gospel?

The law drives us to Christ in the Gospel, and then, the Gospel drives us back to the law as a rule of life for the believer. Both Law and Gospel are a means of grace in the Scriptures. Obedience to the law was never a means of justification. The law and the gospel work together, and they must not be separated. Well, in conclusion, we have seen that the giving of the Law at Sinai came within the context of Redemption: God revealing to His chosen people both Himself and the pattern for living according to His holiness. In the next lecture, we will turn to consider the instructions God gave at Sinai regarding the tabernacle. What we will discover is a treasure trove of gospel truth.

Lecture 10

TABERNACLE

Lecture Theme:

The Lord reveals himself as the God who saves his people in order that he might dwell in their midst—in this world and the world to come.

Text:

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt [tabernacled] among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 10

The descriptions of the tabernacle seemed foreign and unfamiliar to us. For that reason, many people are tempted to skim over all of the tedious details describing the tabernacle in the Bible, but that is a mistake. God has provided us with a vivid and graphic picture full of rich theology. When pausing to take a closer look, these Bible passages open up a window to see delightful and savory truths that Christians today must receive and rejoice over. Rather than seeming mundane, you’ll discover exciting displays of the glory of the Gospel.

What is the main point that God intends to teach us through the tabernacle? And how is that related to the Bible as a whole? Was Moses given a role in the design of the tabernacle? What theology do we derive from the components of the tabernacle? What theology do we learn from the order and sequence the priests followed in their service within the tabernacle? How did the tabernacle point forward to the New Testament and beyond?

Hermann Witsius, the 17th Century Dutch theologian, noted interestingly, “God created the whole world in six days, but He used forty to instruct Moses about the tabernacle. A little over one chapter was needed to describe the structure of the world, but six were used for the tabernacle.” That is interesting because nearly half of the Book of Exodus is not about the actual event of the Exodus, but [is] rather devoted to describing the design and construction of the tabernacle. Why is this?

Well, the Lord reveals Himself as the God Who saves His people that He might dwell in their midst in this world and in the world to come. The tabernacle teaches us about life with God. We study the tabernacle to understand the steps the Lord appointed for a sinful people to approach a Holy God. What we glean here will be traced through the remainder of the Bible. In order to understand the theology of the Bible, you must grasp what God revealed in the unfolding of this portion of redemptive history.

First of all, we need to look at God dwelling in the midst of His people because this is the main point, the main theme in this section on the tabernacle. We saw at the very beginning of Genesis, God dwelling with Adam. He walked with him in the cool of the day. At the fall, man was driven out of Eden, thrust out of God's presence, but God also gave promises that He would reconcile Himself to His people. We have watched the covenant promise unfold in the subsequent lectures, assuring us that God will dwell with His people.

Now, at Sinai, God provides further revelation about His purpose to dwell in the midst of His people, and He reveals the way in which this must be brought to pass. The tabernacle was the Lord's temporary dwelling place during the wilderness. The word "tabernacle" means tent, but it is a special tent set apart from all others. For that reason, it is called "the tent of the Lord" and "the tent of meeting." It was also called the "sanctuary" because it was the place of God's holy presence. Lastly, it was also called the "tent of the testimony." The Two Tables of the Law were called "the testimony," and they were placed inside the ark within the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, thus, testifying to God's Covenant of Grace with His people.

The tabernacle was used from the time of the Exodus until the time of King Solomon when the tabernacle was replaced by the temple. The tabernacle was located at the dead center of the Israelitish camp with the 12 tribes camped around it in a God-appointed arrangement. It displayed vividly God dwelling in the midst of His people. This is clearly stated toward the beginning of this section of Scripture. In Exodus 25:8, we read, "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." This message of God dwelling among His people was connected to the heart of the covenant: 'I will be your God. You will be my people, and I will dwell among you.'

Notice the words in Exodus 29:45-46, "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God." The purpose of the tabernacle was to continue the Sinai experience of Jehovah dwelling in the midst of Israel. Why do I say that? Well, notice this parallel. At Sinai, we read in Exodus 24:15-16 these words, "And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the LORD abode upon Mt. Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud."

Now, see the similar language with the tabernacle in Exodus 40:34, "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." The experience of God in the midst of His people at Sinai would be perpetuated through the tabernacle.

Secondly, we need to recognize a gospel pattern and the gospel content that is found in the tabernacle. This is the meat of the message. This is where we'll spend most of our time. Before we look at the details, notice that there is a divine prescription. Now, we saw with Abel that God must only be worshiped according to His own expressed prescription. This was further ratified in the Second Commandment where God tells us, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." God is saying in that commandment, 'you're only to worship Me as I have appointed,' and this is repeated elsewhere in connection with the Moral Law.

In Deuteronomy 12:32, we have those words, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." This biblical law of worship applies to all men throughout all the ages. We cannot add or subtract from the acts of worship that God specifically appoints for His people, even though what He specifies may differ and does differ in the Old Testament from the New Testament as we shall continue to see.

The tabernacle, not surprisingly, was constructed according to the pattern commanded by God, not Moses. Moses had no role whatsoever. In those chapters stretching from Exodus 25 to Leviticus 7, God supplied every single detail, so that it would be erected exactly as God commanded. We find in chapter 31, verse 11, the words, "According to all that I have commanded thee shall they do." This language is woven throughout. Nothing is allowed to man's imagination. All innovation and human creativity are strictly prohibited in God's worship.

But what exactly did He describe in this pattern? Well, that brings us to consider the theological content, and we're going to look at the individual parts of the tabernacle, the theological content found in the details God gives us to us. The provision and the arrangement of the various components and pieces of furniture revealed God's gospel grace, the way in which redeemed sinners have access to a holy God. We'll consider each piece in the order that a priest would have encountered them when coming to the tabernacle, thus, tracing the theological themes and redemptive content that God revealed. Both the sequence that the priests followed, as well as the individual pieces of furniture, convey gospel truth.

First of all, notice the overall picture. There was a large courtyard that was open to the sky, and it was surrounded by a fence made of white linen and curtains that were hung from pillars, and sockets, and hooks, and fillets. Inside that courtyard was the tabernacle, the tent of the Lord. But also inside the courtyard, outside the tabernacle itself, was the brazen altar and the bronze laver or basin. [The] inside [of] the tabernacle itself consisted of two parts. The large portion was the holy place; and the smaller portion, the inmost sanctum, if you will, was the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. We'll consider the various parts in order, and we can only touch on the seven main items briefly. There's far more to learn from this in your future studies.

The priests would approach the fence of the outer courtyard, which demonstrated visibly God's separation and holiness from people. He would pass through the gate that was made of blue, purple, scarlet, and white curtains connected to four pillars of brass with brass sockets and silver hooks and clasps. And as he passed through that gate, the first thing that he would see upon entering the courtyard was the altar, the bronze or brazen altar. It would be immediately before him, and he would approach that.

The square altar with four horns on the corners was covered in bronze. It would have been beautiful, but it would have been more durable than, for example, something like gold. It was accompanied by bronze pans, and shovels, and forks, and so on. We're told that the fire on the altar was never allowed to go out. In order for a Holy God to dwell with His people, the first thing necessary is a sacrifice and an atonement for sin; hence, the first thing they come to is this bronze altar. God's justice has to be satisfied. Confession of sin has to be made. A substitute has to be provided for the atonement of sin. The priest could not go any further without this first.

Now, we'll discuss the details of the sacrifice in the next lecture, but this pointed to the need for the final and perfect sacrifice of Christ. It was pressed upon the mind of God's people. They needed the sacrifice of Christ, Who would shed His blood for the sins of His people. Without Christ's substitutionary atonement for all of the sins of all of His people, we would not have any access to approach God and no ability for Him to dwell with us.

Well, secondly, you would come to the bronze laver or basin, and it would have been filled with water in which Aaron and his sons washed themselves thoroughly, washing their hands and their feet before approaching the tent of the tabernacle itself. We're told that if they failed to wash and they went into the tabernacle, they would die.

This next step after the sacrifice symbolized ceremonially the need of washing or purification. They needed continual cleansing to enter into God's presence. We see here that those who come to God through the sacrifice of Christ, confessing their sins, need true cleansing, spiritual cleansing. In 1 John 1:7, we read, "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The tabernacle itself was in rectangular shape, and it was covered in four layers of fabric. The bottom layer seen from the inside when you looked up was fine linen of blue, purple, scarlet, embroidered with pictures of cherubims, angels. The outer layers were goat hair, then ram skins dyed red, and then an outer layer of waterproof skins. When entering through the curtain entrance into the first chamber of the covered tent of the tabernacle, which would have been called the holy place, that first section, you would see the table of show bread on the right side; now, the golden lampstand on the left side; and the altar of incense in the middle on the far side immediately in front of the veil into the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies.

So first of all, if you went to your left, you would come to the gold lampstand. This was made of one solid piece of pure hammered gold. It had a center column with three branches on each side making a seven-branched lampstand, similar to a tree. The lamps were to be kept burning with oil perpetually. It illuminated an otherwise dark room. When lit, the interior looked like a microcosm of heaven on earth. You would see cherubims on the walls and on the ceiling.

Those lampstands symbolize the light that shows the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, being described as the Light of the world in the Gospel of John (chapter 8 verse 12). It also represented the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit to reveal salvation. Natural man is blinded by sin and in the dark. In addition to the presence and salvation of the Lord, it gave light for service to the priests [who] were laboring in that place. So, we have the lampstand pointing to Christ and His salvation.

Across from it, you would have had the table of show bread, also called the bread of presence, on the right-hand side. It, too, was overlaid with gold, and it had a crown, a kind of frame of gold around it. On the table 12 loaves of fresh bread, two stacks of six, were placed there every Sabbath and, we are told, eaten by the priests.

The loaves symbolized the 12 tribes and provided a continual reminder of the everlasting promises and provisions of God's covenant.

The ritual of presenting the bread was called a covenant forever. They symbolized God's people in God's presence. The priests were allowed to feed upon them. We, of course, must be fed by the Living Word, by the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is, of course, the Bread of Life, as we see in John 6:35. He promised that those who feed upon Him by faith would never hunger, but that they would have eternal life.

The fifth item that we will consider is the altar of incense. I told you that when you came into that tabernacle, it would be seen in the far side of that first room. This altar with its horns on four corners was overlaid, again, with pure gold. The high priest burned special sweet incense, a recipe that was reserved for this purpose only. He burned that incense on the altar every morning and evening. Then, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the horns of the altar were sprinkled with the blood of the sin offering.

What did this symbolize? Well, the incense represented the prayers offered before the mercy seat of God's presence. If you're singing at the beginning of Psalm 141, you'll see this. We speak about our prayers rising as incense before the Lord (verse 2). The Book of Revelation carries over this same ceremonial symbolism. In Revelation 5:8 and in chapter 8, verses 3 and 4, it speaks about, in those apocalyptic images, the prayers of the saints rising before the throne of God as incense.

All of that has its origin right here in the altar of incense, and it teaches us that God desires our prayers, and that He accepts our prayers through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. These prayers rise before God's throne as a sweet-smelling incense to Him, just as the incense rose just before the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat in the tabernacle. It was before the altar of incense in the later temple, not tabernacle, that an angel appeared to Zachariah to announce that God had heard his prayers for a son, John the Baptist. We read that in the opening of the New Testament.

The sixth item is the veil. There would have been a large veil separating the holy place from the Most Holy place or the Holy of Holies, that inner chamber sanctum. Behind this altar of incense was the veil separating these two portions. It was a visible and symbolic barrier between God and man. It was made of very heavy woven cloth, and it was without an opening in the middle. The priest would have to go around at the side.

Once inside the Holy of Holies, the only item that was found there was the ark of the covenant. Now, the room itself was only about 15 feet by 15 feet. The high priest only entered this Holy of Holies once a year, one time a year, on the Day of Atonement to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat, an atonement for his sins and the sins of the people.

This is very important for understanding the significance of when the veil in the later temple was actually torn by God from top to bottom when Jesus died, symbolizing the ability of every believer to approach God directly through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. You'll note the connection with this Old Testament imagery in Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy," remember the mercy seat? "and find grace to help in time of need."

Let's consider more the ark of the covenant itself and the mercy seat. This, after all, was the final destination within the inmost sanctuary of God within the tabernacle. It provided the central focus and most important part of the tabernacle as a whole. The ark, of course, was rectangular, and it's covered in gold in various place inside and out. But when you come to the ark of covenant itself, that ark is full of all the vivid descriptions that capture the presence of God. In Hebrews 9:4, we read that it contained "the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." The Israelites were forbidden to ever touch the ark of the covenant upon penalty of death.

The mercy seat was made of one piece of pure beaten gold, and it was set on top of the ark. It had two winged cherubims on each side of it, facing each other with wings that were outstretched above them toward each other. The ark chiefly symbolized, as I say, the presence of God in the midst of His people, thus, highlighting the primary purpose of the tabernacle as a whole. Elsewhere, it was called the throne of God. Again, a tiny, temporary picture of God's place in heaven. The transcendent God, Whom not even the Heaven of heavens can contain, condescends to come and dwell among His people, pointing, of course, chiefly to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, as we shall see in a moment.

With all these things in place, one more essential thing still remained, namely, the presence of God Himself. The Lord manifested His presence in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, which rested above the tabernacle directly above the mercy seat over the ark. God spoke to the high priest from above that mercy seat. God's presence led and directed His people through the wilderness. When the cloud or pillar moved, Israel moved. When it stopped, they camped until it moved again, but the message was clear: God was dwelling among them.

Lastly and very importantly, we need to consider the heavenly realities that are found in the tabernacle. The tabernacle was a temporary earthly picture of God's true abode. Since the tabernacle was a symbol of the Lord's home while He dwelt among His people, it had to be a true pattern of His real abode in heaven. We have already alluded to the fact that the tabernacle was an earthly picture of heaven. Remember the embroidered cherubim on the colorful cloth covering the ceiling and sides on the inside, and the cherubim over the ark of the mercy seat, and the reference to it as the throne of God.

The Old Testament saints understood that what was built was only a model or a pattern of something more glorious. Exodus 25 verses 9 and 40, for example, make this clear. It's described as a pattern. The real [thing] had not emerged, but the Book of Hebrews expounds this point at length, and I think it's worth us taking the time to quote those relevant passages. It's pointing to the fact that the tabernacle was patterned after God's true abode in heaven. It was a temporary picture of a heavenly reality.

Notice with me what we read in Hebrews 8:5, "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Chapter 9:8-9, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the present time then present," imposed on them until the time of reformation, that is the time of the coming of Christ.

Chapter 9, verses 23 and 24, "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Lastly, in Hebrews 10:1, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."

You see that? It is a picture. The tabernacle is a picture of heavenly things. Old Testament symbols are replaced ultimately with New Testament realities. We've noted several times that these Old Testament ceremonies were temporary. When Christ came, the symbols of the tabernacle and the temple were permanently put away, and the New Testament, in fact, forbids us to return to these ceremonial shadows. Why? Because we now have the real thing that they could only foreshadow. Great space is devoted in the New Testament to confronting the error of the Judaizers who wanted to bring back these Old Testament ceremonial symbols, and institutions, and ordinances. The apostles forbid it, confronted it.

Galatians 4:9, Paul says, "how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements." Colossians 2:17 speaks of the shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Jesus Himself spoke of this in John 4. You see it again in the Book of Acts. You look at the whole section of Hebrews 8-10. They all carried the same message.

In the New Testament, Christ says that we must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). It would be an affront to Christ [for us] to look to these shadows when His very Person has arrived. This is a far greater glory. So, the New Testament worship, which God commands, prescribes, appoints for His people, exhibits ordinances of far greater simplicity because the glory of New Testament worship is not in the earthly symbols of altars, and incense, and priestly service.

Our worship takes places in the very throne room of the heaven where we find our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory is the presence of Christ. The glory is the presence of His Spirit among us manifest in our midst through simple ordinances like preaching, and reading, and prayer, and the singing of Psalms, and the sacraments. The tabernacle finds its fulfillment in the New Testament.

Let me just say briefly before we conclude, it's fulfilled, first of all, in the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 1:14, we read, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," It's literally 'and tabernacled among us', "(and we

beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” Christ has come. He is Emmanuel. He is God with us. The tabernacle pointed forward to the coming of Christ Himself.

The tabernacle is also fulfilled in the Christian. This is beautifully portrayed in 2 Corinthians 6:16, “For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” There’s the language of the Covenant of Grace again, coupled with the language of the tabernacle. So, we see the Lord graciously dwelling in the midst of His people, within the individual Christian, but we also see the tabernacle fulfilled in the Church as a whole, as the people of God, the collective assembled people of God.

At the end Ephesians 2, we read, “In whom,” that is the Church, “In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” We read elsewhere Jesus’ words that wherever two or three of God’s people assembled together for worship that Christ is there in the midst (Matthew 18:20).

Let me add one more thing: the tabernacle is fulfilled in the heavens themselves. As we’ve already noted, in both Exodus and Hebrews, the tabernacle served as a pattern, as an example, as a shadow, as a figure of the true abode of God in heaven.

Now, let’s bring this together by comparing two texts side by side to see how similar they are. Earlier, we referred to Exodus 29:45–46, “And I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.”

Now, fast forward all the way to the end of the Bible, Revelation 21:3, and notice the similar language, “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.”

Both the tabernacle and the later temple served as the center of God’s presence with His people. The tabernacle and the temple are forever put away in the greater reality of the coming of Christ, but the spiritual truth that they symbolized, God in the midst of His people, continues to be the delight of every Christian. This forms the heart cry of God’s people as seen in the psalmist’s desire to dwell in the house of the Lord forever in Psalm 23:6. Why? Because God is present with them, and we meet with Him to behold His glory.

Psalm 27:4 says, “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.” This runs all through the Psalms, this language. Notice Psalm 84, or think about David when he is in the wilderness as it’s described in Psalm 63.

Well, we continue to sing these songs as God’s people, and we sing them in light of their fulfillment in the eternal realities that they symbolize. We sing looking to Christ dwelling in the assembly of His people in the New Testament church, and we look with anticipation to being with Him in His presence in heaven. Preaching on the tabernacle involves preaching the theological content of the tabernacle.

The New Testament Christian looks through these symbols to their New Testament fulfillment and all that God revealed through them. We see the realities that they foreshadowed. Thus, it provides a beautiful opportunity to preach Christ and the Gospel. We’ve discovered in these temporary Old Testament symbols, pointers to heavenly reality secured in Christ. In the Covenant of Grace, God promised to dwell in the midst of His people in this world and in heaven to come.

In the next lecture, we will explore the Old Testament theology of sacrifice and find, once again, that the Old Testament is full of Christ and the Gospel of His grace.

Lecture 11

SACRIFICES

Lecture Theme:

God's people forfeited by their sin all rights to approach God's Holy dwelling place, except through the blood of Christ's sacrifice.

Text:

“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:13–14).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 11

We sometimes enhance our learning through employing our five senses, that is sight and sound and smell, touch, and taste. If a child is learning to prepare a new and unfamiliar meal for example, he could just read about it, but if someone takes him into the kitchen, and he sees what the ingredients look like, and he comes to see what they smell like when you combine them, and he learns to test taste the mixture and to listen for clues when it's done cooking, and then at the end feels the texture of the final product, he'll know far more than having just read about it. Well, God stooped to the Old Testament people as a church underage and provided them with graphic images to teach them about the Person and work of the coming Messiah. One of the chief modes He employed was through the ceremonial sacrificial system, vivid ordinances that engaged all five senses. So why does the Old Testament system of worship seem so bloodied? Why are there multiple types of sacrifices? And what is the theological significance of the difference between them? How do the sacrifices relate to Christ, and how does understanding the intricate details of the Old Testament ordinances deepen our understanding of New Testament gospel themes?

The psalmist asks a pressing question in Psalm 15:1: “Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” The answer is found in part in God's provision of sacrifice. In the last lecture, we considered the place God chose to dwell among the people, that is the tabernacle. Now we must turn to consider the means of approaching the Lord through the ordinances He appointed, which are namely, the sacrifices to be performed at the tabernacle and then the priests who will offer them. In the following lecture, we'll explore the God-ordained personnel, these priests that He commissioned to carry out the service. All three lectures go together, demonstrating what God revealed about Himself and His redemption through this period.

Men have forfeited by their sin all right to communion with a holy God, except through sacrifice. Those sacrifices were offered at various times in the book of Genesis. In the days of Moses, we have a formal system of

sacrifice that is embedded into the life and worship of Israel. Sacrifice maintained a central place in the daily life and experience of Israel throughout the Old Testament, so we must understand the theology that God reveals through them. When combined, these sacrifices portray a complete picture of substitutionary atonement in all of its benefits provided in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, first of all, in this lecture we need to consider the need for sacrifices. And I want to draw your attention to an important turning point in the flow of redemptive history, an event that I think serves as a hinge in connecting the book of Exodus to the book of Leviticus.

In Exodus 29:45–46, we saw the promise that God would dwell in the midst of His people, but when we come to the end of Exodus, what do we discover? It ends with God’s glory filling the tabernacle, but (and this is an important “but”) there is no access for humanity to approach and to hold fellowship with God in that tabernacle. We read in Exodus 40:34–35, “Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” Well, if Moses was barred entry, then no one had access. This tension creates the context that ushers us immediately into the solution God provides in Leviticus, both the sacrifices and the priesthood. The climax of Leviticus chapters 1 to 10, is found in chapter 9:22–23, which says, “And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people.”

At this point, it may be helpful to introduce a few important points of theological vocabulary that are related to the biblical doctrine of atonement. We’ll be referring to them as we progress. Let me give you three words. The first is “vicarious,” a vicarious atonement; that means a legal substitute, so an atonement that is made on behalf of another: vicarious atonement. The second word is “expiation.” This is one part of the atonement; expiation, that means taking away guilt through the payment of a penalty. And then, thirdly, we have a word called “propitiation.” Propitiation means satisfying divine justice and appeasing the wrath of God. All of these are important for understanding, ultimately, Christ’s atonement. Sin, even sins of ignorance as Leviticus makes clear, require atonement. An atonement for sin was made through a substitutionary sacrifice. This is central to the concept of redemption, and thus to God’s history of redemption, which is what we’re studying in this course. Leviticus teaches us of so great a salvation.

Secondly, let’s consider the provision of sacrifices, and let me say [to begin], I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important it is to understand the sacrifices. First of all, you must note the theology that is taught through each specific sacrifice. You may ask the question, “Why?”. The answer is: because you will see references to particular sacrifices in various places throughout the rest of the Old Testament. You’ll see them in historic books. You’ll see them in the Psalms. You’ll see them in the prophets in their writings. And when the Old Testament believer thought about a particular sacrifice, he thought about the theological truths taught in it, and so we must do the same. It will really open up and clarify later passages in the Old Testament.

When you come across a specific sacrifice and are able to insert the theological meaning into that particular sacrifice, you’ll say to yourself, “Aha! I know why God speaks of that sacrifice in this place.” So, for example, in I Samuel 11:15, it says, “And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.” So, the question is: why a peace offering? Well, the answer will become clear when we discuss the peace offering below. Secondly, under this point, the vocabulary and the theological concepts that are contained in the sacrifices provide really the foundation for the New Testament exposition of the gospel. So, if you want to enrich your understanding of the New Testament, you need to comprehend the significance of these temporary ceremonial Old Testament sacrifices.

Thirdly, in addition to the place of blood, which is obvious in sacrifices, we must also understand the significance of fire in connection with the sacrifices. Sin brings death, and so the animals were killed, but they were also burned as a sacrifice. This shows us that God Himself in His holiness is a consuming fire. We continue to see this theme in the New Testament where we read in Hebrews 12:29, “For our God is a consuming fire.” His glory includes His fury, His wrath, and His vengeance against all sin. You’ll see God manifests this in the judgments that He brought on Sodom and on Nadab and Abihu, and Korah, and so on, but greatest of all, Christ bore the

full cup of God's wrath on behalf of His people on the cross. But before we turn to look at the individual sacrifices, we need to first consider the general procedures that were followed with the animal sacrifices.

So, let me highlight some of those components. When they came to offer sacrifice, first of all, they presented the animal, and this was important. The animal had to be presented for inspection by the priest, and he would be looking to see: Is it a clean animal? Is it without blemish? Is it blind, for example, or maimed? Or does it have scabs, or is it disfigured? Does it have disproportionate limbs? and so on. This was important because the Israelite was offering his best, and that meant that his sacrifice was costly. It literally cost him. It was one of his more valuable possessions. They were presenting what [were], if you will, expensive animals. And in that sense, it was a true sacrifice as we say, 'well, that men really made a sacrifice when he gave that to so-and-so,' but this points to the importance of heart religion because in this inspection the priest was asking: was the worshiper seeking to approach God without cost or to approach Him carelessly, forgetting the fact that God sees the heart? You'll see the Lord rebuke His priests during the period of the prophets. For example, notice the rebukes in Malachi chapter 1 in this regard. God requires perfection, and this already shows us that we need a blameless sacrifice, which will be found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

After the inspection, after presenting the animal, secondly, they placed their hands on the head of the animal not merely touching it, mind you, actually pressing down and leaning one's hand on the head of the animal. It was to be an outward expression of inward faith. The worshiper identified himself with the animal. His sins, if you will, were symbolically credited to the animal. It showed that the animal stood as a vicarious substitute for the worshiper, making atonement on his behalf. Thirdly, they slaughtered the animal, so after being identified with the animal, the worshiper himself would cut the throat of the animal, acknowledging that sin requires death, that there is no remission without shedding of blood, the blood of a blameless substitute. After this action, the priests took over for the remainder of the service.

Fourthly, the priest then applied the blood. You'll notice the words in Leviticus 17:11, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The blood was the life, and life ransoms from death; and life wipes away, if you will, the stains of death. At various times, blood was smeared on the horns of the altar, sprinkled on the sides of the altar, poured at the base of the altar. Other times it was sprinkled on the altar of incense or the mercy seat. The purpose of applying the blood was atonement for sin, providing reconciliation with God and forgiveness of sin.

Fifthly, they burned the animal. Now, depending on the sacrifice, they either burned part of the animal, or the whole of the animal was burned up; but notice that in being burned up, it was transformed into smoke, what the Bible describes as a pleasing aroma that ascends from the altar toward God's heavenly abode. Perhaps you've smelled the fragrance of meat cooking outside on a grill. It often spreads to the surrounding homes, and people can smell it in their yards. The fat in particular, the sweetest and tastiest part of the animal, belonged to the Lord and was always to be burned on the altar, signifying of course that the best belongs to the Lord.

Sixthly, they would engage in communing and in eating. So lastly, the worshiper enjoys, if you will, the hospitality of God's house and fellowship with Him in, specifically, the peace offering. And this brings us really to the heart of the covenant promise: God dwelling in the midst of His people, God being the God of His people and they being His own, those who are brought to take pleasure in His presence. So, we will now consider the basic set of sacrifices found in Leviticus 1 to 6. Each sacrifice teaches a different aspect of Christ's work. In each case the Lord Himself spoke and commanded these ordinances.

So first of all, the burnt offering or the whole burnt offering: this was a voluntary sacrifice. It wasn't compulsory, and the Hebrew word actually means "one that rises or ascends," signifying Israel's assent to God. The burnt offering, what you could almost call the ascension offering, comes first in Leviticus chapter 1; but you should note, it is not first in the actual order of worship, but it is first described in Leviticus 1 because it represented the core, if you will, of the sacrificial system. It was the most costly of all the sacrifices. In fact, you'll remember the altar in the courtyard of the tabernacle takes its name from this offering, the altar of burnt offering. It was the daily morning and evening offering to which all the other sacrifices were added throughout the day, those brought by the people. You can see how their sacrifices are built, if you will, on the foundation of the burnt offering. It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of the burnt offering in the Bible. It is first mentioned

with Noah after the flood, as you may recall. God called Abraham to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering. David offers up a burnt offering to stay a plague, and that place, that very location, becomes the site of Solomon's Temple with all of its burnt offerings that would be offered over the years.

In the burnt offering, the whole animal, not just part, was burnt, demonstrating or symbolizing utter consecration, or full submission, to God and His law. It was a picture of total self-dedication. It is burned completely, transformed into smoke, a sweet-smelling savor before the Lord. It ascends to God in heaven. Note, at the announcement of Samson's birth, Manoah offers a burnt offering, and we read in Judges 13:20, "For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground." See, this symmetry fits with the picture of the offering itself.

Secondly, we have the meat offering. This could also be called a grain offering or a tribute offering. In this offering, there was no death and no blood involved. It was brought to the Lord and offered by the priest. Part of it was burned, and the remainder was eaten by the priests but not the people. God must accept our persons before our gifts; the burnt offering comes before the meat offering. This sacrifice signifies giving back to God a portion of what is produced through His strength and blessing. It entails thanksgiving for God's mercies. You'll note that frankincense was added to perfume the offering, a beautiful picture of Christ's mediation. Now, on the occasions when the priests themselves offered a meat offering for themselves, the entire offering is burned. Why is that? Well, in other words, the meat offering was never eaten by those who gave it. Sometimes it could be offered with the burnt offering or the peace offering or by itself, but the meat offering was often closely associated with the burnt offering. [Here is] brought together consecration to God and tribute.

Thirdly, we have the peace offering. This symbolized fellowship and communion with God. Part of it was burned, and part of it was eaten. It was the only offering of which the worshiper himself was permitted to eat and only able to eat it at the tabernacle in the presence of God. And so, you can see how reconciliation comes first. There is no peace with God without sacrificial atonement; and without the peace offering, there would have been no fellowship. Here we see that the fat is the Lord's, the richest, most flavorful part. God, of course, does not need, nor does He eat food (this is found in a number of places, but go look at Psalm 50 on this point). However, it symbolized these spiritual truths of fellowship and communion with the Lord. It exhibits close fellowship with the God [Who] dwells with His people. It constituted in some ways the highest privilege. You can see how the New Testament draws on this concept and vocabulary. So, for example, in Ephesians 2:13-18, we read, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace." It goes on a little later, "so making peace," and then again, "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

Fourthly, we have the sin offering. This sacrifice related to the pardon of specific guilt for specific sins. It is connected to the idea of expiation, which we discussed earlier: taking away guilt through the payment of a penalty. It teaches that all sin is serious, including unintentional sins of ignorance, because all sin transgresses God's law and defies His holiness. Some parts were roasted for the priests as a provision for their full-time labor. There were four categories of sinners: you had the priests; you had the congregation; you had the rulers; and you had individual Israelites.

Fifthly, there was the trespass offering. This could also be called the guilt offering. It addressed reparation and restitution, or making amends or compensation for wrongs that were done. It is closely connected to the previous sacrifice. The sin offering atones for sins against God. The trespass offering addressed sins of defrauding God and one's neighbor, with an emphasis on sins of a more private and personal nature. Remember how Jesus summarizes the law. It's summarized under loving God and loving our neighbor. Both are found here. There was no leniency in bearing the guilt, even in sins of ignorance. What did this do? The sacrifice aimed at cultivating a tender conscience toward sin, seeing it as stealing from God and man. Man is not right with God as long as these trespasses remain without atonement.

Next, we need to consider the order in which these sacrifices were offered. Just as we saw with the procedures in the tabernacle, the sequence or order in which the priests offered these sacrifices also teaches us important theological truths. The first three were each voluntary, and in some ways represented an ideal worship scenario. The second two were expiatory, a remedy for particular sins. And so, ordinarily one or both of the last two, the sin

offering and the trespass offering, preceded the other three. So, for just a brief example, if you look at Leviticus 9, you have the sin offering that is presented for purification and/or the trespass [offering] which deals with restitution, reparation. Then following those, you have the burnt offering, this concept of ascension, and along with that came the tribute offering, the meat offering, and it concludes with the peace offering. And so, the application of blood underscores expiation, cleansing from sin. The burnt offering pictures ascension and full consecration. The peace offering, the only one eaten by the worshiper, is a meal of communion and fellowship with God in His presence. So, the pattern follows: justification, sanctification, and fellowship with God. The ultimate goal is fellowship and communion with God, but that requires cleansing and consecration. Atonement is a means to the end of fellowship with God in His presence.

Lastly then, let's bring all of these things together by focusing on Christ, the one final sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goats never atoned for sin in themselves. Hebrews 10:4 says, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." And the Old Testament saints knew this at the time. You'll see references again to this in the Psalms. They looked forward by faith through these ordinances to the coming Messiah, just as we look back by faith to Him. Christ's coming sits at the center of history, and the fact is we still mark time by it. We speak of the years before Christ (B.C.) and the years after Christ (A.D.). The tedious and monotonous details of sacrifice underscore their inadequacy. Every animal sacrifice, all of them, pointed forward to the one final and perfect sacrifice of Christ. You'll notice that the New Testament bursts open with John the Baptist's cry, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). The sacrifice of Christ lies at the very center of the gospel and the Bible.

As we saw previously, these temporary ceremonies of the Old Testament were put away entirely when they were fulfilled in the coming of Christ and the accomplishment of His work. The signs and shadows, types and pointers, no longer have a place in the New Testament, but we're able to study them with profit in light of the New Testament fulfillment. In doing so, they open up opportunities to see and preach beautiful portrayals of Christ and the gospel. The many continual Old Testament sacrifices are contrasted with Christ's one final sacrifice. Hebrews 9 the end of verse 26 says, "but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Hebrews 10:14, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Christ bore the sins of His people and the punishment for those sins. See this in I Peter 1 at the end, He is the sacrifice "without spot or blemish" (verse 19). He was well pleasing to the Father. God's most valuable sacrifice of all is found in Christ.

Jesus presented Himself voluntarily, without compulsion, as the Lamb adorned with meekness and submission to His Father. He served as the only and ultimate substitute standing in the place of God's elect people to atone for their sins. He fully satisfied and appeased God's wrath and reconciled His people, making peace with God for them. His blood was shed and sprinkled upon His people to cleanse them. We see this in many places. Revelation 1:5, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

The Christian exercises faith in Christ, leaning, as it were, all the weight of his soul upon God's Lamb, resting entirely in His person and His work. And we feed upon Christ by faith: John 6:51, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Christ enables us to hold communion and fellowship with God and His gracious presence now and into eternity. The Christian can thereby present his own body to God not as a bloody, but as a living, sacrifice wholly acceptable on to God, which is your reasonable service as we see in Romans 12:1. The law will constantly remind Israel of their inability to conform to God's standards of holiness and to love Him comprehensibly, and it is the law itself that teaches them to avail themselves of the sacrifices as they repent and cast themselves on God's mercy.

The sacrifices express the totality of reconciliation and restoration of fellowship with God through Christ. They move from the sinner's guilt before a holy God to the provision of a substitute in the place of the offender, the covering or atonement for sins and to restitution, dedication, and fellowship with God. Reading and preaching the Old Testament sacrificial system provides a wonderful opportunity for explaining their fulfillment in Christ and thereby presenting the glorious riches of His grace in the gospel. The sight of Christ's sacrifice continues even into heaven. In Revelation 5, we read, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne." It goes on,

“stood a Lamb as it had been slain” (verse 6). “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood” (verse 9).

In conclusion, God’s people forfeited, by their sin, all rights to approach God’s dwelling place, except through the blood of Christ’s sacrifice. In the next lecture, we will go on to consider God’s ordained servants appointed to offer the sacrifices, namely the Old Testament priesthood.

Lecture 12

PRIESTHOOD

Lecture Theme:

God dwells among his people, but he can only be approached through an appointed high priest who offers an acceptable sacrifice for sin.

Text:

“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:11–12).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 12

Did you ever notice the difference between a child’s storybook and a normal adult book? A child’s book often has large colorful pictures that take up most of the page with only a few simple words at the bottom. By contrast, an adult book is often full of a solid text of words, page after page after page, with few or no pictures. This is another way of illustrating the character of the Old Testament ceremonial system. It was God’s vivid picture book for a people underage. The colorful pictures conveyed God’s revelation of the coming Person and work of Christ. But in the full light and knowledge of Christ coming, the picture book, the Old Testament ceremonies, was put away in place of the mature and full revelation of God in the New Testament.

We continue the exploration of these Old Testament ceremonies in this lecture, bringing to completion the connections of the tabernacle, the sacrifices, and the priesthood, which form one whole package. Who were the priests, and what was their role in Israel? How do Aaron and his sons relate to Christ? What service did the priests perform, and what does that reveal about the gospel? What theology was taught through the Old Testament ceremonial feasts, and how do they relate to God’s inspired story of redemption? Where does the New Testament believer find his high priest? What effect does this have on the Christian’s access to God? We have seen that sin bars the way into God’s favorable presence, so what is to be done? What is necessary to gain access? The answer is twofold: what is needed is a sacrifice and one to offer the sacrifice. And we covered the former, sacrifices, in the previous lecture. In this lesson, we will focus on the second, the necessary provision of priesthood. And of course, we study these Old Testament shadows to see the revelation of the Person of Christ.

You may have noticed that we will have spent 12 whole lectures, including this one, covering only the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. The question is: why? Well, it’s not because the other portions are any less important, but it is because the Pentateuch provides the foundation upon which everything else that follows is

built. We could rightly focus on other emphases, but this course is on biblical theology, and I cannot emphasize strongly enough how essential and indispensable it is to have a deep understanding of the first five books of the Bible. We will cover 12 lectures, and we will have only touched on and highlighted a handful of themes. We have sought to provide you with basic tools to go further and deeper. So, in this lecture, first of all, we must consider the priests.

The dominant theme running throughout the whole book of Leviticus is holiness. Holiness is a defining mark of God's character as seen in the cry of the angels: "Holy, holy, holy." Holiness includes two aspects. One is separation: separation from what is sinful. The second is purity: being sinless, being spiritually pure. So, the Bible tells us that God is holy, but it also tells us His law, His ordinances, His priests, His altar, His feasts, His vessels, His oil, the priestly garments are all described as holy. When the priest appeared before the people, the message of holiness would have been visible. Why? Because the priest wore a golden plate on his forehead with the words engraved, "holiness to the Lord."

Furthermore, God specifies the necessity of the holiness of His people and entering God's presence. The holy priesthood was part of that provision. God Himself appointed the Old Testament office of priesthood. In other words, the church government of the Old Testament, just like the New Testament, was not an innovation of human origin. It was received by divine prescription. Not only is this made clear throughout Leviticus, but Hebrews 5:4 also confirms it. It says, "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." So, not just any Israelite male was permitted to pursue the priesthood. God restricted it to the tribe of Levi, and He divided the families into various classes with distinct responsibilities. You had, of course, the high priest, which was the highest office drawn from among a class of priests and composed of the direct descendants of Aaron. The high priest had functions not shared by any other, including entering the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, for example. But then there were the general Levites, the rest of the tribe, and they carried out a variety of functions. Some were scattered across the land with the purpose of teaching God's people His Word and Law. Others had designated functions associated with the worship in Jerusalem, such as singers and players of instruments, and porters, and a variety of responsibilities associated with the sacrifices and other aspects of tabernacle and temple worship. These men were set apart as priests by the application of oil. In other words, they were anointed with holy oil when consecrated to their sacred service.

Let me provide the big picture at this point so that we are connecting the dots in our study of the history of God's redemption. There were three primary offices in the Old Testament, and each of them required sacred anointing when they entered their respective offices. There were prophets, there were priests, and there were kings. Now, the New Testament word *Christ* is the equivalent of the Old Testament word *Messiah*, and both words mean *the Anointed One*. So, if you put that together, the title *Christ* in the New Testament is really an abbreviated reference to the fulfillment of these three offices, to the One Who is God's ultimate Anointed One. The title *Christ* points to the final prophet, God's final Word, the great High Priest and the King of kings, all found in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God also appointed holy ceremonial clothing for the priest to wear when serving in the holy place, and we cannot consider here the significance of the details, but let me highlight the prescribed breastplate, as it relates closely to one important function of the priesthood. The priests were ordained to make intercession on behalf of the people. Interestingly, the breastplate consisted of 12 precious stones or gems, and each stone had a name of one of the tribes of Israel written on [it]. These stones were placed in the breastplate, and the breastplate was placed over the heart of the high priest. As he entered into the holy place to appear before the Lord to make intercession for the people, he carried the names of the 12 tribes visibly before the Lord. This is a beautiful picture of all that Christ does as our High Priest and bearing His people upon His heart before the eternal throne, as we shall see further, in a moment. Well, that introduces us to the priests.

Secondly, we need to give some attention to their service. The priest was a mediator representing the people before God. He was appointed to present gifts and offerings, sacrifices, intercessions, and the people themselves before the Lord in pursuit of reconciliation and the expiation of sins. As we saw in an earlier lecture on the regulation of God's worship, we see again here that the priests were restricted in their service by God's permanent law of worship. God only permits acts of worship that He has appointed or commanded, and this language is woven throughout the description of the preservice. For example, [in] Exodus 31:11, we see that phrase, "according to

all that I have commanded thee shall they do.” That theme is carried through this section. All through the fine details of divine worship outlined, for example, in Leviticus 8 and 9, we see the repeated words, “as the Lord commanded, as the Lord commanded,” and that prepares us for Leviticus 10 because in Leviticus 10, we have an example of the violation of this principle by Nadab and Abihu. In Leviticus 10:1–3, we read, “and Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified,” made holy, “in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.” Even though it was his own sons, [the] glory of God took preeminence.

Well, this remains a lesson for the remainder of history to the present day. In every last detail, we must only offer acts of worship to God that He has explicitly commanded in His Word. You think in the New Testament [of] the reading of God’s Word, the preaching of God’s Word, prayer, the singing of Psalms, the Lord’s Supper, Baptism, and so on. So, what did God appoint in the Old Testament ceremonial worship? What did He prescribe? And what theology do we derive from this revelation? Well, we can only highlight a few examples. In addition to the daily morning and evening sacrifices, as well as the sacrifices brought by the people day by day, God also appointed special holy days at which sacrifices were offered. He required all the men to travel to Jerusalem three times a year for the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. The Bible says they did so in order to appear before the Lord. That’s the language, and this language is important for the remainder of Scripture. They did so to appear before the Lord. He also provided a special selection of Psalms that they would sing on their way to meet with God in Jerusalem, which we call the Psalms of Ascent, Psalms 120 to 134. We will consider these feasts briefly, though devoting a little more time to the first and last ones that we will cover.

The first Old Testament holy ceremonial feast is Passover, and we’ve seen reference to this earlier in our lectures at the time of the Exodus. Passover and the feast of unleavened bread, which was connected with it, was instituted back in Exodus 12, and we read more about it in Leviticus 23:4–8. God appointed this feast at the time of the Exodus, and He required them to continue to celebrate it in order to commemorate Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage at the time of the Exodus. So, its origin is connected with the 10th plague, as you will remember, in which God promised to destroy the firstborn males of every house, unless they applied the blood of the Pascal Lamb to their doorframes. That night God passed over the homes shielded with blood. This salvation through judgment initiated Israel’s redemption and deliverance. The feast of unleavened bread was connected with Passover. Israel was to eat unleavened bread for seven days to recount the bread made in a hurry when they were brought out of Egypt in haste, and they were also told to offer a burnt offering each day.

Well, if you fast-forward to the New Testament when Christ ate the last Passover with His disciples on the evening before His arrest, we are told in Matthew 26:30 that they sang a hymn. Now, this word *hymn* is used in the titles of the Psalms, but they sang a hymn when they went out to the Mount of Olives. The Jews sang the Hallel psalms, that section that’s found from Psalm 113 to 118, on these occasions, and [these] would have been the words sung by Christ and His disciples. Imagine the Lord Jesus Christ singing Psalm 118 as He went off to His arrest and crucifixion. Think of the words in verses 22–23 and 27, “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” It goes on, “bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.” [It’s] powerful to think about those words in that context. The Passover signified and pointed forward to God’s ultimate provision in the person of Christ. So, we read in I Corinthians 5:7, “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” He is God’s Pascal Lamb. His blood covers His people and delivers them from their sins. We can sing in Psalm 32:1, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”

[The] second feast that we will consider is the feast of Pentecost, sometimes called the Feast of Weeks or Harvest. This too is found in Leviticus 23. This was appointed to be observed 50 days after Passover, and it occurred on the first day of the week, which would eventually become the New Testament Sabbath. The people presented an offering of grain out of joy and thankfulness for the Lord’s blessing on the harvest. Notably, in Acts 2, it was on the day of Pentecost that the risen Christ poured out the Holy Spirit, and 3000 souls were converted and baptized. We will consider this further when we come to the New Testament, the connection between Pentecost and what took place next. The third feast is the Feast of Trumpets. This feast was a day of memorial, the text says,

before the Lord accompanied by repentance and consecration to the Lord. The people ceased from their work and offered an offering made by fire. Perhaps it was a memorial of the long blast of the trumpet in Exodus 19 when Israel was summoned before the Lord at Mount Sinai to receive His Word and Law. Interestingly, the New Testament begins with the angelic announcement of the coming of the Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the birth of the Savior, and we will hear of this imagery again at Christ's Second Coming. In I Thessalonians 4:16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

Fourthly, we have the feast of Tabernacles. This is the third and last of the annual feasts that required pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which we mentioned earlier. At this feast, the people offered various burnt offerings and gifts and free will offerings before the Lord. It entailed a weeklong celebration of fall harvest, coupled with making temporary shelters of branches to remember how God cared for His people during the 40 years in the wilderness. And we are told [that] they did so to rejoice before the Lord their God.

The fifth feast that we will consider is the Day of Atonement. This was the highest and the most solemn holy day of all. In fact, it is referred to as the Sabbath of Sabbaths, and it was at the very heart of Israel's calendar and national life. It was the high day of cleansing from sin by substitutionary atonement. On this day the Israelites were told to afflict their souls. This is an expression of repentant sorrow, often with fasting. The high priest would wear simple linen clothes rather than his normal elaborate garb. The annual ceremony involved two sets of offerings: a sin offering for the high priest in his house, and then a sin offering for the people; and then secondly, a burnt offering for the high priest in his house and another for the people. In between the two sets was the ceremony of the scapegoat.

The height of the ceremony came when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies. The one and only time that he did so each year was on this day, the Day of Atonement. He entered the Holy of Holies to sprinkle blood upon the mercy seat on the top of the ark of the covenant. In addition, lots were cast to designate a goat for Jehovah and a goat for Israel, the first being sacrificed in its blood used to cleanse God's house. The second goat was the scapegoat. The priest placed both hands over its head and confessed all of Israel's sins and rebellion. It was then led into the howling wilderness, never to be seen again, and it was symbolically loaded with Israel's sins. In addition to the spiritual meaning regarding the sacrifices, which we considered in the last lecture, we see in the scapegoat, another picture of Christ, the One Who would bear away the sins of God's people.

Scripture describes this in various ways. It says, God remembers our sins no more (Hebrews 8:12, 10:17); He casts our sins behind his back (Isaiah 38:17) and into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19); He separates our sin from us as far as the East is from the West (Psalm 103:12). All of this language is connected to what is pictured in the scapegoat. The Day of Atonement signified God's provision of atoning sacrifice, reconciliation with God, and the way of access into God's acceptance and presence. We have not explored all the details of these feasts, but you can see that God filled them with savory gospel truths that pointed to their fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ. That brings us to our third point, the perfect priest.

How can a sinful people approach a holy God? The answer is through a God-appointed priest offering an acceptable sacrifice. This is beautifully fulfilled in Christ. Think of how the two things are brought together in Christ. He is both the Sacrifice that is being offered and the Priest Who is presenting the sacrifice. Both are bound up in Him. In Hebrews 7:27 it says, "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself." Chapter 10:12 says, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Christ offers the sacrifice of Himself and makes intercession for His people. Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 12 question 31 speaks of Christ as "our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of His body, has redeemed us, and [makes continual intercession with the Father for us]." Shorter Catechism question 25 says the same. Hebrews, the book of Hebrews, speaks at length of the superiority of Christ's priesthood over that of Aaron. As we saw in Lecture 7, Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek and not that of the tribe of Levi.

Earthly priests and priestly service and ceremonial feast days and ordinances were fulfilled by Christ. And therefore, they are completely abrogated and put away in the New Testament church. The Christian church should not have earthly priests and vestments and altars and incense and those Old Testament holy days, like Passover and Pentecost, and the other elements of ceremonial worship. All of these would detract from and be an affront

to the superiority of the glory of having Christ Himself. Colossians 2:17 says that these things were shadows of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Christ is the only Mediator between God and man. The New Testament sanctuary and Holy of Holies is not found in a room anywhere on earth like the tabernacle and temple. We now have the true sanctuary, which is located where our High Priest is found, in heaven itself, Hebrews 4:14, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God."

New Testament worship does not contain earthy symbols, which would be far too paltry. Our worship is heaven-centered because our worship is transacted in the heavens themselves. Though the New Testament is simpler in its form than the Old Testament, it brings far greater glory with it because it transpires in the heavens each week, when the Lord's people meet together before the throne upon which Christ sits and with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our midst. We must resist all attempts to drag into New Testament worship the priest craft and ceremonial elements seen, for example, in the Roman Catholic Church and, sadly, among some Protestants who follow them.

Christ continues to serve as the High Priest of His people forever. He intercedes continually, and He does so with compassion and sympathy. Hebrews 2:18, "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Hebrews 4:15, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." We read in Exodus 19:6 God saying to His people, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." By means of the Levitical priests, Israel would learn how it as a nation could approach God through a priestly ministry. This comes, of course, to fulfillment in the New Testament as seen in the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

We read in I Peter 2:9, speaking to the New Testament Gentile church, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." And in Revelation 1:6, "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." The Old Testament material that we have covered enables us to understand this concept. Every believer has direct access into the presence of God, into the Holy of Holies, without an earthly priest or mediator. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." And while believers do not offer bloody sacrifices, we do consecrate our whole lives to Christ. Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

In conclusion, this lecture brings our brief consideration of the first five books of the Bible to a conclusion. God has delivered Israel from bondage, established them as a nation, and provided them with the tabernacle sacrifices and the priesthood, signifying God's presence with them and the means of finding acceptable access to Him. But Israel is still in a howling wilderness. They are not yet in the land God promised. In the next lecture, we will consider the theology of God's revelation in connection to the land and the inheritance that it signifies.

Lecture 13

INHERITANCE

Lecture Theme:

God redeems his people in order to bring them to the promised land of his heavenly inheritance, where he will dwell with them for all of eternity.

Text:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:3–4).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 13

At this point in our course, you will have begun to see that when we come to a text, we must not only understand and interpret and apply the text itself, but in order to appreciate the full wonder of truth, we must read it against the backdrop of God’s overarching big story. For that, we need the whole Bible. So, we’ve been illustrating throughout our study both the need and the method for connecting the dots so that we can better discern God’s message in any given text or story. This will be important for understanding the place of the promised land within God’s history of redemption. Why does the land of Israel feature so prominently throughout the Old Testament? How is it tied to the idea of inheritance? What was the theological significance of all of this for the Old Testament church? How do these themes carry over into the New Testament? How does the New Testament build upon them? Where do we find the ultimate fulfillment of the promised land?

First of all, let’s consider the land of promise, this basic theme. Eden was the original territory given to Adam, a place where God dwelt with him. God commanded Adam in Genesis 1:28, and He said that Adam was to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: . . . and have dominion over every living thing that moved upon the earth.” Well, that paradise was lost through man’s fall into sin, but notice that the new land of promise comes with a similar, a renewed if you will, call to take dominion over the land of Canaan. God called them to purge the land of the heathen and their idolatry and to establish a holy dwelling place with their holy God.

Moses had given them clear instructions. In order to accomplish this, they were to smite and utterly destroy, specifically, seven wicked nations inhabiting the land and to make no covenant with them or to show mercy to them. They were to save nothing alive that breathed. That meant all animals and all people. They were not to save anyone alive, anything alive, among the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites,

the Jebusites, and the Girgashites. You see this in Deuteronomy 7. For any others in the land outside these seven nations, they were to kill the males and save the women, children, cattle, and the spoil. The purpose in all of this was to establish a holy land for God's dwelling.

Now, you will remember that God's call to Abraham included a land of promise. In Genesis 12:1, we read, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show [thee]." He repeats this in His covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17:8, "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." This expectation was increased with Isaac, Jacob, and [Jacob's] sons. Remember Joseph's bones? It was further intensified when Moses led them out of Egypt. They were en route to possess the land promised to them over 400 years earlier, but the land was not an end in itself. It served the promise to the seed. The seed is the first priority. The land serves as an inheritance to them, embodying God's covenant commitment to dwell with them and among His people. The promise was personally applied through the division of the land into allotments given to each tribe, with each tribe assigning portions of their allotment to various families within the tribe as a perpetual inheritance to be preserved.

There is also an exception to this principle. Aaron, the high priest, and his descendants, Levites, were given no inheritance in the land. Their inheritance was to be the Lord Himself. You see this in a few places: Deuteronomy 18:1–2, for example. So, the family of the priests served as a constant reminder that the promise of inheritance was never ultimately found in the geographical real estate, if you will, of the land, but rather in the spiritual inheritance of Christ and His presence with His people, as we will see more in a moment. You must also note the relationship of God's promise of both blessings and curses, and consequently God's demands, within the context of the Covenant of Grace as applied here to the land. The promise had to be received by faith with a believing, responsive obedience. You see, this explains the 10 spies and the two spies. Right? You had 10 [who] were unbelieving, and you had two, namely Caleb and Joshua, [who] were believing. And it explains the cause for God's judgment in stripping Israel of the possession of what was promised to them. They followed the 10 spies in unbelief. They made a breach of covenant. They were covenant-breakers, thus reaping the covenant curses that God had promised. They suffered 40 years in the wilderness, and all of those age 20 years and above perished without ever enjoying the land.

Joshua and Caleb, however, entered the land by faith. Notice the beautiful description of Caleb in Numbers 14:24, "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it." You'll note the emphasis on the fruit of obedience at the beginning and end of the book of Joshua chapter 1 and then chapter 23. As we have seen previously, there is this distinction within the covenant people of God, a distinction between the visible church, those who are outwardly seen, and the invisible church, where those who are true believers. This is referred to in places like Romans 2 and 9 in the New Testament. This important theological principal continues to bear significance in the remainder of the Old Testament and into the New Testament. We also note that those who were originally outside the covenant could be brought in through faith. So, the Gentile Rahab is a notable example during this period. Hebrews 11:31 says, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."

Throughout their sojourning in the wilderness, God still continued mercifully to set the gospel before them. Reference is made to Israel in the wilderness in Hebrews 4:2 which says, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them." One example is the brass serpent in the wilderness. We read about this in Numbers 21. This is fulfilled in Christ. Jesus says so in John 3:14–15. It says, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." So, the gospel continues to be proclaimed in the wilderness. Well, Israel, having broken the covenant through unbelief and disobedience, had to renew the covenant with God before entering the promised land under Joshua. This was a confirmation of the covenant God had already made with them, and this is recorded in Joshua 5, where Joshua also circumcises all the males—it's the sign and seal of the covenant—and keeps the Passover at Gilgal, a covenant meal.

This marks the transition from wilderness to conquest. The manna, we are told, ceases, and the eating of corn begins. At the end of the chapter, Joshua encounters a theophany, and he is told, like Moses in Exodus 3, to

take off his shoe for he was standing on holy ground. Well, much more could be said. You should also notice, for example, the connection between evil and Gerizim in the book of Deuteronomy and what we find in Joshua 8. The book of Joshua outlines the conquest of the land in the first 12 chapters, the division of the land in chapters 13 to 21, and then rest in the land in chapters 22 through 24. We'll return to the significance of this last point, the point about rest, in a moment. We're only providing a brief sketch, but this period is full of rich gospel truth. For example, we can explore the theological significance of the cities of refuge and how they provide background for the revelation of God as our Refuge, and a gospel theme that is woven throughout the New Testament. But we discover throughout the whole Old Testament, God's people possessing the land points to the future reality of living as God's people in His kingdom.

And that brings us to our next point: secondly, a land of fulfillment. Abraham was described as a stranger and sojourner, a tent dweller. This concept was reinforced in the experience of his role as a whole during the period in the wilderness. They too were aliens, foreigners, and pilgrims, but what did this convey? Well it meant they did not belong, but it also meant that they were homeless. They were homeless. They did not have a place that belonged to them where they could dwell and put down roots. They had not arrived in God's land of promise. The tabernacle, as we saw earlier, was a microcosm of heaven, but it reflected the design of the whole land, the whole promised land. The land was a place where God would dwell among His people. So, Abraham, Moses, and Israel as a whole looked beyond the symbol of the land to what it signified, where the promise was to be ultimately fulfilled in permanently dwelling with God in His eternal abode.

We see this taught in the New Testament. Hebrews 11:10 and then verse 16 says that Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He goes on a little later, "But now they desire a better country, that, is a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." That city is the new Jerusalem, and it's described in Revelation 21 and 22. Likewise, Moses had respect unto the recompense of the reward. In the same chapter, Hebrews 11, we read of those in the Old Testament who were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection. You see, they all set their sights beyond the land. They looked to what the land symbolized, the eternal inheritance that is found in heaven. You need to understand the Old Testament vocabulary and concepts because they carry over into the New Testament where they are applied to all believers, Jewish and Gentile believers alike. Christians remain strangers, sojourners, and pilgrims. We are homeless in this world. Our mind is set on things above. Our conversation is in the heavens. We seek a land greater than this world. We are en route to our final destination and home in heaven, dwelling with Christ forever.

The symbolism of the land and the promise of an inheritance as a whole carry over as a dominant theme in the New Testament. True believers are the children of God, and therefore they receive an inheritance from Him. They are destined to enter into the full enjoyment of that promise. I Peter 1:4 affirms that God gives to His people "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." Christ promised this. For example, John 14:2-3, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The focal point is being with Christ, being with Jesus, dwelling with His people in the eternal land of promise. As with the Old Testament priests, our inheritance is found in the Lord Himself, seeing and sharing in His glory. Jesus in His high priestly prayer said in John 17:24, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Once again, all of this is connected to the development and fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace. We read, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament," new covenant, "that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15). Notice the language describing heaven in Revelation 21:7, "he that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." There's the language of the covenant. Just as Canaan was divided into allotments among the people, so the Lord has prepared designated allotments for each believer in heaven. Do you remember the emphasis in Joshua on God giving His people rest in the land? Hebrews makes clear that this too is fulfilled in the ultimate promised land of heaven, our place of rest. Hebrews 4:9 says, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

You should also know that the name *Joshua* is the New Testament equivalent of the name *Jesus*, and both mean the same thing: “Jehovah saves.” So, we read in Matthew 1:21, “and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Joshua pointed forward to Christ, and think of the parallels, for example, of God’s commission to Joshua, in Joshua 1, where He calls him to take the land for the Lord, and on the other hand, Christ’s commission to His Church at the end of Matthew 28, where He tells them to disciple, to take if you will, all nations for Christ. And notice that in both places, God emphasizes the same promise, “I will be with you.”

Some Christians today have confused their theological categories through a misplaced emphasis on the significance of the current geographical land of Israel and its importance for the Jews and the church. They stop at the Old Testament land promise without tracing its original symbolism to its fulfillment in the New Testament. As we have seen, neither the Old Testament saints nor the New Testament writers made this mistake.

Thirdly, let’s consider briefly how the books of Judges and Ruth fit within the theme of this lecture. They both record events that followed the period of conquest under Joshua. We will consider, first of all, the book of Judges. After Joshua and the elders die, Israel enters this period of the judges, which forms a link between Moses and Joshua and the rise of the monarchy in I Samuel. Just as Israel entered into the land by faith in the fruit of obedience, they can only continue to enjoy the land with the same faith and obedience. The covenant promises both blessings and curses, and it brings demands.

So, Judges begins with an account of Israel’s failure to fully obey God’s command to drive out and destroy the wicked nations within the portion God had given them to possess. One of the dominant responses of Israel was their slothfulness, seen in their unwillingness to expel these nations, and in their greed, desiring to use the nations for their own profit. As John Calvin notes, “The dominion of the land which had been divinely offered, they with flagrant ingratitude rejected by taking possession of only a part.” This resulted in idolatry. It resulted in the corruption of the tabernacle, immorality and pride, and God punished them with those who spoiled and plundered the land and forced them into the service of other nations. God warns them that their failure would result in the heathen being “as thorns in your sides and their gods shall be a snare.” We see that in Judges 2:3, again recounted in I Samuel 12.

The whole book follows the same cyclical pattern. You see sin in Israel bubbling up to the surface, and then we see that provoking God’s wrath. He brings affliction, chastening them, and then they cry out in repentance. God responds by sending them deliverers, saviors, the judges; and then the people reform themselves and begin routing the nations; and they enjoy a period of rest, but this cycle continues over and over and over, from sin to God’s wrath to a chastening to their cry to deliverers to reform to routing the nations and to rest. And each time, they quickly returned to their stubborn ways and “did evil in the sight of the Lord.” That language is used over and over: “did evil in the sight of the Lord.” As God had warned the remaining heathen proved a powerful snare by the influence of their wicked ways and their false worship. Please read II Corinthians 6:14–18 because we find in the New Testament God issuing the same warning. In fact, He’s using the same covenant language to the New Testament church. II Corinthians 6:14–18 is built on what we discover in the Old Testament.

Now ultimately, later in the Old Testament, Israel’s idolatry and rebellion will result in their expulsion from the land altogether when they will be taken into exile. We see throughout the book Israel’s inability to enjoy the land because of their sin, and we see God’s gracious provision of these judges, these deliverers, to call them to repentance and to deliver them. But the deliverance only lasted for one generation at a time. Something more was needed. They needed a king after God’s own heart who would do that only which was right in God’s eyes, as we read in I Kings 14:8, and who would uphold the rule and reign of God’s redemptive kingdom. The last verse of the book of Judges says this, “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

Well, we also need to consider Ruth. The story of Ruth took place during the period of the judges, and it focuses on the experience of one family, that of Elimelech and Naomi. Israel had experienced the famine, a sign of the curse of the covenant, as seen in Deuteronomy 28 verses 5 and following. Elimelech left Bethlehem his home. *Bethlehem* means “house of bread.” And he left the promised land, the place of God’s presence and promise and provision, all in rebellion against God’s commandment and went to live among the pagan people of Moab. There he dies. His sons marry two Moabite women, and the sons die, so Naomi returns to her homeland. We have a beautiful description of Ruth’s faith, her daughter-in-law’s faith, and her conversion, in cleaving to Jehovah.

The whole book is full of beautiful portrayals of gospel truth, but we can only touch the main theme of Ruth as it relates to this lecture.

The themes are tied back to the law and tied forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. So first of all, you need to understand the law in order to understand Ruth. And there are two important institutions in the law that we need to explain. The first is called the Levirate marriages. You can read about this in Deuteronomy 25 verses five and following. If an Israelite died without a seed, his brother or a near relative was responsible to marry his widow and to raise up a progeny for his brother and to thereby preserve the inheritance and land of his family. Well, from what we have learned, you know why this was so important. This institution, the Levirate marriages, was a ceremonial exception to the general rule regarding marriage. But secondly, we need to consider what we call the Goel Institution. You'll read about this in Leviticus 25 as well.

The Hebrew word *Goel* means Kinsman or Redeemer or near of kin or next of kin. This person was responsible to buy back or redeem the land of a family member who had lost it for various reasons, thus protecting and defending the family. While this has great prominence in Ruth—the word *goel*, word for kinsman redeemer, is used 20 times in this brief book, so it's obviously a dominant theme—behind this institution, you need to understand, was the fact that God Himself was the Kinsman Redeemer of Israel. Many passages could be cited to prove that God was the One Who had redeemed Israel from Egypt and brought them to the promised land. The land was ultimately God's land, the place of His dwelling, and so [it] was not to be sold but redeemed. The kinsman redeemer had the right, although [he] didn't have the obligation in every case, he had the right to redeem a family member. He could redeem a family member from slavery. He could redeem their land from being sold to another. He could fulfill the Levirate marriage that we spoke of earlier, and he could serve as the avenger of blood in the cases of murder. This is part of the background to the cities of refuge. So, he served as God's agent to redeem persons, property, blood, and the name and posterity of a family member.

Well, you can easily see how Ruth fits within the theme of this lecture. It is not just a nice story. It provides revelation of God and His gospel grace. Best of all, the main character is not Naomi or Ruth or Boaz; it is Christ, our Kinsman Redeemer. Like Boaz, Christ secures the names and eternal inheritance of His people in heaven. Christ purchases our inheritance and makes us joint heirs with Him. You come to the end of chapter 4 at the end of the book of Ruth, and you find a genealogy. Now the recorded genealogies in the Bible tend to be portions that many people want to skip over, and this is a grave mistake. God never includes an unnecessary word in Scripture. You'll notice that the book of Ruth ends with a genealogy, and you may have wondered, "why?" Well, we're going to answer that question in the next lecture on David.

Now that you understand the redemptive historical significance of the concept of the land and of inheritance, you can see how the New Testament builds on this theme. You'll find copious references to the inheritance that Christians obtain in Christ Jesus and through His gospel. In the words of Colossians 1:12, it will lead you to give "thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Well, in conclusion, we have learned in this lecture that God redeems His people in order to provide in order to bring them to the promised land of His heavenly inheritance where He will dwell with them for all of eternity. The end of both Judges and Ruth set the stage in preparing us for the provision of a king. In the next lecture, we will consider the place of David, Israel's greatest king, within the unfolding revelation of God's redemption.

Lecture 14

DAVID

Lecture Theme:

God's covenant with David further intensifies the promise of the coming Seed. David's future Son will be greater than David, as the King of kings, and his kingdom will be an eternal kingdom.

Text:

“Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David . . . being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne” (Acts 2:29, 30).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 14

Children often enjoy copying a picture with the use of a blank piece of thin translucent tracing paper. When they lay the thin paper over top of the picture, they can see through it to the image underneath. They then use their pencil to copy the artwork below. They take great delight in the final product, which is of course only possible because of the original. Likewise, we are told that King David was a man after God's heart. The Lord traced out His own character in the heart and life of his servant David in order that he might reflect God's own glory. God raised up David to exemplify God's rule and to advance God's kingdom.

Let me begin with a few questions. Was it sinful for Israel to desire a king? Why did they need a king? What role would the king have? What did God reveal about His plan of redemption through the reign of David? How is God's covenant with David connected to the rest of God's grand story? Where is Christ revealed in this period of history, and how is David connected to the coming of Christ? Throughout the whole Old Testament, the fact of God's people possessing the land points to the future reality of living as God's people in His kingdom. In Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, we see a kingdom emerging, but we're left wondering, 'Where is the king?'

We'll consider a few points under this lecture. First of all, preparation for David. Under Moses and Joshua, Israel became a national theocracy with God as their supreme King and the authority of His law as their standard. The period of judges demonstrated their slothfulness and rebellion and their need for more than temporary judges given to a single generation. They needed a king, but a certain type of king. Ruth reveals that David's ancestry emerged from an instance of kinship redemption. God's king would rule in order to redeem. We see the description of God's king in Psalm 72:14, "He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight."

God prepared the way from within the service of the tabernacle. Remember the account given to us of Hannah's son of impossibility, Samuel, who would prepare the way as a preacher of repentance and righteousness.

He would anoint David as king. Notice the words in Hannah's song in I Samuel 2:10, "the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." We learned in the previous lecture that prophets, priests, and kings were all anointed, and their offices pointed forward to the Lord's Anointed, Jesus Christ. The expectation of a Messianic King goes all the way back to Genesis 49, and we see it unfold beautifully under David. But notice that there are some transitions that take place during this period. The worship of God is transferred from Shiloh to Jerusalem. The leader of God's people transitions from the period of judges to the house of David, and the tribal league, if you will, in Israel ends up becoming a unified kingdom.

As you approach the beginning of I Samuel, there's a question that we end up facing. It's a question about the problem of kingship. What do I mean by that? Let me ask you a question. Was Israel's request for a king sinful? In some ways, it does seem so because we read in I Samuel 12:12, "And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God was your king." And again, in I Samuel 8:7, "And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Israel recognized the problem because in I Samuel 12:19 it says, "And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants under the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king." That raises a problem, but the request for a king was not sinful in itself. How do we know that? Well, because God promised a king in Genesis 49:10, and even the law itself provides for a king, for example, Deuteronomy 17. Hannah prophesied of a coming king.

The problem was found in the people. They requested, they said, "a king to judge us like all the nations" (I Samuel 8:5), "a king to judge us like all the nations." The desire to be like the nations was rebellion against the command of God. That is why God says, "show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them" (I Samuel 8:9). You see, it was the manner, not the matter, of kingship. God disapproved of their desire to imitate the nations and thereby reject their God. It was a rejection of the covenant and of God's rule. They wanted security and safety, not from the provisions of God's covenant, but in a way that no pagan ruler could ever provide. But God would provide a king after His own heart, David, one who would exemplify the Lord's rule. But before that happens, the people rebelled, and God permitted the choice of Saul to give them a taste of their sin. If they had waited on God, He would have provided a king according to His law. Therefore, Saul represents the people's rejection of the Lord, of Jehovah, as King.

We come to see that Saul rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord therefore rejected him as king. That brings us to David himself. Now, we need to return to our question raised toward the end of the last lecture about the genealogy at the end of the book of Ruth. One of the main purposes of Ruth is to supply us with the genealogy of David and to pave the way to the rise of his reign. You'll notice this genealogy began with Pharez, who you should remember was the illegitimate son [from] the incestuous relationship between Judah and his daughter-in-law, who was pretending to be a harlot. The family tree further reveals that David had a significant proportion of Gentile ancestors. In fact, he was 3/16 Gentile. This included Rahab, a harlot who came to faith, and Ruth, a believing Moabitess. This has further significance when you turn to the first chapter of the New Testament, Matthew 1, and discover that this same genealogy continues to the person of Jesus.

Here is the gospel writ large. But when God rejected Saul, we read in I Samuel 13:14, "the LORD hath sought for him a man after his own heart." It goes on a bit later, "thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee," speaking to Saul. And then, if you take that passage and turn to when Samuel anointed David, we read in chapter 16:7, "the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." From David's youth all the way through to his old age, he had the consistent testimony of having both a shepherd's heart and a warrior spirit. He reflected God's own character. Psalm 80:1 one describes God: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth." By way of parallel, II Samuel 5:2 says of David, "Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel." See the combination of Shepherd King coming together in David? Here is God's own estimation of David [in] I Kings 9:4, "as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness," and in I Kings 14:8, "as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in my eyes."

And you may be thinking to yourself, 'Well, we know about David's history.' And you know, of course, of David's public sins, and you may think to yourself that Saul's sins seem less significant by contrast, but Saul repeatedly defied the first table of the law, the first four commandments, in what many think of as small details. But, as we saw in the lecture on Sinai, the first table has first priority. His hypocritical response was to make excuses and to blame others. David by contrast had a great love for God's law and a passion for God's worship done God's way. He did violate second table commandments, but his heart was borne out in acute brokenness, repentance, and renewed obedience, as we see in Psalm 51. God chose David as a man after His own heart to be the great king and the sweet psalmist of Israel.

Secondly, we need to consider the covenant with David. The climax of the unfolding of the Covenant of Grace in the Old Testament comes in God's covenant with David. God's purpose to redeem His people finds expression in the way He instituted His rule over them. The seed of the woman will be a kingly seed. There are three events that set the stage leading to God's covenant with David in II Samuel 7. First of all, in II Samuel 5, David conquered Jerusalem, which was set in the middle of the country, joining the two major sections: north and south. Jerusalem would become the centerpiece and the jewel of the kingdom, and Jerusalem become a picture of the New Testament church as evidenced in the language of the New Testament. So, for example, [in] Galatians 4, Paul refers to the church as the "Jerusalem which is above... is the mother of us all" (verse 26). You see the church described in Revelation 21 as the city, as Jerusalem, coming down from heaven.

The second significant event is found in II Samuel 6 where David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. The ark represented the throne of God, the place of God's presence and lordship on earth. David longed for the manifestation of God's reign and to bring his own domain, David's domain, under God's authority. This provides the backdrop for the merger of David's kingship with God's throne, which we'll talk more about in a moment. The third event is found in II Samuel chapter 7:1. David found rest from all of his enemies as foretold in God's promise regarding the land, and so he will rule from a position of security under God. These three events anticipate in shadow form the coming of Christ's present reign.

After his resurrection, Christ ascended on high to the heavenly Jerusalem, the Mount Zion from which God reigns, and Christ merged His Messianic throne with God's eternal Lordship. He said in Matthew 28:18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Christ the King will serve as a covenant Mediator. He will represent the people before God and God before the people. You should also notice the great emphasis that is placed on the connection between David's passion to build God's house and God's promise to build David's house, that is, his posterity. David's zeal was for the glory of God, and God secured that with the promise to David that would be fulfilled in the coming of Christ, Who would dwell among His people and Who would reign triumphantly in the advance of His eternal kingdom.

The rest of the Old Testament will continue to appeal to the Covenant of David, to the sure mercies of David, exemplifying the development of the Covenant of Grace and setting before Israel God's promises, calling them to faith and repentance and renewed obedience. But the key verse in the Davidic Covenant is found in the reference to David's seed in II Samuel 7:14, "I will be his father," God says, "and he shall be my son." What does that mean? He is a man that will be God's own Son. These words would have rattled the minds of those who heard them. The seed of David would be that Man, would be God's own Son. Now, this is quoted in reference to Christ in Hebrews 1:5, "For unto which of the angels said he had any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me Son?" showing the superiority of the glory of Christ. David's promised Son will be God's own Son, and so we need to explore this next.

Thirdly, David's greater Son. The Lord promised that David's seed would sit upon his throne forever without interruption. Well, we hear that. We understand it, but then we read forward in the Bible and in history, and it appears that the reign of David's house eventually ceased. What do we make of this? Well, here is where we begin to see the greater glory of what God promised to David. We saw that David's throne was made God's throne. The two are brought together, and so it doesn't surprise us, at the coronation of Solomon, [that] we read in I Chronicles 29:23, "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him." The throne of David's house served as an earthly symbol of God's own heavenly throne from which He ruled His people through His anointed king.

The promise to David's seed is found in Christ. Paul wrote to the Romans, and he said, "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3). Christ is the One Who would ascend and be exalted to sit upon God's eternal throne. He now rules in heaven at the right hand of God, the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament shadow found in the merger of David's throne and God's throne. At the end of Revelation, we hear Christ say from heaven, "I am the root and the offspring of David" (Revelation 22:16). The Old Testament continued to prophesy of Christ's coming. For example, Isaiah 11:1–2 prophesied of Christ, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD."

Christ is called the King of Kings. He is described as Messiah the Prince, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Governor of the nations, all language drawn from Scripture. The New Testament makes repeated references to the present reign of Christ as the ascended King. Peter at Pentecost says, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David" (Acts 2:29). He goes on, "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:30). You see that? The Lord Jesus Christ sitting upon the throne of heaven fulfills the promise to David. We sing of Christ's kingship all through the Psalms. Psalm 72 points to Christ's glorious reign and finds its fulfillment in Christ's own kingdom, which "shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (verse 8). We read the thrilling descriptions of Christ at the end in verses 17 to 19, which conclude with these words, "And blessed be his glorious name forever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen." Christ's throne fulfills the promise to David's throne, and His throne is above and beyond the expansion of David's kingdom.

His glory will fill not the original promised land, but it will fill the whole earth. The answer to Shorter Catechism question 26 says, "Christ executeth the office of a King in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies." The exercise of Christ's reign is a great comfort to the Christian, but there's more. Every contemporary believer belongs as a citizen of Christ's kingdom. We have been born in various countries, but our ultimate citizenship is in heaven. Our loyalties and allegiance do not belong to our country of birth but to the unshakable and permanent kingdom of Christ, which will outlast all other nations. But there is even more. As sons and daughters of God, believers are of royal blood as joint heirs with Christ. That means Christians are kings. Every Christian is a king. God has made us kings and has promised that all who overcome will sit with Christ upon His throne and judge angels. We see this in Revelation 1, Revelation 3, and so on.

And so, Christ's kingship is connected to the experience and privileges of the Christian. Well, if you put the pieces together, we start with David, and we look at the preparation and all that God did to raise up David as a king after His own heart who would have passion for God's glory and would uphold His worship and His law, who would rule in the place of God as His representative, exercising the reign of God over His people. We begin there, but we connect all of that, in the reign of David and the covenant with David, to Christ. And in connecting it to Christ, as we have just seen, we connect it to the Christian. These passages, like the rest of the Old Testament, are exceedingly relevant for the contemporary believer.

Well, in conclusion, God's covenant with David further intensifies the promise of the coming seed. David's future Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be greater than David. He will be the King of kings, and His kingdom will be an eternal kingdom. But David was not just a king. He was also a prophet, and God planned another very important role for David to play, one that would exert a daily influence over God's people for the rest of history. In the next lecture, we will discover exactly what God intended.

Lecture 15

PSALMS

Lecture Theme:

God provides his church with a permanent book of inspired songs in which we sing to Christ, of Christ and with Christ.

Text:

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 15

This is Lecture 15, entitled “Psalms.” Have you ever had a tune stuck in your head, something running in the background of your mind? Music is a powerful thing. If you join words to music, it greatly enhances your ability to remember the words. It makes them stick. Songs shape and mold us. God designed this to be the case. In order to impress His will and Word on our minds, He provided a Book of Songs for the church to memorize and sing. What place does the book of Psalms have in the Bible as a whole, and what use does the New Testament make of the Psalms? Why does God include an inspired Book of Songs in the middle of the Bible? What is the theological content of the Psalms, and how do they relate to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ? What role should the Psalms have in the church and in the Christian life? The Lord wants you to be excited about this book and the important place that it has in your life. The Hebrew title for the book of Psalms means *praises*. God inspired His prophets to compose songs, which were collected into this book, and included it in the canon of Scripture as a precious gift to His church throughout all ages.

In this lecture, we will explore God’s appointed purpose for the Psalms and the content He included in it. It’s essential that we recognize the role of the Psalms within the flow of God’s history of redemption, which is why we devote one whole lecture to it. By the end of this lecture, I hope you will have gained a renewed enthusiasm for how precious this book is to the believer as God’s own Book of Songs.

First of all, the central place of the Psalms. And I want to persuade you of the importance of this amazing book. Not only are the Psalms found in the middle of the Bible, but God gave them a central place within the church throughout redemptive history. Psalms is the Old Testament book most often quoted in the New Testament by far. It’s referred to on an average every 19 verses in the New Testament. So, it has a central place in the New Testament. This alone would require intimate familiarity with them, but they also have a vital place

in Scripture as a whole. The Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther, said the Psalms were unlike any other book. He called it a little Bible because the Lord included in concentrated form everything you find elsewhere in the Bible: history, law, prophecy, gospel, the mission to the nations, every aspect of Christ's person and work, all the doctrines of Scripture, every part of the Christian life and experience, and on and on it goes. We will explore the content later in this lecture.

They also have a crucial place in the history of the Old Testament revelation. While most of them were written during the period of David, we have Psalms written from the time of Moses all the way to the Babylonian exile. Several Psalms rehearse the history of the redemption of God's people. They are central to the church in all ages as a permanent manual of inspired songs. Jesus sang them. After all, they were His own songs. The apostles and apostolic church sang them. After the New Testament era, the Psalms were the only hymnbook the church used. In the early centuries of the church, presbyters were required to memorize all 150 Psalms, and they were designed by God for use in the church for the remainder of all of history as we could easily illustrate. The Psalms unite the church throughout the world. Churches in China, Indonesia, Nigeria, Germany, Mexico, and everywhere else should be unified in the sung praise they offer to God in worship through their respective languages, just as they are united in the reading and preaching of the whole Bible. The Psalms also unify the church throughout history. Those in the 21st century are still singing the same inspired praise that was sung through the Old Testament, the New Testament, and all ages of the church.

Lastly, and to this point, they function as vital to the life of the individual believer. John Calvin writes, in the introduction to his commentary on the Psalms, "I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, an anatomy of all parts of the soul. For there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all of the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated." The universal experience of believers confirms this truth. God provide songs for times of sadness, joy, fear, triumph, trust, hope, repentance, and every other part of Christian experience. Whatever our condition, God puts a song in our mouth to express ourselves to Him in worship. So, we see the centrality of the Psalms within the church and the Christian life.

But secondly, we need to consider the theological themes that are found within the book of Psalms. Listen to the words of Basil, one of the early church theologians. He said, "The book of Psalms is a compendium of all divinity, a common store of medicine for the soul, a universal magazine of good doctrines profitable to everyone in all conditions." This is similar to Luther's description of the Psalms as a little Bible. They set forth the mind and heart of God Himself. As Basil said, it is full of good doctrine.

The studying of the theology that is contained in the Psalter will take a lifetime, but we'll highlight a few examples to get us started. But first of all, you should understand something about the structure of the book. The Psalms are divided into five books, if you will. You have Psalms 1 to 41, secondly 42 to 72, thirdly 73 to 89, fourthly 90 to 106, and then the fifth book is Psalm 107–150. Each of the first four books end with a doxology, and then the fifth book concludes with the climax of five psalms of praise, Psalms 146 to 150. As we've already seen, they're composed by several authors, David being chief, and all of them being prophets. Psalm 1 and 2 form two halves and serve as the preface to the whole Psalter, anticipating major themes that permeate the whole book. For example, Psalm 1 focuses on God's Law, and Psalm 2 centers on God's Messiah. Both of them contrast believers who submit to God's law and to Christ and those enemies of God who disobey and rebel.

There are a variety of types of Psalms. Eight Psalms are acrostics. That is that they follow the order of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet through their sequence of verses. We also find the Psalms of Ascent, Psalms 120 to 134, that the Jewish pilgrims used when ascending to Jerusalem in their pilgrimage. There are also historical Psalms that recollect and rehearse God's dealings with His people in the past. For example, Psalms 105 and 106, and then later Psalm 135 through 137. There are also Psalms of penitence, at least 14, with an emphasis on confessing sin, Psalm 51 being the best known. While every psalm contains revelation of Christ, some are singled out as particular Messianic Psalms with a concentrated focus on God's coming Christ. So, for example, Psalm 42, 45, 69, 72, Psalm 110, Psalm 118, these would be examples.

But we should also highlight a handful of the theological themes that God reveals in the Psalms. Psalms is one of the most Christ-centered books in the Bible. Most of us would have loved to have been with the two

disciples on the road to Emmaus when Jesus expounded what was written in the Psalms concerning Himself. Hebrews 1 is one of the most potent New Testament chapters on the glory of Christ. When the author of Hebrews determined to establish the supremacy of Christ, he quoted the Psalms 7 times in that brief chapter. Every aspect of the person and work of Christ is covered in the Psalms: His three offices of prophet, priest, and king; various aspects both of his humiliation and exultation; we have his incarnation; his ministry; his betrayal; his atonement and death; his burial and resurrection; his ascension and his reign; we sing of him as Savior and Judge and Shepherd and many other things. We could go on and on, but to illustrate the invaluable place of God's revelation of Christ in the Psalms, did you know that we learn more about Christ's internal experience on the cross in the Psalms than we do in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? Without the Psalms, we would have an incomplete knowledge of Christ.

The Psalms are also full of the application of redemption in the gospel. We learn, of course, about election but also of imputation and forgiveness, regeneration, the Christian's justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification. The Psalms are full of the mission of taking the gospel to all the nations of the world. They are, if you will, inspired missionary hymns. Consider Psalm 67 as one prime example. The Psalms are full of the revelation of God: all His names, His attributes, and His works—creation, providence, redemption. You will find nothing missing. For example, God's supreme reign as King is celebrated all through the book, setting forth His comprehensive sovereignty over all things. They also point beyond us into the future of Christ's Church in this age and to the judgment day and heaven and hell to come.

Lastly under this point, we must take up one theme that sets God's songs apart from uninspired hymns of human composition. Namely, the imprecations; imprecations are where God's people are calling down His curses on wicked enemies and foes. This theme permeates the whole book. Perhaps you've wondered why the book called *praises* in Hebrew opens without the word *praise* but instead a detailed contrast between the godly and the wicked, complete with blessings and curses. We finally reach the first mention of praise at the end of Psalm 7, where the name of God most high is praised for His righteousness. You see, these songs focus on God Himself, His name, His character, His thoughts, ways and works, unlike most modern worship songs. David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, was chosen by God as a man after His own heart, whose desires, thoughts, emotions, praises, and prayers were aligned with God's.

Remember the tracing paper illustration from a previous lecture? This clarifies the often-misunderstood place of imprecations all through the Psalms: the believer's desire and prayer for the destruction of wicked enemies and the deliverance and exultation of the righteous. It expresses the mind and will of the believer conformed to God's own mind and will. So, for example, in Psalm 139:19–22, we read, "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, Oh God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, Oh LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies." Our minds and emotions must be conformed to God's will and most zealous for God's glory. The fact that this theme is entirely absent from uninspired hymns has warped the piety of God's people, a problem unknown to previous ages of the church who used God's songs. God is to be worshiped in the beauty of His holiness, and His righteous wrath and perfect justice are worthy of our praise. Those who feel uncomfortable with this must remember that the saints will sing Alleluias when God judges and destroys His enemies on the Last Day. Consider, for example, Revelation chapter 19. Understanding the theology of the Psalms demonstrates their full sufficiency as songs for the church in every age, which brings us to our third and last point.

We'll consider the Psalms as inspired praise. God has provided the Psalms as a permanent manual of sung praise. This is God's inspired hymnbook for the church in all ages, and we see the basis for this under three points. First of all, regarding inspired prophets, the Bible teaches unequivocally that divine inspiration is a necessary qualification for writing worship songs. There is a connection between prophecy and praise. The writers understood that it was necessary to possess the gift of prophecy and that they were writing inspired songs for worship. In II Samuel 23:1–2, we read, "Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." As Acts 1:16 and Acts 2:29–31 state, David was a prophet who spoke by the Holy Ghost.

Moses, who wrote Psalm 90, was also a prophet. Others, like Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman, are called seers, but we read in I Samuel 9:9 and elsewhere, “for he that is now called a Prophet was before time called a Seer.” In I Chronicles 25, we read, “Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy.” And it describes their sons prophesying, and it goes on, “All of these were the sons of Heman the king’s seer in the words of God.” Again, it goes on a little bit later, “All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of God, according to the king’s order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight.” During the Old Testament spiritual reformations under King Hezekiah and Josiah, they returned to God’s inspired songs. II Chronicles 29:30 says, “Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.”

The same principle could be illustrated throughout the Old Testament. God made clear His criteria, which is carried as the standard into the New Testament. The English Puritan, John Owen, wrote, “In every ordinance or worship, we consider God’s appointment of it and submit our souls and consciences unto His authority therein. This is the first thing that faith regards in divine worship. It discerns that God hath commanded, and therein lies His authority as He required it.” The office of prophet has now expired, and the production of inspired songs has ceased. We find no warrant in Scripture for the use of uninspired human compositions in the singing of God’s praise in public worship.

The second point relates to canonical songs. Scripture provides, and we possess, a complete deposit of inspired songs in the Canon of Scripture. Therefore, the Psalms have a unique and authoritative status restricting us to what God made available in the Bible, and God commands us to use them in worship. For example, Psalm 105:2, “Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him.” The divine provision of a collection of inspired songs constitutes a prescription for their use. Their mere existence proves this. The fact that God provided a canonical text for reading, 66 books of the Bible, proves the warrant to use it for such. We have no more warrant to substitute man’s songs for God’s songs and worship than we do to substitute another text for Scripture reading, like the Apocrypha or something. To be clear, God appointed singing in His worship, and He provided the text to be sung. If you walked into a church, and someone handed you a book with the title “Worship Songs” written on the front cover, you would clearly understand its purpose. That is what God did with Psalms. God provides ordinances and prescribes the content: a Bible for reading; the Psalms for singing; the help of the Holy Spirit for praying, not a prayer book; water for baptism; bread and wine for the Lord’s Supper; gifts of preaching for sermons; and so on. We must stick to God’s appointed ordinances.

In Colossians 3:16, we read, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” And in the parallel passage, in Ephesians 5:18–19, we read, “but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” All three Greek words for psalms, hymns, and songs, are used in the titles of the Greek translation of the Psalms. Paul often multiplies words to describe one thing. He’ll speak of signs, wonders, and miracles. In this case, he uses three words for the Psalms. You’ll note the word *spiritual*. The word *spiritual* can qualify the word *song*, or that adjective can qualify all three words, but in every other place in the New Testament, which is 25 times, the Greek word *spiritual* refers to inspired texts. So in Ephesians 5, Paul says, be filled with the Spirit, singing the songs of the Spirit. In Colossians 3, he says, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, singing the word of Christ in the Psalms. Christ Himself sings them with and through His people, His word dwelling richly in us. Rather than contradicting the doctrines we have outlined, these two texts, Colossians 3 and Ephesians 5, reinforce the teaching of Scripture elsewhere. The book of Psalms is a complete and permanent book of praise for all ages.

Thirdly, a word about the sufficiency of the Psalms. In light of what we have seen, the Psalms are fully sufficient as a permanent manual of praise. God determines what is sufficient. The New Testament clearly saw no inadequacy in the songs and neither has the church throughout the ages. The early church champion theologian, Athanasius, wrote, “I believe that a man can find nothing more glorious than these Psalms, for they embrace the whole life of man, the affections of his mind and emotions of his soul, to praise and glorify God. He can select a

psalm suited to every occasion and thus will find that they were written for him.” The problem of any perceived inadequacy in the Psalms for New Testament believers lies entirely with us, not the Psalms. Psalm 22:3 says, “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” God inhabits the praises derived from His own mouth.

These are Jesus’s songs. He sang the songs He gave. We sing with Him, and we sing about Him, and we sing to Him in the Psalms. In fact, we sing the Psalms more meaningfully as those who live after the coming of Christ. We see and delight in all that they reveal of Christ even more than the Old Testament church because we sing them in light of their New Testament fulfillment. You think of the references to Jerusalem, Zion, and the sacrifices, and so on, pictures of the church and of the sacrifice of Christ. Often, this is evident even in the Psalms themselves. Psalm 141 speaks of incense, but it makes clear that’s a picture of the prayers of God’s people that are rising heavenward. John Calvin was right when he wrote these words, “Now what St. Augustine says is true: that no one is able to sing things worthy of God, unless he has received them from Him. Wherefore, when we have looked thoroughly everywhere and searched high and low, we shall find no better songs, no more appropriate to the purpose than the Psalms of David, which the Holy Spirit made and spoke through him. And furthermore, when we sing them, we are certain that God puts the words in our mouth as if He Himself were singing in us to exalt His glory.”

The Huguenots, that is the reformed Christians in France, provide one beautiful example of the influence of the singing of Psalms on God’s people. Those writing at the time tell us that Psalm-singing was one of the greatest influences on the spread of the Reformation of biblical religion throughout France. These believers memorize the Psalms and sung them with intensity all day long in villages and towns throughout the whole country. They could be heard by school children walking on the road, workman plowing the fields, families around their homes, as well as in casual gatherings, and always in public worship. The reformed armies sang them going into war. At a crucial point in battle, their captain would call to his men to raise their voices, and the sung words of Psalm 68 would peel out over the din of cannons as the godly drove themselves like a wedge through their enemies. You can see how Psalm singing permeated their lives. The Word of Christ was dwelling in them richly.

The Psalms should be memorized and sung by believers every day and by the church whenever it gathers. This will enable us to experience the rich blessing described in Psalm 1 of meditating on God’s Law, or Word, day and night and the spiritual fruitfulness that is promised as a result.

In conclusion, I hope that you have a new enthusiasm for this priceless book of the Bible. You must commit yourself to a lifelong, concentrated study and mastery of the Psalms. God has provided us with a permanent book of inspired songs in which we sing of Christ, to Christ, and with Christ. In the next lecture, we will consider the place of Solomon within God’s history of redemption.

Lecture 16

SOLOMON

Lecture Theme:

All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ, who is the Wisdom of God.

Text:

“The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here” (Matthew 12:42).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 16

In every age the world reveres and listens to those they deem wise men. Wisdom is considered a valuable virtue. Likewise, no one wishes to be considered a fool by their peers or others, but herein lies a problem because the presence of sin in the world has distorted true wisdom. Paul says that the world considers God’s wisdom, which is real wisdom, foolishness, and he says the world’s pseudo-wisdom must be exposed as foolishness. When the Bible uses the word *fool*, it is not calling people names. Foolishness describes the character and nature of a person who does not fear God and submit to His Word. So, what is true wisdom? How does wisdom relate to the fear of God? What role did God give to Solomon in all of this? How did the wisest man produce a foolish son? Where did Solomon turn from wisdom to folly, and what were the consequences for Israel? How does Solomon relate to Christ? How is Christ the true depository of God’s wisdom? Where does the contemporary Christian turn to learn God’s wisdom today?

The Bible describes Solomon as the wisest man alive in his day. This was so significant at the time and still recognized today, but the name Solomon was synonymous with wisdom. It brought him international fame as a world attraction, but he did not embody perfect wisdom. He fell from the heights of wisdom and descended into an abyss of folly. We will explore some of the theology that God revealed during Solomon’s reign. First of all, let’s consider the historical context. The glory of Israel was secured through David’s reign, and it continued during the reign of his son Solomon. We read in II Samuel 12:24–25 that Solomon was given the name Jedidiah, which means loved by Jehovah. And of course, the name *Solomon* itself means *peace*. In I Chronicles 22:9, God promised David, “I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.” Whereas David was a man of war, Solomon enjoyed the fruits of peace during his life. God also provided unparalleled prosperity to Israel. Israel’s peace and prosperity

reached its climax under Solomon which would never be seen again in Israel's history. In I Kings 2, beginning at verse two and following, David charged Solomon to stand to God's covenant, depending on God's promise, and upholding God's law. You will notice in that passage how David brings together the Mosaic covenant and the Davidic covenant as two aspects of the one Covenant of Grace.

We have seen throughout this course that the works of the incomprehensible God are not simply historical accounts. The examples of godliness and ungodliness, blessings and curses, must be connected to God's intended future plans, signifying and testifying to Christ in the unfolding of God's grand plan of redemption. Well, Solomon began well but ended dismally. He began with wisdom and ended with folly. Those who went before Solomon, some of them, were known for wisdom as well, such as Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9) and David himself (II Samuel 14:20), yet the Bible places greater emphasis on biblical wisdom in relation to Solomon than anyone else in Israel's history. In I Kings 3, we read that Solomon responded to God's offer of granting whatever he wanted by asking for wisdom. God's provision gave Solomon wisdom that exceeded everyone in the world, causing him to reach, as I say, international fame. It is seen in I Kings 4:30-34 where we read, "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt." Later on, it says, "and there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom." The Queen of Sheba is an example of one attracted to his wisdom, and what she found exceeded all of her expectations. Solomon's reign was designed by God to influence and impact the nations, but soon the nations began to influence him.

Despite his bright beginning, he yielded to the temptation to turn from God's law and the demands of His covenant. He married pagan wives, contrary to God's prohibition. These wives brought an evil influence that led him into idolatry just as God had warned in Deuteronomy 7:3-4. All of this is described in I Kings 11:1-6, and though it's a little lengthy, it's worth us reading and hearing. It says, "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD as David his father."

In response to Solomon's idolatry, the Lord was angry and pronounced a judgment, namely, that God would rend the kingdom and give most of it to another. However, because of Solomon's father David and his covenant faithfulness, God would delay the judgment until after Solomon's death, and God would preserve one tribe to Solomon's son for David's sake and for Jerusalem's sake. But Solomon sins sowed the seeds of disintegration that produced evil fruit throughout the remainder of Israel's history. It paved the way for the division of the kingdom and the influences of idolatry in both countries, which we'll consider in Lecture 18 under the kingdom. Let's turn our attention now to some of the theological themes we must grasp in these portions of Scripture concerning the reign of Solomon.

And so, secondly, theological themes. First of all, the most obvious is the wisdom theme. Now we learn that God Himself is the source of all wisdom. It's not just that He has wisdom and displays wisdom. He is wisdom. Wisdom is an attribute of God, a description of His very being. He is described as "God only wise" (Romans 16:27) and "the only wise God our Savior" in Jude 25. In Isaiah 40:14, we hear this question, "with whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" The answer, of course, is "no one." God has no equal. Since God Himself is wise, His Word also conveys wisdom. Remember Deuteronomy 4:6 says that the law of God was Israel's wisdom. It says, "keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." By way of contrast, man's corrupt mind is vain in imaginations, and his foolish heart is darkened. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," as we read in Romans 1. Isaiah 55 teaches that God's ways and God's thoughts are higher than man's ways and his thoughts, higher than the heavens are to the earth. True wisdom is

God-centered, and it is based on God's will found in His Word. So, wisdom is the ability to apply the Scriptures to practical areas of life by seeing things from God's perspective, understanding God's will, and following God's Word. But wisdom is also tied to the doctrine of covenant.

In Proverbs chapters 1 to 9, wisdom is personified in the covenantal language of marriage. She, that is wisdom, cries and calls out to God's people. They're called to hearken and not refuse. When heeded, "wisdom entereth into thine heart," it says, "to deliver thee from the strange woman, which forsaketh the guide of her youth and forgetteth the covenant of her God" (Proverbs 2:10, 16). Notice those words *forsaken* or *forsaketh* and *forgetteth*. These are words the prophets use a great deal. This covenant-breaking constitutes harlotry and adultery, a theme we will take up under our consideration of the prophets, but notice the way of the strange woman picturing folly in contrast to Lady wisdom. Notice how that way leads to hell and the chambers of death as we see in Proverbs 7:27. Wisdom is found in not forgetting God's law and in keeping God's commandments (chapter 3 verse 1). Notice in 3:18, it is a tree of life. That's language connecting us back to Eden and connecting us forward to heaven. Notice also that Hebrews 12 verse 5 and following refers to Proverbs 3:11–12 regarding those who are trained by the loving chastening of God. You see, the call to forsake folly and to flee to wisdom is the call to keep covenant with God. Solomon was initially praised for choosing wisdom, but it was intended for more than just himself and even more than just Israel. Notice in I Kings 10:23–25 it says, "So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. And all the earth sought to Solomon." It goes on, "and they brought every man his present." As we saw earlier, God intended Solomon's wisdom as a light to the nations, nations who would come to see God's glory and the wisdom of His law. The Psalms and prophets reinforce the point that God was intending this gift of wisdom to draw in the nations and to display His glory. And bringing the nations under the knowledge of God, He also gathered vast resources as an inheritance for His people and kingdom. The other nations contributed large sums of money that were used for the building of the temple. In fact, Israel's wealth exceeded that of any other kingdom so that silver became as common as stones in the street, and cups were made of gold.

Another theme is the fear of the Lord. Wisdom has its starting place in the fear of God, which you see several times in Proverbs. The theologian Geerhardus Vos says, "The fear of Jehovah remains throughout the Old Testament the generic name for religion." We cannot overemphasize the importance of the fear of God in Scripture. It is traced from the beginning to the very end as a dominant theme. As Professor John Murray wrote, "The fear of God is the soul of godliness." Look at the descriptions of the New Testament church: for example, Acts 9:31, the church is described as walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Now, there is a fear of dread and terror in the face of impenitent defiance of God. After all, He is a consuming fire. But God's people have a filial fear of reverence and honor and trust and awe. The fear of God includes a few things. It includes, first of all, the knowledge and sight of God. There's no fear of God without that. Secondly, it includes a sense of His presence and awareness that God sees all and is present in all our actions and behavior. And thirdly, it includes a knowledge of what He requires in His Word.

An absence of the fear of God is a sign of false religion. Romans 3:18 says, "there is no fear of God before their eyes," in describing unbelievers, but godly fear, on the other hand, promotes many good fruits. It promotes holy conduct, for example, II Corinthians 7:10. It is also a motivation for evangelism (II Corinthians 5:11). The fear of God motivates reverent worship. We sing about this in various places in the Psalms, but you see it in the New Testament in Hebrews 12:28–29. And the fear of God promotes vibrant pursuit of Christ in our callings. Consider Colossians 3:22–23, where the servant is told to conduct his business in the fear of God eyeing Christ, not man. The Lord delights in those who fear Him. Toward the end of the Old Testament we read in Malachi 3:16, "then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD and that thought upon his name."

Let me also mention briefly the theme of God's righteousness. This is another revelation of God given during this period. For the sake of brevity, notice for example that righteousness is mentioned 54 times in just six chapters of Proverbs, chapters 10 to 15. True wisdom mixed with the fear of God produces gospel righteousness: submitting to God's thoughts and walking in God's ways. Lastly, under this point we should say a brief word about Solomon's wisdom books: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. Proverbs educates the believer in divine wisdom through the fear of God, providing practical instruction in godly living. It demonstrates that God requires conformity to His will in the smallest details of conduct. The fear of God is the basis for the whole

book. It opens with the fear of God and closes with the fear of God (chapter 1 verse 7 and chapter 31 verse 30), and wisdom is obviously the dominant theme, but the fountainhead of Proverbs is the moral law of God. Proverbs unpacks and applies the moral law to the details of daily life.

Ecclesiastes demonstrates the folly and vanity of life without God at the center. It provides lessons in contrast to persuade us to embrace God's wisdom rooted in the fear of God and His law. The conclusion proves this point. Ecclesiastes 12:13 says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

Thirdly, we have the Song of Solomon or the Song of Songs. This is a priceless book prized by all of the reformed writers of the past as a beautiful description of the relationship of the Church, Bride, to Christ, her Husband. If you are unfamiliar with this point, you need to devote concentrated study to this very important book. The marriage motif in describing God's covenant relationship with His people can be traced all through the Old Testament. You see many references to it, for example, in the prophets, and it is traced into the New Testament. We think of what Paul writes in Ephesians 5 or the description of the church in the book of Revelation as Christ's Bride. This book evokes passion and following, seeking, clinging to Christ with intense fervor and holy jealousy. Only the Christian can say of Christ, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." Song of Songs is not a romantic story about merely human love and marriage. It teaches us of the wisdom of loyal love to our heavenly Husband.

Thirdly, in our last major point, we need to consider New Testament fulfillment of what we find in the reign of Solomon. We find New Testament fulfillment under two categories. First of all, the Lord Jesus Christ. While wisdom was Solomon's glory, God's true wisdom did not find its fullest expression in Solomon who turned back to folly. Wisdom is displayed preeminently in Christ. He is the greater than Solomon. At the end of the first lecture in this course, we discussed the interchange between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. We read in Matthew 12:42, "the queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold a greater than Solomon is here." We saw how this pointed forward to the surpassing glory of Christ which will take away the breath of all who behold Him. Wisdom of Christ is foretold back in Isaiah 11:1-3, and you should read that text, and it is fulfilled at His coming in Luke 2:40. Christ is described as "the wisdom of God." He is the wisdom of God (I Corinthians 1:24), and Paul says that we find the depository of wisdom in Christ. Colossians 2:3 says, "in whom," that is Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

A second area where we find New Testament fulfillment pertains to the Christian. The world's false wisdom is, in fact, folly. I Corinthians 1:20 reads, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" The contemporary Christian continues to face the competing claims of the world and God's Word. James 3:15 and following contrasts worldly wisdom, which is described as earthly, sensual, and devilish, with the wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, and so on. The believer finds true wisdom in Christ alone. We study the Word of Christ to gain wisdom. Paul says to Timothy in II Timothy 3:15, "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." In the Bible, we learn of Christ and the gospel. I Corinthians 1 verse 17 and following teaches that the preaching of the gospel, the preaching of the cross, is considered foolishness by the world, but it is the true wisdom of God. The contemporary believer continues to look to Christ to learn gospel wisdom leading to salvation. The fruit of that salvation includes walking in the fear of God, living in the light of God's law, and holding fast to God's covenant. This is why Romans 12:2 says, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

In conclusion, the reign of Solomon teaches us that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ, Who Himself is the wisdom of God. The greatest display of Solomon's wisdom was found in his most important work of all, namely, building a house for the name of God. In the next lecture, we will explore the theology of the temple.

Lecture 17

TEMPLE

Lecture Theme:

God establishes a permanent dwelling place among his people in the Promised Land, thereby pointing forward to the coming of Christ and his presence with his people in time and eternity.

Text:

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21:22–23).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 17

When you approach a modern city by car, especially if it's a large city, you can often see far off in the distance the tall buildings rising above the horizon. Now, if you have something or someone you're eager to see in that city, that sight builds your anticipation of arriving. Well, as believing Israelites journeyed to Jerusalem for the feasts, they would have seen Jerusalem off in the distance, as they approached, elevated on high ground with the temple situated at the top. They could have seen the smoke of sacrifices rising into the sky, and as they approached, they could have heard the music. You can imagine them singing the Psalms of Ascent as they pressed forward toward the symbol of God's throne and presence among His people. Solomon's temple was truly magnificent. Unlike the beauty of any other architectural structure, it was perched at the pinnacle of the temple mount, at the highest point in the middle of Jerusalem. The Lord appointed the temple to be covered with so much gold that at sunrise, it would have [shone] as a blinding fiery splendor aglow like a little ball of sun. That image spoke volumes. Why was the tabernacle replaced by the temple? How are they similar and dissimilar? What is the connection between the temple and the kingdom centered in Jerusalem? Why is holiness such a dominant theme in connection with the temple? What is the connection between Christ and the temple? What does it reveal about the gospel? Now that the temple has been put away, how does it relate to the New Testament church and contemporary Christians? What is the connection between the temple and heaven to come?

The temple was the centerpiece of Old Testament Israel, their prized possession. The ark of the covenant, the symbol of God's throne, was lodged in the temple's interior room, the sacred holy of holies. The Old Testament believers' whole life, their schedule, their priorities and affections, were tied to this holy structure. Much later on in the Old Testament during the Babylonian exile, we find Daniel still praying at an open window facing east toward Jerusalem. You will note that he prayed at the time of the evening sacrifice. Well, how did he know

that? That's a sacrifice he had not seen for 70 years while in Babylon. Well, Daniel was still operating on God's clock, on God's appointed schedule, and his mind was still centered on the ceremonies of the temple. Listen to Psalm 137:5–6, written at the same time, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." We could multiply examples like this. Think of Nehemiah, who wept over the news of the destruction of Jerusalem and its prized temple. All of this reinforces our need to understand the theology that God reveals about this important structure within the history of His redemption. So, let's consider some of the points that we can learn.

First of all, we'll consider Solomon's temple. The tabernacle, as you will recall, was a temporary movable structure, symbolizing God's presence with His people. It served Israel while they were pilgrims in the wilderness and during the early years in Canaan. The temple, by way of contrast, was a more permanent abode. Once David had captured Jerusalem and established it as the capital of the kingdom, he desired God's throne, symbolized in the ark, to be united with his own reign from Jerusalem. All the pieces were put into place, and Solomon was called by God to bring it to fruition. In I Chronicles 28:9–10, we read David's charge to Solomon, similar to what you read in I Kings 2:2, which we noted in the last lecture, but with this addition; it says, "Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it."

One of Solomon's greatest achievements was building the temple in Jerusalem, accomplished by God's strength and His blessing. The glory and splendor surpassed anything ever seen before or since. We read about the tabernacle being brought into Jerusalem and replaced by the temple in I Kings 8. The bringing in of the ark, represented the enthronement of God as King. The temple exhibited stabilization, if you will, [and enlargement] because it was a house for God's name. God says, "My name shall be there," in I Kings 8:29. But Solomon acknowledges that the heaven of heavens cannot contain God, much less the house that he built. It was merely a symbol. It portrayed the saving mercies of God and the forgiveness of sins. It also served as a witness to evangelize the nations. We read of the non-Israelite stranger who will hear of God's great name and who praise toward God's house. Then, in I Kings 8:43, it says, this is Solomon praying, "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name."

Though the temple included a great deal of intricate and artistic design, we learn that God's biblical law of worship was still maintained. Nothing was left to human innovation. It was received by divine prescription. We read in I Chronicles 28 about many of the details as well as the wealth that the temple entailed, but it says that David gave to Solomon "the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord" (I Chronicles 28:12). "All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (I Chronicles 28:19). It was all appointed by God Himself. We read in I Kings chapters 6 to 8 that it took Solomon seven years to build the temple. It stood as a magnificent spectacle of the beauty of God's presence. It took the breath away of all who saw it, but it did not last forever. The temple was destroyed at the time of the Babylonian exile. This judgment of God upon the sins of His people brought devastation to them. It signaled that their unrepentant sins had separated them from God's favorable presence. But God's promise did not fail, as we will learn in the lecture on Judah's return from exile, but things were never the same for Israel. Another temple was rebuilt but at a far more inferior scale. When the people looked upon the less glorious replacement, they responded with a mix of joy and sorrow. Ezra 3:12–13 say, "but many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."

Secondly, we need to think about the theology of the temple. There are many obvious parallels between the theology of the tabernacle and Solomon's temple. The basic purpose and the individual components remain similar, though the temple was far more grand in scale and glory, so we will not rehash the points covered in the earlier lecture on the tabernacle, though I would encourage you to reference and review the points relevant to this lecture. Instead, I will draw your attention to a few points of theology that are distinct to the temple.

First of all, everything about the temple is permeated with the idea of holiness. It is a holy place reflecting the presence of a holy God. The psalmist bears witness to this in Psalm 138:2, "I will worship toward thy holy

temple, and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.” The holiness of the temple was connected to the holiness of God’s name. The temple was a house unto the Lord God. We read in I Kings 9:3, and then in verse 7, “I have hallowed this house, to put my name there forever;... this house, which I have hallowed for my name.” The theology of holiness features prominently. This explains, in part, Christ’s cleansing of the temple in the Gospels. We read in John 2:15, and in verse 17, “and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables;... and his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” Christ had a holy jealousy for the glory of God in His holy house.

Secondly, one very important text for understanding the theology of the temple is found in Solomon’s prayer of dedication after the completion of the construction. This is found in I Kings 8 and II Chronicles 6. Above and beyond all else, we find the revelation of God Himself. You should notice the theological themes of covenant, atonement, intercession, forgiveness, and repentance and recovery from disobedience, all found in that prayer. As we saw earlier, it also refers to God drawing non-Israelite strangers into saving fellowship with God. All of these points could be fleshed out. This revelation of God led Solomon and the Old Testament believer to conclude, in the words of I Kings 8:23, “LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart.”

Furthermore, within the temple we find a huge, heavy, beautiful veil that separated the inner sanctum of the holy of holies from the rest of the world. It was a very thick curtain. It created a visible picture of separation from the immediate presence of God and the necessity of an atoning sacrifice offered by a holy priesthood. When Christ died upon the cross, that veil was torn open. We read in Mark 15:37–38, “And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” Christ’s atonement granted open and direct access through His blood into God’s presence. This is why we read in Hebrews 10:19–22, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.” It goes on, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

The temple extended the influence of God’s wisdom to the nations. People from the surrounding nations were attracted to Jerusalem, and this resulted in them bringing tribute to Solomon in subjection to him. God had promised this expansion in Genesis 15, and it became a reality under Solomon, also referenced in Psalm 72. God gathered the wealth of the nations to build His own house and kingdom, just as Israel had plundered the Egyptians earlier at the time of the Exodus. The kingdom of God and the unfolding of this redemption is central to the world and to history.

If you fast-forward in your mind, at the time of the New Testament, God raised up the Roman Empire who built roads leading to distant places of the then known world. Those roads were put to use. God had put them in place just in time for the gospel to be carried by the apostles and early Christians throughout the Gentile world. They served the advance of Christ’s greater kingdom, a kingdom greater than the Roman Empire. Today, missionaries have airplanes to enable them to take the gospel to distant places on the globe. You are using the Internet to listen to these lectures on biblical theology, though we are separated by many miles, countries apart. God causes everything to serve His plan, His gospel, and the expansion of His kingdom, and we see all of that at the time of Solomon as well where he is gathering together the resources for the establishment of his kingdom.

Lastly under this point, the temple ties together Eden, the garden at the beginning of time, and heaven at the end of time. You will note the imagery of the garden woven into the details and design of the temple. Both the garden and the temple were places where God manifested His presence to His people. After the fall, when man was thrust out of the Paradise of God’s presence, the Lord opened a way back through His own provision of sacrifice and redemption. The earlier tabernacle exemplified this covenant promise, but it comes to fuller expression in the temple. We’ll expound the connection between the temple in heaven in just a moment.

And so, thirdly, we need to think about the fulfillment of the temple in the New Testament. The New Testament makes extensive use of the theology of the temple. As with the tabernacle, the temple was a pattern and a shadow of heavenly and eternal realities. It pointed forward to fulfillment in the greater glory that would come under the new covenant. As we have learned in the previous lectures, these Old Testament ceremonies were

temporary. When Christ came, the temple and its symbols were abolished, and returning to the shadows is prohibited. We now have the realities that the temple prefigured, so the question is, where do we find the New Testament realities that the Old Testament temple symbolized? And there are four places that we find this.

First of all, Christ. The temple prefigured Christ Himself. We read in John 2:19–21, “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.” They thought he was referring to the physical structure in Jerusalem. He was referring to Himself, His own body. Now why would Christ refer to Himself as the temple?

Think about that for a moment. Think about what you know about the temple, what it symbolized, what its purpose was, how it functioned within the life of Old Testament Israel. If you think for a moment, you’ll see the answer. The answer is found in Colossians 2:9, “for in him,” that is Christ, “dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Christ was the perfect and full embodiment of the presence of God on earth. That’s what the temple symbolized: God’s presence in the midst of His people. But it comes to its fullest expression in the incarnation of Christ. God’s covenant promise to dwell among His people is fulfilled in Christ’s coming.

The second place that we find New Testament fulfillment is in the church. The church is also described as a temple. Now, this should not be a surprise because Christ dwells in the midst of His Church. So, in Revelation 1, Jesus is described as walking in the midst of the candlesticks, which symbolized the churches. Now, think with me: walking in the midst of the candlesticks. That’s temple imagery, the candlestick that’s found in the temple. But in Revelation 1, we’re told the candlesticks are a symbol of the churches themselves. So, Christ is found present among them. It is Christ Who erects the Church. Remember Matthew 16:18, “and I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” In other words, we are the house that Christ is erecting. Hebrews 3:6 says, “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house we, are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” He Himself serves as the chief cornerstone promised in Psalm 118, and His people are built upon Him and raised as a temple in the Lord. The church is the habitation of God. This comes out in Ephesians 2, the end of that chapter in verses 20–22. It says, referring to the church, “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

All of the pieces are found in that passage. Each believer has a part in this house. In the words of I Peter 2:5, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.” When the church gathers for worship, the glory far excels the earthly glory of Solomon’s temple because “where two or three are gathered in Christ’s name, He is in their midst (Matthew 18:20). Our worship takes place in the very throne room of heaven. Our glory is found in the presence of Christ by His Spirit manifest in our midst through the simple ordinances that He’s given us, like preaching and reading, prayer, singing of Psalms, and the sacraments. And so, the temple finds its New Testament fulfillment, secondly, in the church.

The third area is the individual Christian. The individual believer is also described as a temple. The temple was the place of God’s presence and dwelling, as you know. The Christian actually experiences this reality. We read in I Corinthians 3:16, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” and then in I Corinthian 6:19, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and you are not your own?”

Lastly, we see the same thing in II Corinthians 6:16, “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Well, this has far-reaching, practical implications. The believer is indwelt by God Himself. Paul says that therefore the parts of our body indwelt by the Spirit are to be employed as instruments of righteousness in the service of God not as instruments of unrighteousness (Romans 6:13). As you will note in I Corinthians 6 and II Corinthians 6, which we mentioned a moment ago, this should result in separation from sin and the world; and rather, it should bring holiness and consecration to Christ.

The fourth area that we see the temple fulfilled in the New Testament is heaven. All of this comes together and culminates finally in heaven itself. Heaven is the final fulfillment of the temple as the abode of God where God dwells with His people for all of eternity. That is why we find no temple there. We read in Revelation 21:22–23,

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Just as with the Old Testament temple, nothing unclean will enter into heaven, as we see in chapter 21 verse 27. Heaven is the place of God’s holiness. So, heaven is the final fulfillment of the temple. There we see the Lord’s people dwelling in the Lord’s presence in perfect purity for all of eternity. There is the heavenly reality replacing the earthly shadow.

In conclusion, in the building of the temple, God established a more permanent dwelling place among His people in the promised land, thereby pointing forward to the coming of Christ and His presence with His people in time and in eternity. But in the next lecture, we will turn our attention to the period after Solomon and to the tragedy of a divided kingdom with one portion of Israel alienated from Jerusalem and the temple, alienated ultimately from God Himself.

Lecture 18

KINGDOM

Lecture Theme:

After the kingdom divides, both Israel and Judah turn away from God's covenant to idolatry, and God sets before them the path to blessings and curses. It is clear that God's great King has not yet come.

Text:

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ... And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:14, 16).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 18

Children love stories of powerful kings, beautiful castles, and vast kingdoms. We all find awe-inspiring the accounts of heroism and victories and defeats, and it is intriguing to trace the tangled path associated with the rise and fall of great kingdoms. But Christians know that the nations of this world are not the main focus of history. History is God's story, and He is placed at the center of His story, His kingdom, His church, His people. Everything in the world ultimately revolves around the unfolding of God's plan of redemption. Everything in history serves God's gospel purpose.

What is the cause behind the division of the kingdom of Israel into two parts? And what is the theological significance of this event? What role [do] David and Jeroboam play throughout this lengthy history? Will the division ever be healed? And if so, how? What was the number one sin that God most often confronted in the Old Testament? How did the theological themes derived from the period of the divided kingdom carry over into the New Testament? How does this period set our expectation of what will come with the arrival of Christ and the implications for the remainder of history? Are there any aids that may help us keep track of all of the details of this confusing portion of redemptive history? The scope of this lecture covers the period of redemptive history stretching from the division of the kingdom after Solomon until the time before Judah's Babylonian exile. We will consider points of theology gleaned from this history, which is God's works. In the next lecture, we will focus on God's Word spoken to His people through the prophets during the same period.

But let me begin by offering a few suggestions that will greatly help you in your study of this portion of the Bible and in your understanding of its theology. First of all, after the division of the land into the two kingdoms of southern Judah and northern Israel, there are two parallel lines. So, if you can find or create a timeline that charts both the kings of Judah and the kings of Israel, it will prove a great aid to your studies. But equally

important, you need to know which prophets God sent to Judah and the prophets He sent to Israel and when they prophesied to their respective nations. Add this information to your timeline as well. When you're reading the narratives within the historical books, like II Samuel, II Kings, II Chronicles, or even Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and so on, you should consult your timeline to see which prophets were prophesying at what times. Now, why is this important? Well, you've seen in this course, the importance of connecting the unfolding events of redemptive history, God's works, with God's Word. So, you should study what God was saying to either Judah or Israel through His prophets while studying the unfolding of the history of these two nations. That would combine God's revelation in history and His revelation in prophecy, thereby providing a full picture of God's message. This method will greatly enhance your understanding of the theology of the Bible.

Secondly, all of your studies of the details of the historical events within the first five books of Scripture, and especially your detailed knowledge of God's law, coupled with the theology you've gleaned from all of this will prove indispensable to your study and understanding of the prophets, in particular, because the prophets will make constant references to this material, which the Jews would've recognized, and so should you. The prophets pointed them to the past, and the future, and the implications of the present. We'll be considering the prophets in the next lecture.

Lastly, some familiarity with the geography of Judah and Israel will also prove helpful. If you have access to Bible maps that would aid you. This serves our purpose, not only in following the story line, but also because of the theological significance attributed to what took place in various locations. I strongly encourage you to use these suggestions in your ongoing study of the Old Testament.

Secondly, let's turn our attention to what we see in this period of history. God revealed that kings were to represent the Lord Himself to His people and, therefore, to have God's heart. David provided the model of a king who reigned under the Lord, pursuing God's interests and His glory, and ruling by His law. We read in I Samuel 16:7, "the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." God says David was one "who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes," I Kings 14:8. Remember those last words, "right in my eyes." David became the standard of a godly king, but there also arose another king, one who became the standard of an ungodly king, namely, Jeroboam. You will notice the contrast between David and Jeroboam repeated over and over throughout the history of Israel.

So, for example, notice the description of godly king Hezekiah in II Kings 18:3. It says, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did." In contrast, when the Bible describes the ungodly kings, you see the following words repeated over and over and over—I'll take one example from Jehoahaz in II Kings 13:2 where it says, "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin. He departed not therefrom." With all of the ungodly kings, you'll see this comparison, "following the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat which made Israel to sin." The brief references to David, because there are few godly kings, and the frequent references to Jeroboam are obvious when you're reading this portion of Scripture, but in all these cases it speaks of what was right or evil in the sight of the Lord, in His eyes. Clearly, what God sees is what matters most. The godly and the ungodly kings were distinguished by whether they had God, His cause, His glory, His law, His covenant at the center of their pursuits. Were they men after God's heart, or were they men opposed to God?

The story of Israel after Solomon is largely an account of covenant-breaking and rebellion. It begins with the catastrophic tearing of the nation into two parts. This division between the two nations, the two tribes in the south and the 10 tribes in the north, broaden irreparable rupture in the theocracy of Israel. The promised land was shattered. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, became king in the south. Jeroboam became the first king in the north. All of this began with Solomon's own apostasy in I Kings 11. Then his son Rehoboam drove the wedge even deeper with his folly and harshness, as you see in I Kings 12. Jeroboam with the 10 northern tribes rebelled and formed a separate nation. We read in I Kings 12:16 these ominous words, "the people answered the king," that is Rehoboam, "saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents." Do you appreciate what's happening here? They cut themselves off from Jerusalem, from the temple, and the sacrifices, and the priesthood. That is to say, they cut themselves off from God and His covenant.

Notice the inescapable implications of this action. Northern Israel withdrew and threw off the Davidic Covenant, and then they rebelled against the prescriptions of the Mosaic Covenant and what followed later in that same chapter, 1 Kings 12. This was the beginning of a steep spiritual decline leading to Israel's removal into exile by Assyria. Not one of the kings of northern Israel was a faithful servant of Jehovah. Jehu came the closest, but he was still an idolater. In II Kings 17, we see that Israel was carried into captivity because they persisted in idolatry. Now, the word *Jews* is designated for the southern kingdom of Judah. Eventually, the Jews, that is the South, would consider Israel in the North to be Gentile mongrels, a mix of Gentile and Jewish blood. In Jesus's day we see the disdain that the Jews had for those in the north. In John 4:9, we read, "for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Southern Judah failed to learn from God's dealings with northern Israel. Instead, they followed in their footsteps of spiritual apostasy and repeated the consequences, similar to what Israel experienced when Judah was taken into Babylonian exile. But we will be covering Judah's exile and restoration in future lectures.

Eight kings of Judah were considered faithful to some degree, walking in various degrees in the ways of David. Eleven kings of Judah were entirely unfaithful. The desecration of God's temple reached its height under the reign of Manasseh. In II Kings 21:2 we read, "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel." He committed gross idolatry and dedicated the covenant seed, children, to false gods sacrificing them in fire. He did repent in the last two years of his life, but it was not enough to curtail the evil influences on his son [who] was enthroned after him.

Now, we read of the healing of this division of the nation in the prophecy of Ezekiel, who prophesied around the time of Judah's exile. In Ezekiel 37:16–17, you see the description of how God promises that the two sticks of Israel and Judah will become one, but the division would only be removed in the new covenant when the gospel would be taken from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth as you see in Acts 1:8. Paul speaks of this gospel healing between the two tribes and more generally between the Jews and the Gentiles in Ephesians 2 verse 14 and following. It says, "For he," that is Christ, "is our peace, who hath made both one," that is Jews and Gentiles one, "and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." It goes on, "and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

Secondly, that brings us to consideration of some of the theological themes during this period. First of all, remember at the heart of the promise to David were three things: a mediator from the seed of David, secondly the covenant of grace which was establishing the bond with God, and a kingdom representing God's throne and reign. The history after the division of the kingdom largely represents Israel's attempt to jettison all three of these, but one primary sin took center stage. So, let me ask you a question. What was the number one sin that God most often confronted in the Old Testament? What would you say in answer to that question? Well, the answer is idolatry. It is clearly and unequivocally idolatry. God's people failed to remain separate from the godless world around them. Instead, they mimicked their evil ways. There are many themes we could highlight during the period of the divided kingdom, but the most dominant one pertains to idolatry, so we'll spend some time exploring God's revelation on this point of theology.

Idolatry originates in the heart and in the mind, not what is in the hand. What's in the hand is the byproduct. An idol is whatever we love, esteem, follow, or prioritize above God Himself. An idol can refer to any god or anything besides the true God, or to an image of the true God in a departure from the purity of His appointed form of worship. We already noted the initial spiritual departure through Solomon's idolatry. That brings us to Jeroboam the first king of the separated northern kingdom of Israel.

In I Kings 12, we read that he established, in rebellion against God's law, a separate form of worship in the north with a separate priesthood, high places, counterpart cities to Jerusalem, and distinct holy days. At the center of this were idols. We read in I Kings 12:28, "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Now, all of this should sound familiar to you. It is a repeat of an incident we read back in Exodus 32 when in the absence of Moses, Aaron made a golden calf.

Now, if you go back to the law, you remember that the second commandment prohibits all forms of idolatry and that God's biblical law of worship requires His people only to worship Him as He has commanded without addition or subtraction. And you should remember the words of Deuteronomy 4:15–16. God says, "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for you saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you

in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, in the similitude of any figure.” God prohibited images that would be made of Him.

Notice that in both Exodus 32:4, the earlier account the days of Moses, and in I Kings 12:28, in the days of Jeroboam, the golden calves are described as images of Jehovah, the God Who brought them up out of the land of Egypt. Now, all images of God are prohibited, and all forms of other gods are condemned. This is a clear violation of God’s law. The sin of idolatry continues to persist through the remainder of the kings, waxing worse and worse at times, which provokes God’s wrath and beckons His chastening. Isaiah 42:8 reads, “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.”

Now, let me point out one important consequence of idolatry. What could that be? Well, it is this: we resemble what we worship. When men worship idols, they become like what they worship. This is a very significant theological point in the Old Testament, in the Bible as a whole. So, in Psalm 115:4–7 we read a description of idols; it says they have eyes and they [see] not, ears but they hear not, and so on. But I want you to notice verse 8, which reads, “They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.” This is a principle we can trace all the way through the Bible. We become like what we worship, but there is more. That resemblance will ruin us, in the case of idolatry, or alternatively restore us, in the case of worshiping God. In the case of idolatry, we will suffer God’s punishment along with His punishment of the idols that we worship and resemble. God’s holy jealousy does not tolerate idols. If we make them, He will break them. In all of this, Israel turned away from God’s covenant. They became covenant breakers subjected to the covenant curses. This becomes clear if you study the history of the kings and compare what you read to God’s warnings found in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. You can actually trace the details point by point. God always fulfills His promises: both the blessings and the curses. God’s people were exiled because God was faithful to His covenant. He brought the promised curse.

Well, fourthly, let’s think of how this carries forward into the New Testament, connecting it to the developments in the New Testament. John Calvin warned that the human heart is a perpetual factory of idols. The lesson about idolatry continues to the contemporary Christian. We read of the incident of Exodus 32 that we were talking about earlier. We read about that in the New Testament in I Corinthians 10:6–7. It says, “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” That warning echoes through the whole New Testament. For example, Paul writes in II Corinthians 6:16–17, notice that he’s employing the language of the covenant, “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” John concludes his first epistle, I John 5:21, with this exhortation, “Little children keep yourselves from idols.” So, the warning about idolatry is as relevant today as it has ever been. It still is an expression of God’s holy jealousy and of the holy standards of His law, but the gospel does more than deliver us from idolatry.

Those who worship the true God in spirit and in truth are transformed into His likeness. We become like what we worship. God made man after His own image in the garden. That, of course, was damaged after the fall, but God remains the only lawful focus of our worship, and those who come to Him by faith in the gospel and worship Him as He has appointed in His Word experience the restoration of His likeness through the ministry of the Spirit. In II Corinthians 3:18 we read about this, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD.” Romans 8:29 teaches us that God predestines His people to be conformed to the image of His Son, so there’s the warning about not making any images, any images of God or any other idols, but there is also the promised blessing of worshiping God and being made into His likeness.

Next, in the Old Testament period of the divided kingdom, we read of one king after another after another after another, and each time we are forced to conclude he’s not the one, he is not the great King that is promised. Another and a greater is still coming. In other words, we are left waiting and looking until at last Christ appears in the pages in the New Testament as the true and ultimate Heir to David’s throne. Christ is the only King Who is truly after God’s own heart because He is the divine Messiah. He would succeed in bringing about God’s

dominion where Adam originally failed and all the kings of Israel failed. We see this in the description of the ascension of Christ foretold in Daniel 7:13–14, “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” Jesus applies this text to Himself in the Gospels. Earlier, in Daniel 2, God describes the kingdom of Christ in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar. We read in chapter 2 verse 44, “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” These texts in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 stand behind Christ’s great commission wherein He calls us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth and to disciple the nations at the very end of Matthew 28.

You see, the Old Testament history supplies the background for the theme of the kingdom in the New Testament. Christ’s kingdom excels all others because Christ the King excels all others. He is the King of kings. His kingdom will extend throughout the whole earth. We read in Revelation 11:15, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.” You also read of the ultimate success of the gospel among the nations and the description of heaven in Revelation 21:24, “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.” Here is a beautiful picture. Here is the great King, the promised One [Whom] we are left waiting for all through our reading of the Old Testament. And what kingdom is like His? There is no other. So, Solomon’s original prayer remains the heart cry of every true Christian today. In I Kings 8:60 it says, “That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else.” In Psalm 67 remains our constant song, for we are asking the Lord to take the glorious gospel of His grace to all of the nations and to make them glad in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, after the kingdom divides, both Israel and Judah turn away from God’s covenant to idolatry, as we have seen, and God sets before them the path, the blessings and curses. It is clear in the Old Testament that God’s great King had not yet come. In this lecture we have focused on the history and its theology. In the next lecture, we will take up the prophetic message, God’s Word to His people during this same period.

Lecture 19

PROPHETS

Lecture Theme:

God raised up prophets to pronounce judgment and proclaim salvation to his disobedient people, calling them to look to the Savior who would come and serve as God's final Word.

Text:

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...” (Hebrews 1:1–2a).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 19

A microphone is a tool to communicate and amplify the human voice. It serves to deliver the message of a person speaking through it to those who hear him. The microphone itself does not create the message; it merely brings the words of the speaker to the ears of the intended audience. God used His true prophets in the Old Testament to communicate His Word and will to His people. The prophets were never permitted to concoct their own ideas. God laid a burden on them that constrained them to deliver a message from God Himself. They delivered that message boldly, loudly, and clearly to the nation of God's people. They served as vehicles of the inspired revelation of God Himself. They came from God with, “Thus saith the Lord.”

So, who were the prophets? Who was the greatest Old Testament prophet? What function did their God-ordained office include? What were the dominant points of the content of their message? What role did they have in connection to recorded Scripture? What was the prophetic interpretation of what we learned about in the previous lecture regarding idolatry? What does the Bible say about false prophets? And, what is the relationship of the prophets to Christ? What about New Testament prophecy? And, does the threat of false teachers and prophets continue? In the last lecture, we explored the history of Israel from the division of the kingdom until the period prior to exile, but what was God saying to His people during that period? In this lecture, we will consider the place of the Old Testament office of prophet, focusing our attention on God's Word to Israel and Judah during the same period that we covered in the last lecture. In the next two lectures, we'll consider the prophetic message surrounding their exile, and then God's Word to Judah after their return from captivity.

And so, first of all, let's give some consideration to the office of prophet. The prophet was the official spokesman for the Lord. They served as the inspired mouthpiece of God to His people. Some people make the mistake of thinking of prophets and prophecy as referring only to the prediction of future events, but this definition is far

too narrow. Prophets proclaimed God's Word, and sometimes that Word spoke of future events, but more often it was God's message to that current generation. Whenever they spoke, they proclaimed, "Thus saith the Lord." Prophets also served as watchman. They reasserted and enforced the law of God given through Moses. They called Israel back to the covenant promises and obligations. Consequently, their dominant call was to repentance: turning from sin and in faith to the Lord. To cite one example, we read in Jeremiah 11:6, "Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them." You will find references to all of the biblical covenants in the prophets, even back to the covenant of works in the garden, the covenant with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and reference to the new covenant. But the Mosaic and Davidic covenants are of course prominent.

The prophets also reported inspired writings, so their prophecies, which you find in the books of the prophets, historical books, and Psalms, as we saw in a previous lecture. God commissioned the prophets to reveal the inspired message of God's will to mankind. You will note their repeated introductory phrase, "Thus saith the Lord." This message was rooted in the history of redemption and His previous Word, especially God's law. That means you must know the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, well in order to recognize the connections that you'll find in the prophets. Moses was the greatest prophet of the Old Testament. He alone spoke with God face to face. In Numbers 12:6-8 we read, "And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye afraid not to speak against my servant Moses?" Moses delivered the law and the covenant from God to His people at Sinai. For this reason, all of the subsequent prophets build on the foundation that God laid through Moses.

You will remember that it is two great Old Testament prophets, Moses and Elijah, [who] appear with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration in the Gospels. In the New Testament, you'll notice many references to the law and prophets. These were held together. For example, note Christ's words in Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Later in that same gospel, chapter 22:40, Jesus summarizes the law under love to God and love to neighbor saying that "on these two hang all the law and the prophets." You'll note in Acts 13:15 and 27 that it was still the practice of the synagogue to read and expound the law on the prophets every Sabbath. Prophets have a prominent place in the minds of those living during the New Testament era.

We should also note the presence and threat of false prophets throughout the Old Testament. A man who spoke his own thoughts and words, or who spoke a false message in God's name, was actually to be put to death as you see in Deuteronomy 13. The false prophets often tailored their message to the desires of the people. Jeremiah 6:14 says, "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." In other words, they steered the people away from the Lord's true Word. Micah 3:5 says, "Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him."

Lastly, under this first point you should also remember my counsel in the previous lecture. It is essential that you associate each prophetic book with their audience whether that be northern Israel or Southern Judah or even Gentile nations, such as Nahum speaking to Nineveh, capital of Assyria, or Obadiah speaking to Edom. You also need to connect the prophets with the time period in which they served. This will help with putting the pieces of Old Testament theology together. In this lecture, we are focusing primarily, though not exclusively, on earlier prophets. That would include Isaiah of course and Hosea, Micah, Amos, as well as Elijah, Elisha, and others.

So, we've considered the office of prophet. Second, let's consider the message of the prophets, and here, we begin to see the theology. First of all, the message concerned revelation of God Himself. As with all that we've seen in this course, the prophets, first and foremost, provided a revelation of God Himself. You will see this for example in the repeated words, "that they may know that I am the LORD." For example, you'll find this kind of phrase over 70 times in Ezekiel alone. This was the purpose of the well-known account of Elijah's confrontation of the false prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. He said in I Kings 18:37, "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." You see the same all through the prophets. Remember the words of Isaiah in chapter 40:9 where he proclaims, "Behold your

God!” The whole of that remarkable chapter sets forth the incomparable glory of the Lord. What God’s people needed most was to see, to understand and know God Himself, His character, and His glory. That remains the case in all ages as we saw in our very first lecture.

God’s people were also called to repentance, faith, and obedience, and they were warned of the consequences of refusing God’s call. This message was not just dire gloom and doom. God was actually displaying mercy, calling them to turn from God-defying, soul-destroying sin. One of God’s purposes is for the warning of judgment to turn people from sin. If you saw a neon sign on the side of the road warning drivers that the bridge was out ahead, you wouldn’t be annoyed. You’d be grateful for the merciful warning. The prophet Jonah is a perfect example of this theological point that the pronouncement of judgment served mercifully to turn people from destruction. He was sent by God to proclaim His Word of judgment against Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, Israel’s greatest national enemy.

Did you ever wonder why Jonah did not want to deliver this message to the enemies of his people? Well, he delivers the message, and the people repent. And after the repentance of Nineveh and God’s mercy on them, which we read about in Jonah 3, we read Jonah praying in chapter 4 verse 2, “And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.” The message of judgment resulted in mercy. What’s the background for all of this? This is why you need to know the details of your Bible. Go back and read II Kings 14:25. Jonah had experience. He had previously seen God’s proclamation of judgment turn Israel from their sin and display God’s mercy. He understood the theology that you’re learning here, so he feared that his prophetic warning might result in Nineveh finding mercy, and he hated Assyria, so he didn’t want to proclaim judgment. This lesson is why God could say through Ezekiel in chapter 33 verse 11, “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?”

But, there’s another important theological point in their message. In the previous lecture, we noted the most frequent sin of this period, which was idolatry. We spoke at length about that. In the prophets, we learn how God viewed that sin. So, this is an important theological point. The prophets made clear that idolatry is spiritual adultery and harlotry. Now, this is covenantal language. The imagery of marriage, as you know, was established exclusively between one man and one woman at creation. Then in the giving of the Law, 10 Commandments, at Sinai, we saw that God’s first demand of His chosen people was, “I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods beside me.” The same message is repeated by Christ when He said the first and great commandment was to love God chiefly and comprehensively. God requires an exclusive relationship as a jealous God between Himself and His people. You see this in the second commandment. You see it in places like Exodus 34:10 and verse 14. The Lord’s jealous love for His chosen redeemed wife, His people, demands that she give her heart to no other lover. Isaiah develops this point clearly and fully, repeatedly making reference to *none else* and *no other God*. If you want to consider this briefly, just look at Isaiah 43 through chapter 46 and notice how this is combined with the bridal language throughout his book.

When Israel forgets and forsakes the Lord, she is guilty of gross spiritual adultery. This theme continues through the prophets, and the whole book of Hosea is about this. Or, consider Jeremiah, especially chapters 2 and 3. If you want to get an introduction in Ezekiel, read chapter 16, Isaiah 57, and so on. Even the biblical references to backsliding are set in the context of graphic imagery about spiritual whoredom. To fail to love the Lord with the whole being is to take what rightfully belongs to Jehovah, the Lord’s people’s heavenly Husband, and to offer wicked, perverted spiritual adultery to other lovers, idols. A holy and jealous God is justly offended by this. This explains why the prophets are given by God such graphic imagery to express this concept. We should never be tempted to avoid or soften such language. It is necessarily distasteful, but the cause, the offense, lies with God’s people, not the Lord, Who is a righteous and faithful Husband.

Lastly under this point, the prophetic message also revealed more about the coming Messiah. We learned that deliverance would come through God’s anointed (Habakkuk 3:13). God would raise up unto David a righteous branch and a king that would prosper (Jeremiah 23:5). His name would be Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), and the government would be on his shoulders (Isaiah 9:6). He would be the stem of Jesse and bring the sure mercies of

David. There are so many references to Christ that you must learn to read with an eye for detail and careful study. When you read the New Testament, you'll be struck by the references to seemingly obscure texts in the prophets referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament writers knew their Old Testament well. So should you. You can learn much from studying this New Testament use of the Old Testament references to Christ.

Thirdly, we can connect all of this to the New Testament fulfillment. First of all, of course we must consider the connection to Christ Himself. The prophets pointed forward to Christ. I Peter 1:10–11 says, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and search diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." But not only did they point forward to Him, Christ also became God's last and greatest prophet. Now, we were told this all the way back in Deuteronomy. God had promised to Moses in Deuteronomy 18:18, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." Flip forward to the New Testament and there's Peter in Acts 3:22–24 and he proclaims that this text from Deuteronomy was fulfilled in Christ. He says, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A PROPHET SHALL THE LORD YOUR GOD RAISE UP UNTO YOU OF YOUR BRETHREN, LIKE UNTO ME; HIM SHALL YE HEAR IN ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER HE SHALL SAY UNTO YOU. AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, THAT EVERY SOUL, WHICH WILL NOT HEAR THAT PROPHET, SHALL BE DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." Christ is, in other words, the fulfillment of all that the office of prophet represented.

You'll remember that we learned previously the three Old Testament offices that were anointed, prophet, priest, and king, and that all three pointed forward to God's Anointed, the Messiah or Christ. Shorter Catechism question 24 says, "How does Christ execute the office of a prophet? Christ executeth the office of a prophet in revealing to us by His Word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation." Christ reveals God's mind and will to us. He reveals our sinful misery, His provision of salvation, and the fruit of thankfulness born in the life of the believer. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ serves as God's final Word to the world. Remember the words of Hebrews 1 how it opens in verse 1 and the beginning of verse 2, "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." In the New Testament, Jesus is called the Truth (John 14:6), the Word or logos (John 1:1), the Messenger of the Gospel (Luke 4), the giver of the Old Testament, and so on. Christ continues as Prophet in heaven. He reveals to us by His Word and Spirit the will of God. We see the exercise of Christ's prophetic ministry whenever the Bible is read, preached, or sung.

Secondly, we need to consider the New Testament prophets and their relationship to Scripture because we also read in the New Testament of the role of the office of prophets. They had a role in bringing about the completion of New Testament revelation. Thus, they served as a foundation, along with the inspired apostles, for the New Testament church. Ephesians 2:20 speaks of the church "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." After the completion of the Bible, the New Testament office of prophet expired along with the cessation of special revelation from God. All direct revelation from God is now confined to His complete, fully sufficient, and inspired Scriptures. Peter refers to the superiority of our Bibles in II Peter 1:19–21, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." All we need is found in this more sure Word of the Holy Scriptures.

We also need to be mindful of the ongoing threat of false teaching and prophets in the present day. Though the office of prophet has ceased, pretenders and false teachers continue to exercise a threat to the contemporary church just as they did in the Old Testament. Jesus warned in His sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets." The New Testament is full of these warnings calling true believers to exercise spiritual discernment. We find this everywhere. Whenever we hear of God's true message, we also find the rebukes of the counterfeit message of false prophets. So, we read in I John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Peter issues the same

warning in II Peter 2:1, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

False teachers are not usually obvious. They sound good. They may seem to be speaking about the Bible, while they are actually really twisting what the Scriptures teach. We cannot be fooled by what initially looks and sounds good. When men come claiming new light, you can be sure it is old error. The time-tested biblical truths contained in the historic creeds and reformed confessions provide an aid in recognizing these old recurring errors. We must hold fast to the truth. Galatians 1:8–9 says, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you then that you have received, let him be accursed.” For this reason, it is essential that believers study diligently their Bibles.

We have to know what God says and why He says it. All teaching must be tested and held up to the Word of God. I Thessalonians 5:21 says, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” The Bereans provide a good example of this in Acts 17:11, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” The Ephesian church was also commended by Christ Himself in Revelation 2:2, “I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” These courses that you are studying aim to acquit you in your study of the Bible so that you, in the words of Paul (II Timothy 2:15), can “study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” But we need to go on.

We also need to consider spiritual adultery in the New Testament. As should be expected by this point in our course, Jesus also continues into the New Testament with His references to “an evil and adulterous generation,” as you see in Matthew 12:39. Paul speaks several times of keeping the church as the bride of Christ, pure and separate from the world, from idolatry. He says to the Corinthians in II Corinthians 11:2, “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” James also employs the same language in chapter 4:4–5, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?”

This is covenantal language. You should see that is essential for you to know the vast Old Testament background of this New Testament language in order to appreciate and understand its meaning for the contemporary church. The threat of idolatry continues to the present hour, and God’s view of that idolatry also continues to the present time. The New Testament has a great deal to say to us, warning the New Testament church about the threat of spiritual adultery.

In conclusion, God is never silent. Even in the face of His people’s grave sins, He continued to speak to them through His inspired prophets. The Word of God echoed through the land, calling His people to turn to Him and live. We learn from the prophets the same lesson that Jesus taught in Matthew 4:4, “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” In the next lecture, we will consider the prophetic message that was associated with exile.

Lecture 20

EXILE

Lecture Theme:

God's promises bring privileges, but they also bring obligations. God's people learn that rebelling against him and breaking his covenant results in the mercy of chastening to train them in his ways and to turn them back to himself.

Text:

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:11–12).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 20

The ancient world did not have newspapers, but imagine for a moment that they did. If you were reading the headlines of newspapers in Syria, Babylon, Persia, or even later on at the time of the New Testament, the Greeks and Romans, what do you think they would say? I imagine they would talk about news from the palace of the emperors, perhaps economic progress. They would talk about all the wars and battles on the foreign front, especially about the expansion of their nation's territory in glory, and many other such things, but you would find almost nothing about Judah and Israel other than perhaps some brief lines at some point about a new territory subjected under the Empire. But, when you open your Bible, you discover something remarkably different. That is because you are reading history from God's perspective. You learn that all these nations with their [supposed] importance are really a peripheral side story. The real story is about God's people. The other nations merely serve the Lord's intentions to uphold His plan of redemption. God controls all for that purpose, but you would never learn that from a newspaper. You would think that the important matters pertain to Babylon, or later on to Rome, or whomever. The Bible teaches us how to see history, and nothing has changed. What is important is what God is doing with His Church today.

In this portion of Old Testament history, we see God raise up the great nations of Assyria and Babylon to accomplish His purposes with His own people. When did God forewarn His people about the threat of exile? What did He say was the cause for their removal from their beloved land? How did the spiritual recoveries of reformation affect the delay of exile? What did these reformations entail? What spiritual lessons can we derive from the experience of those in exile, and did this leave them any hope at all? How does the example of the believing, God-fearing Jews in exile relate to the experience of the contemporary Christian? In this lecture, we will consider the period leading up to and during exile. This is only second in importance to their previous

captivity in Egypt. In the next lecture, we'll consider their return from exile, which could be described as the second Exodus, if you will.

So first of all, let's begin by surveying some of the history. From the very beginning, God had warned His people about persisting in unrepentant sin. Moses had said in Deuteronomy 31:20, "For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear to their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant." And He told them that if they turned from Him and broke covenant, they would be separated from the privileges associated with their land, and they would be scattered among the nations. So, if you go back and read, for example, Leviticus 26:27–33, or go to Deuteronomy 28 and consider verses 64–67, you'll see God in the book of the covenant providing these threats of the curse of the covenant. A little bit later, [in] Joshua 24:19, we read "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God."

Now, this whole business of exile first began with northern Israel, who turned more quickly and fully toward evil. Israel had existed as a separate country separate from Judah for about 200 years, but God sent prophetic warning after prophetic warning; and finally, northern Israel fell in 722 BC to the nation of Assyria. The northern 10 tribes were hauled off to foreign captivity. God then sent His prophets to Judah and warned them to learn lessons from their northern brothers, but Judah imitated the sins of Israel and suffered similar consequences. Southern Judah lasted well over 100 years after Israel fell, but invasion began with Babylon earlier, and then eventually Jerusalem fell in the year 586 BC. God prophesied that they would spend 70 years in Babylonian captivity. Just as Judah failed to learn from Israel, the church today can fail to learn from both of them.

The cause for this judgment is spelled out in detail throughout the prophets, but among other things, they committed sins of idolatry and imitation of the heathen, summarized in II Kings 17:15, "And they rejected his," that is God's, "statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them." But, God slowed the path toward exile for Judah through biblical reformations and spiritual recovery that took place under King Hezekiah and King Josiah.

Notice the description of God the King Hezekiah in II Kings 18:3, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did." No other king in the history of Israel or Judah receives the high praise of Hezekiah. And though he was imperfect and sinned, his overall testimony is one of faith and devotion to the Lord. Josiah's reformation seems to be the most thorough. Though young, he sought to pursue what God had commanded, and he pursued it with it with zeal for what pleased and glorified the Lord. Though these reformations slowed the path to exile, they did not remove it altogether. The Bible teaches that what we sow we will also reap. The gross sins of the nation still had to be answered by God, and the people continued to steer into the wayward ways of the godless world around them. Exile for Judah would come. The land of promise would experience a sabbath rest for 70 years, while the sinful nation suffered under captivity.

But what theology does God reveal to us during this period of Old Testament history? Well, once again God keeps His promises, both the blessings and the curses of the covenant. This history is rooted in the revelation of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. All that God spelled out in Deuteronomy 28 came to fruition in the face of Israel and Judah's unbelief and disobedience, and God has not changed. In the opening of Romans 3, Paul recounts all of Israel's privileges under the Old Testament. But then the New Testament teaches us to learn from Old Testament history. I Corinthians 10:11-12, for example, say "Now all these things happened unto them," the Old Testament saints, "for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The whole book of Hebrews, consider for example chapters 3 and 4, reinforces the warnings about present unbelief and the dangers of reaping the dreadful consequences, so we do well to take heed and to not harden our hearts. The lessons from the prophets during the period of exile are lessons that are just as relevant today as they have ever been.

You should also notice God's sovereign disposal of nations. He uses even the enemies of God's people to accomplish His, God's, good intentions toward His people. We sing in Psalm 76:10, "Surely, the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." God used Assyria to punish Israel, but Assyria was still culpable, guilty, for their wicked deeds. So, God raised up Babylon to destroy Assyria for their actions, while

also employing Babylon to chasten Judah. Later, God would use the Medes and Persians to destroy Babylon from their lofty height as a punishment for what they did to Judah.

We could go on and on, but God's sovereignty is displayed in all the details of the world. Think of how what I've just said comes together at the cross in the New Testament. The enemies of Christ are guilty for their wicked deeds in crucifying the blameless Son of God. But, the Lord ordained these events for the salvation of His people, their good. Peter says to the Jews in Jerusalem in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost (verse 23), "Him," that is Christ, "being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," there's God's sovereignty, "ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Well, there is the Jews' culpability. You see the same thing in Acts 4:27-28. It says, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Were these wicked individuals responsible for the guilt of their wicked deeds? Yes, absolutely. But had God sovereignly ordained it all to accomplish His purposes? Yes, indeed He had. God has a sovereign disposal of all the nations.

But, the prophecies during the period of exile also include God's intentions in the future. And, many things could illustrate this, but for example in Daniel 2 and again in chapter 7, God reveals in a dream a great image to Nebuchadnezzar depicting foreign nations that would arise. And it depicted Babylon, the Medes, and Persians, the Greeks, and lastly the feet, which [were] the Roman Empire. And, he foretells that in the days of the last kingdom during the Roman Empire, in Daniel 2:44, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." This foretold of the establishment of Christ's invincible kingdom at the time of the New Testament when the Roman Empire was in power.

Later on in Daniel, we learn more about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. But during this period of exile, we have many examples like the one I've given of prophetic revelation that is foretelling things that would unfold in the future regarding the church and beyond. It is important that you remember all that we covered about the land in the lecture that was entitled "Kingdom". Remember those points of theology about the significance of the land of Canaan, the land of promise? Well, those points of theology speak directly into the significance of the unfolding events of exile. The land signified God's presence, as you will remember, God dwelling among His people. Well, their extensive unbelief and apostasy resulted in their removal from God's favorable presence. That's what's taking place during the exile: their removal from the land itself and the destruction of Jerusalem. Israel was cast out of the land of promise, cut off from the Lord. The New Testament parallel can be seen in the spiritual realities found in the ordinance of church discipline, for example, excommunication where the unrepentant and rebellious are removed from the visible church, the dwelling place of God, and lose the place of those privileges. Well, that brings us to the connections between the prophetic period of exile and the New Testament.

First of all, the Old Testament reformations under Hezekiah and Josiah provide enduring patterns for the church in all ages. When the church begins to adopt the ways of the unbelieving world and to corrupt God's appointed worship, they must retrace these same steps in returning to the Lord. If you study church history, you'll notice for example, the close parallels between the patterns of these Old Testament accounts and God's great work at the time of the 16th century Protestant Reformation and the 17th century second Reformation. Every time men forsake God, and forsake God as God by putting themselves in God's place and walking after their own devices in the imaginations of their evil hearts, then follows the evil ways of sins that men commit against each other. In other words, violations of the first table of the law, the first 4 Commandments of the 10 Commandments, lead to transgressions of the second table of the law, Commandments 5 to 10.

This is spelled out in the New Testament in places like Romans 1: the causal connection, forsaking the first table, which leads to this gross immorality of sins outlined in the second table. And, the further men stray the more evil and perverse their ways become, like we saw on the day of the judges, resulting in unthinkable forms of sexual perversion and murderers and so on, like Sodom and Gomorrah. But, the way back always begins with reestablishing God as God. Remember the words of David's repentance in Psalm 51, "against thee and thee only have I sinned." God was preeminent. So, when we see God as God, then we will submit to God's rule and to His holy worship, which leads then to holy practices in our relationships with other people. We see that reformation must begin with the return to God's Word. One prominent feature under Josiah was the recovery

of God's law. It was read to the king and then read before all the people. God was speaking again to His people, and they were listening.

This revelation produced acute contrition for sin, humiliation, and the fruits of repentance. They confessed their sins and they fled from worldly influences and idolatry. They made their top priority the removal of all of this idolatry and the restoration of God's commanded worship ordinances. The same was true in the Protestant Reformation: the recovery of God's Word being brought back to center stage within the church, God being recognized as God, and the first priority, therefore, given to the Reformation of God's worship. John Calvin wrote these words: "If it be inquired then by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence among us and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity: that is a knowledge, first, of the mode in which God is duly worshiped, and secondly, the source from which salvation is to be obtained." These Old Testament reformations involved a return to God's biblical law of worship, which resulted in a return, consequently, to godly living more generally. When God is given His place, and our allegiance to Him is our first priority, it will bear the fruit of godly living in other areas of life.

Secondly, we must not forsake our own mercies. When God's people sin against the Lord, God's chastening serves to train them in His ways and to turn them to Himself. So, discipline is a mercy and a mark of God's love. Hebrews 12:5–11 reinforces this point. Part of it reads as follows, "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? It goes on a bit later, "Now no chastening for the present [time] seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." When you feel the pain of conviction under the Word of God, recognize this as tokens of the Lord's love. God disciplines His people in providence, through the rebukes of His Word, and in the ordinances of His church. The Lord will not leave those He loves to wander from Him in their sin. While this correction comes with a painful sting, God designed this chastening to produce beautiful spiritual fruit.

Another connection that we should draw is this: some of the godly, that is the God-fearing Jews, during this period suffered with the rest of the nation, and they themselves went into exile. Daniel and his three friends are one example, but they remained tenaciously loyal to Jehovah. They upheld His law and sought His glory amid the devastating circumstances of exile. For the New Testament Christian, our ultimate home is centered in the Jerusalem above, in the words of Galatians 4. The New Testament describes Christians as what amounts to exiles. It uses language like *foreigners*, *strangers*, *pilgrims*, *aliens*, *sojourners*. This is a description of Christians in this world, separated and en route to their heavenly abode.

Peter opens his first epistle to the scattered believers with these words, "To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." He goes on in chapter 2:11–12 to exhort God's people in all ages, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." We live as exiles in loyalty to Christ and in opposition to the sinful ways of the world all around us. We are called not to cave to their influences but rather to hold to consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are to have our heart and mind fixated on seeking the good of God's cause, God's kingdom, above all else.

Psalms 137 was a song that was penned during the Babylonian exile, and it is a song that remains the Christian's heart cry. In Psalm 137:5–6 we sing, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem," the New Testament Christian thinks of the church, "let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." As we consider the experience of the godly who suffered during this period of exile, there is a great deal for the contemporary Christian to learn. How do we live as those who by way of equivalency also are exiles in a hostile world with pagan influences that are all around us? We live as those [who] have our devotion and loyalty fixed on Christ Himself, walking in His ways, holding His

Word, pursuing His glory. We have at the very center of our heart a concern for His cause, His kingdom, Zion, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, in this world. We recognize that all the fanfare that passes in the public media about nations and about all of their accomplishments are really the side story [and] that the main story continues to be God's work of redemption carried out through His Church. And, we view our present time and recent history in light of those biblical theological truths.

Well, in conclusion, after all of the trauma of the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jews in a pagan land, does any hope remain for those that are in captivity? That's a pressing question. In the next lecture, we will consider their deliverance and their return under what could be called the second great Exodus.

Lecture 21

RESTORATION

Lecture Theme:

God promises of deliverance endure to the very end and train his Old Testament people to yet hope in the even greater promises to be fulfilled in the coming of the promised Messiah.

Text:

“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:16–18).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 21

Few things compare to the experience of coming home, especially after having been gone for a long period. Familiar sights, sounds, and smells greet you on your arrival. We find comfort in what is familiar to us, and nothing is more familiar than home itself. Even following the route that takes you home conveys a sense of joy. You recognize old landmarks and familiar scenes. You're heading back to where you belong. Many of the Jewish exiles died in Babylon. Some of them decided to stay, having grown accustomed to their pagan surroundings. Some were born in Babylon and were going to see Jerusalem for the first time, not in its glory, mind you, but in crumpled ruins. But, some of the older Jews would be returning to what they left. It would have brought them joy but a joy mixed with sorrow because it was not what they once knew. But certainly, joy was dominant. You can read Psalm 126 and imagine them singing it on their trek and arrival home. Psalm 126:1–2 say, “When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.”

How does the timing of the return from exile relate to God's word of prophecy? Who were the main leaders in this return and what prophets continued to bring God's Word to His people? What ongoing sins persisted after the return? What theological truths do we glean from Nehemiah's call to biblical reformation? What function does the Sabbath have at the end of the Old Testament, and what does that teach us about its permanent relevance? What do we learn about the new covenant in the Old Testament prophecies? As we conclude our study of this Old Testament period, what have we learned about the points of continuity and discontinuity between the Old Testament and New Testament? In this lecture, we will have completed 21 lessons on the Old Testament. We began with the account of Eden before the fall, and the Old Testament history ends with what we might call the second Exodus, the Jews' deliverance and return from Babylonian exile. This history is recorded in places like the

end of II Chronicles and Esther and especially Ezra and Nehemiah. God's prophetic word during this time can be found in books such as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

First of all, let's give some consideration to what we learned about the history of this period. God had foretold through the prophecy of Jeremiah that the Jews would spend 70 long years in Babylonian captivity. Those who paid close attention to God's Word knew this, and Daniel was such a man. We read in Daniel 9:2, "In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem." Well, as Daniel saw the end of the time in Babylon coming to a conclusion, he was motivated to pray for God to do what He promised. You remember Solomon's prayer of dedication at the temple way back? He prayed in I Kings 8:33-34, "When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers." Daniel's prayer is built upon all of this, and really the prayer of Daniel 9 is one of the model prayers of the Bible. It is filled primarily with the confession of sin, sin being the cause behind their exile from the land of promise. Daniel does not seem to have lived to experience the return himself, but God's promise came to pass.

The Jews, which is the southern kingdom, returned from captivity in three successive waves. First of all, the first group returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel. This begins where II Kings and II Chronicles end. The second group returned under Ezra, a scribe and a priest. The book of Esther probably describes a situation just prior to this second return, this second group returning. The Bible describes the good hand of God upon them and the enduring validity and fulfillment of God's promises. This time of renewal also brought fresh demands of humility and return to God's law, as you see in Ezra. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah provide God's Word to His people during this period. The third wave of return took place under Nehemiah with Malachi prophesying around this time. Under Nehemiah's leadership, God brought about the last Old Testament reformation, providing another pattern of restoration and renewal.

Considering the whole flow of redemptive history, what was one of God's primary purposes for bringing His people back from captivity into the land? The answer is the Lord brought the Jews back from exile and preserved the kingdom so that the path to the coming Messiah would remain open. The great King would arise from Judah as promised centuries earlier. God was keeping His promises.

Secondly, we need to consider the theology of this period, some points of theology. God in His providence is steering the whole course of history to serve His primary purpose with His people and the unfolding of His redemption, as we saw in the last lecture. So, the Lord raised up Cyrus, king of the leading world superpower, to issue an edict enabling the Jews to return to Judea. God refers to Cyrus as His servant and as the one appointed to accomplish His purposes. The same could be said for Artaxerxes in the days of Nehemiah. They actually lent their political support to advancing the good of Zion. While they were pagan rulers, what they did served God's will. The office of kings, as we have learned previously, exists to serve the Lord first and foremost and to uphold God's law under God's authority. We learn in Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." God is directing the course of history for the good of His people.

Secondly, God had judged His people and destroyed Jerusalem and removed His people from the promised land, further rebellion against God, defying His law and breaking His covenant; but we discover upon their return that those same sins persisted in the hearts and lives of His people. They reverted to their old patterns. Notice that now at the end of the Old Testament we see many of the same sins that we discovered at the beginning of the Old Testament. Significant space, for example in Ezra, is devoted to His dealing with their sin of intermarrying with the heathen, those outside God's covenant. We first saw this all the way back in Genesis 6. We've seen warnings about it several times since then. We're also told that they returned to corrupt worship and desecrated God's Sabbath.

All of this stemmed from a disobedient heart of unbelief accompanied by all sorts of sins that came as a result. Malachi reveals that their outward form of religion was twisted, perverted, and without the fear of the Lord, and it was evidenced by sorcerers, adulterers, false swearers, and oppressors of the stranger, fatherless, and widows. We see that in Malachi 3. Remember, before exile Jeremiah provided another clear list of these sort of second table sins in chapter 7:8-9, and that list comes immediately following a passage that graphically depicts

their spiritual adultery. Under Nehemiah, we see the last Old Testament reformation. I will not repeat what we learned in the last lecture, but you can trace the same exact pattern here. It began with the reading of the law, resulted in the conviction of sin, repentance, separation from the world, and the recovery of God's pure worship. Nehemiah calls them back to God's covenant, the pure worship of God, and to obedience to God's law, but I want to focus our attention on the role of the Sabbath as one example within this context.

We read about in and in Nehemiah and especially chapter 13 verses 15 and following. We read of the Jews buying and selling food, commercial transactions, on the Sabbath and permitting outsiders, non-Israelites, to do the same. Nehemiah confronted the leaders, the nobles, and he imposed strict enforcement as a magistrate of Sabbath keeping in and all around Jerusalem. Why was he so vehement about the Sabbath? Well, we read in Nehemiah 13:18 this, "Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath." Sabbath desecration was a cause for their previous judgment in exile. This is important for understanding the theology of the Bible because it connects the beginning and the end of the Old Testament and sets the precedent for continuity in the New Testament.

As you'll recall, the Sabbath was established as a creation ordinance in Genesis 2:2-3. This preceded the fall and had relevance apart from sin and redemption. The Sabbath belongs in the same category as marriage, work, [and] procreation, and can be no more abrogated than they are. The Sabbath is built in the very structure of the universe. We have accounts of God's stipulating the importance of the Sabbath prior to the giving of the Mosaic covenant in Sinai. One example is Exodus 16:22-30. There was no interruption in the flow of Sabbath observance from the time of Adam to the ratification of Sabbath observance in the 10 Commandments. The Sabbath was of course embedded in the 10 Commandments. It's the fourth commandment as you see in Exodus 20 and in Deuteronomy 5. These commands are moral in nature and are a continuing standard for all time as a reflection of God's character. Jesus affirmed this in Matthew 5:17-19. This standard regulates the conduct of all nations and all peoples and all time.

Failing to set apart one day in seven is as sinful as stealing, committing, adultery, or the violation of any of the other commands of God. You'll remember that in the Old Testament, the penalty for desecrating the Sabbath under the theocracy of Israel was capital punishment. We see that in Exodus 35 and Numbers 15. This established irrefutably the importance of keeping the Sabbath to Jehovah. Can you think of anything that merited capital punishment in the Old Testament that is not considered sin in the New Testament? It should be fixed in our minds that the Lord does not take lightly violations of His moral law.

The prophets raised the same concern. We read in Isaiah 58:13-14, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." God requires people to cease from their ordinary work and recreation in order to devote the whole day to public and private worship, the exercise of the soul in fellowship with God. This is accompanied by works of necessity and mercy as Christ taught. While Jesus confronts the perversions of the Pharisees' distortion of the Sabbath, He upholds its original standard. That standard continues to the present day. When we read Nehemiah, we are reminded that spiritual declension will be found wherever the Sabbath is desecrated, and biblical reformation will always include its recovery. I've highlighted one particular item to demonstrate the relevance of the theological truths gleaned from this period of history.

Thirdly, we need to go on to see how this final stage, this final period of the history of the Old Testament, points us forward because the final segment of Old Testament redemptive history promotes within us a sense of expectation. The inadequacies of the second Exodus, the return from exile, demonstrate that something more is needed. God's last word to Israel in the Old Testament of course is found in Malachi. We read at the end of that book in chapter 4 verse 2, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." We can see the expectation here. God then says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD" (verse 5). As you turn the page over into the New Testament, you see this fulfilled almost 400 years later in the ministry of John the Baptist as the forerunner preparing the way for Christ. We also need to say something about the references to the new covenant in the Old Testament

As we draw our studies of the Old Testament to a close and as we prepare to turn our attention to the New Testament, we should consider what the era of the prophets, as a whole, contributed to God's revelation about the coming new covenant, which is referred to as an everlasting covenant. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and some of the minor prophets provide several key texts about the new covenant. The difference between the Old Testament old covenant and new covenant is not one of substance but of administration.

Well, we can only consider a few themes, but one important text is Jeremiah 31:31–34. It's in part important because it is cited in the New Testament in Hebrews chapter 8. When you read that textual, you will note first of all the continuity between what is described as the new covenant with the former covenants. So, it speaks of the same people, Israel and Judah, uses that language, speaks of the same law, a law which is now put into their heart, and the same promise that we learned long ago in our studies, the very core of the covenant, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people," and so immediately you see the continuity and connections. But, it will bring new blessings that God once again initiates. He will apply His law internally in their hearts. He will provide increased knowledge of Himself. He will grant definitive, full forgiveness of sins, no longer in Old Testament symbols.

Paul in II Corinthians 3 shows that the comparatively greater glory of the new covenant will surpass the glory of the old. Hebrews 8 through 10, which speaks a lot about the new covenant, grounds this in the superiority of Christ's ministry as mediator. Christ, of course, ratifies the new covenant in blood for the remission of sins. We see this in the descriptions in the four Gospels of Christ establishing the Lord's Supper. We see the same language in I Corinthians 11. Likewise, Ezekiel 36:25–27 promises cleansing, to sprinkle His people with clean water, and it promises a new heart and God's Spirit that would be put within His people, enabling them to walk in His statutes. We'll discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in new covenant when we come to the lecture on Pentecost. But for now, we recognize that it is important for us to begin with what the Old Testament foretells about the coming new covenant. We'll see it even more fully and clearly when we turn to the New Testament itself.

Lastly, as we prepare for consideration of the New Testament, it may be helpful to pause and summarize some of the points we have learned about the continuity and discontinuity between the Old Testament and New Testament as a whole because these two things must be held together as we've seen all the way through these lectures. You cannot rightly understand the New Testament without a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, upon which the New Testament is built. Likewise, you must interpret the Old Testament in light of its fulfillment in the New Testament.

First all, we'll consider points of continuity, sameness, and connection. As we've seen throughout this course, the Bible primarily emphasizes the continuity of the Old and New Testament. We've seen this in the one covenant of grace that stretches from Genesis 3:15 and gradually unfolds and expands through the covenant with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and now into the new covenant. All the way through, God proclaims the same basic promise, "I will be your God and you shall be my people." Both the Old and New Testaments reveal the same God: A God Who is unchanging.

To draw a contrast between the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament would be a destructive error which heretics of the past have taught over and over. No, He is the same unchanging God in both Old and New Testaments. Both the Old and New Testament also revealed the same Savior. The Old Testament points forward to Christ through types and shadows and ceremonies. The New Testament unveils His person and work in the full glory of His coming. The Old Testament and New Testament also set forth the same gospel of grace. Contemporary Gentile believers are saved by faith in Christ just as Abraham was redeemed. God does not have multiple plans for salvation throughout biblical history. He unfolds one single grand plan for redeeming His people after the fall. The Old Testament is therefore full of gospel content.

The Old and New Testaments also represent one people of God, one church, under two different administrations. In the New Testament, the church of course is greatly expanded through the influx of Gentile believers as had been promised all through the Old Testament. The moral law of God, the 10 Commandments, also remains the same for all people and all ages as the revelation of the character of God and of His divine will and standard of right and wrong. All of these points of continuity reinforce the fact that the whole Bible is the Christian Scriptures, and we must study and understand this whole Bible revelation of God and His redemption.

Well, secondly, discontinuity. We've also noted various points of discontinuity in our study of the Old Testament. There are several differences between the two testaments and between the administration of the covenant,

the Covenant of Grace, in the Old and New Testaments. This should not surprise us. The Old Testament foretells, and the New Testament fulfills. Points of discontinuity would include, first of all, the removal of Old Testament ceremonial laws, institutions and regulations. The New Testament set aside the ceremonial worship of sacrifice, altars, priests, and so on, along with the rituals of purification and the ceremonies of clean and unclean prohibitions. The significance of the promised land as well is also replaced with the realities it symbolized. As Paul says, we must not return to the shadows when we stand in the presence of the person that they pictured. To do so would be an affront to Christ and would undermine His finished work.

Another difference includes the important place of kingdom expansion, which I mentioned briefly. The Old Testament did not exclude Gentiles altogether, and think of people like Rahab, Ruth, Uriah, and several others; but proportionately fewer Gentiles were enfolded in the covenant and Old Testament church. And here's why: the Old Testament was primarily a "come and see" model, if you will. God set Canaan, generally, and Jerusalem, in particular, as a light to the nations. Some outsiders would be attracted to come and learn about Jehovah and receive His salvation. So, the Old Testament was primarily a "come and see" model, but the New Testament issues a commission to "go and tell" (Matthew 28:19). See the difference? The gospel is now taken to the nations beginning in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The mission focuses on expanding Christ's kingdom universally, not locally in Israel. The recipients of these covenant promises will include people from every tribe and tongue throughout the whole world. The Gentile nations are to be disciplined and added to Christ's inheritance. Now, we realize because of our studies of the Old Testament this mission to the Gentile world of course was predicted all through the Old Testament from the early chapters of Genesis onward, but it comes to fruition under the New Testament. As we will see in future lectures.

A last category of discontinuity relates to the greater degrees of blessing in the New Testament, derived from the finished work of Christ. A greater measure of the fullness of the Spirit is given at Pentecost. We have more direct and immediate communion with God without the aid of earthly priests. We have an increased assurance and heightened power in sanctification, and we could list many other examples under the same category. So, while there is primarily a dominant continuity that hold the Old and New Testaments together as one Bible, we also need to be very conscious and careful about these points of discontinuity, the differences between the Old and New Testament, that we have learned in our studies.

In conclusion, we have now completed our last lecture on the history and theology of the Old Testament. This last period of the Old Testament leaves us, if you will, straining to see the promised Christ coming over the horizon. In the next lecture, we will turn our attention to the New Testament and begin our consideration of some of the theological themes that God revealed in the culmination of the Bible's history of redemption.

Lecture 22

INCARNATION

Lecture Theme:

God displays the fullest and final revelation of his glory in sending his Son into the world.

Text:

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 22

When you're scheduled to see a loved one, your expectations intensify the closer you get to that appointed day and time. If they send you notes describing all that they plan to do when they see you, that will strengthen your longing in the joyous anticipation to finally see them. That's how we should feel in reading through the Old Testament. God has been sending His Word and revelation, constantly supplying more and more detail about the Messiah's person and work. All that is left is for Him to come.

In this lecture, He finally arrives to the joy of men and angels. How does Christ connect the Old and New Testaments? What is the relationship between anticipation and then fulfillment? What does the word *incarnation* mean? What do the Gospels reveal about Christ's divine glory? How does Christ reveal the glory of God? What was the message that Christ proclaimed in His earthly ministry? How does that message relate to the Church's message today? At the end of the last lesson, we summarize the points of continuity and discontinuity between the Old and New Testament.

In this lecture, we move from foretelling, that is the Old Testament, to fulfillment, which is the New Testament, or from anticipation to accomplishment. We're still focusing on God's acts of redemption in history. Our study of the New Testament begins with us standing on the cusp of Christ coming. The incarnation of Christ marks a whole new era in the history of redemption. The history of the whole world centers on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, most of the world marks time by Christ's coming. He is the axis, if you will, upon which the world turns, so we use the designation B.C., before Christ, to mark the years that are before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; and we use A.D., which is an abbreviation for the Latin words Anno Domini, the year of our Lord (A.D.), to specify the years after Christ. So, the whole history of the world prior to Christ pointed and prepared for this moment, and the history of the world ever since has experienced the world-transforming implications and outworking of His coming.

First of all, I want to take up the point joyous anticipation and fulfillment. We've seen that knowledge of the Old Testament is indispensable to understanding the New Testament. Both, of course, focus on Christ. Listen to Jesus's description of the Old Testament Scriptures. He says, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). After Christ's resurrection we read, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me" (Luke 24:27 and verse 44).

As we turn to the writings of the New Testament, we discover God drawing many parallels between Christ and various Old Testament figures, such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Aaron, Joshua, David, Solomon, and so on. The New Testament also draws connections between Christ and many Old Testament events, ordinances, and other types. So, you think in John 12 of the reference to the brazen serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness as a picture of Christ.

With the extensive revelation of Christ in the Old Testament, it's no surprise to find godly believers who knew their Old Testament anticipating His coming. So, we read of Simeon in Luke 2:25-26, "And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Likewise, we have the example of Anna in the same chapter, Luke 2:37-38, "And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years," we read, "which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him," that is Christ, "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." This point about the buildup of anticipation and its joyous fulfillment stands out prominently at the beginning of the New Testament, so it's important for us to consider this more fully by demonstrating how Christ's coming connects this anticipation and the accomplishment.

The dominant note in all of this is joy, so consider first of all that Christ's coming was announced by the angels of heaven. In Luke 2:10, the angel proclaims, "behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." After all, the angels take a keen interest in all of these things. Remember I Peter 1:12, "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves," speaking of the Old Testament, "but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." So, the angels learn about the glory of God through Christ's incarnation through His person and work. Again, in Luke 2:13-14, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest."

Secondly, for the sake of brevity, let's focus on one other event in Christ's ministry that especially highlights this point about anticipation and the joyous fulfillment in the incarnation. Namely, let's consider Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem where the King comes to redeem and claim His Bride. This is toward the end of the Gospels. So, if you consider Psalm 118, this has a very important part to play in our understanding of the New Testament. And, if you look at verses 25 and 26, you see Psalm 118 provides the anticipation. It says, "Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: We have blessed you out of the house of the LORD." Now, keep those words in mind and note that we see this fulfilled in all four Gospels; and you should also note that the word *Hosanna* here is a shout of praise that means "save, we pray," the words of Psalm 118.

So, we read in Matthew 21:9, for example, the people saying, "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD; Hosanna in the highest." Compare this to what you see in the parallel passages in Mark 11, Luke 19, and John 12. Furthermore, in Zechariah 9:9, we read, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Likewise, in Isaiah 62:11-12, "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." And again, we turn now to the New Testament, and in Matthew 21:4 we read, "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." And then, the passage goes on to quote what we just read from the Old Testament. So, in these examples, you're seeing this buildup of anticipation in the Old Testament and then clear fulfillment with joy over all that is accomplished in the coming of Christ.

You'll notice similar language woven throughout other Old Testament passages. Psalm 45 speaks of the King's daughters rejoicing. Psalm 24 speaks of "lift up your heads, O you gates," and says that "the King of glory shall come in." In the Song of Solomon chapter 3 is a reference to the daughters of Zion beholding the king. We can cite many, many more: Zephaniah 3, Psalm 96, Psalm 98, and so on.

But then, you turn to the New Testament, and in John 12:15, you see the language "Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh," in the name of the Lord. All of this is showing the connection between anticipation and joyous fulfillment. Note also the connection between Isaiah 40, where the big theme is "Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, . . . his reward is with him, and his work before him" (verse 10), and Isaiah 62:11-12, "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." Then, you turn to the New Testament, and you can in this instance, for example, go all the way to the end, [the] last chapter of Revelation 22:12, to see the fulfillment. And then we read the words, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me," it goes on to say, "to give every man according as his work shall be."

What's happening here? Why, I'm merely supplying really a brief sampling of passages as examples just enough to convey to you the profound sense of Old Testament anticipation and the overwhelming joy of fulfillment in Christ's coming, in Christ's incarnation. You'll need to search this out further in your studies, but the repeated call to "behold, behold" in the Old Testament gave way to actually seeing the promised Christ and hearing the sound of His voice. No wonder God's revelation in the incarnation of Christ brought so much joy both the angels and to men. We should share in that joy ourselves. This is a stupendous event, the incarnation, a stupendous event indeed.

Secondly then, let's turn our attention to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, His person. The word *incarnation* means literally "in flesh," so it refers to the humiliation and condescension of the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, in coming to take to Himself a human nature and continuing as both true God and true man in two distinct natures and one person forever. Shorter Catechism question 22 summarizes it this way, "Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary and born of her, yet without sin." In your studies of systematic theology, you will explore the details of all that this doctrine entails. But for our purposes in this course, we will focus on the self-disclosure of Christ and His revelation of the glory of God. This is very much central to the incarnation.

So, notice under this the second point. First of all, Jesus is true God. Throughout His earthly ministry, Christ continues to disclose His own divine glory. For the sake of brevity, consider some of the highlights just from the Gospel of John. The book opens with a clear declaration of Christ's divine glory in John 1:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." So, you see Jesus identified as God and yet, at the same time, distinguished from God. So, He's the second person of the Trinity, and He is true God along with the Father and the Spirit.

As you progress through John, this recurring theme continues to unfold, and I'll just give a couple of highlights. In John 8:58, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am;" chapter 10:30-33, "I and my Father are one." The Jews understood what this meant. Notice what the text says, "Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father. For which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." You recall that God revealed Himself as the great I AM to Moses. That's the name Jehovah: Exodus 3:14, "And God said unto Moses, I AM that I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Well, in the Gospel of John, Jesus uses that name repeatedly in reference to Himself. So, if you study John, you'll recall what we sometimes call the seven *I am* sayings of our Lord. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35), "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12), "I am the door," "I am the gate if you will," "of the sheep" (John 10:7&9). He says that "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11-14), "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25), and "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Lastly, "I am the true vine" (John 15:1 and following).

You have all of that, and then at Christ's arrest in the garden, we read in John 18:5-6, "They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he." Literally, in the Greek, the pronoun *he* is not there, so literally

he says, "Jesus saith unto them, I am. . . . As soon then as he had said unto them, I am, they went backward, and fell to the ground." You see this amazing proclamation of Christ. You'll also discover many Old Testament passages that refer to Jehovah being cited in the New Testament as references to Christ. That would be, I think, an edifying study for you to actually list those out. But what happens is, in doing so, the New Testament is proving that Jesus is Jehovah. One example from John 12:41 cites the vision that many are familiar with in Isaiah 6, the vision that Isaiah has of Jehovah, and then, John says that Isaiah saw Christ. There are many examples like this where Old Testament references to Jehovah are applied in the New Testament to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see the same point in many of the titles of Christ. So here are two examples. He's called the Son of God; He receives worship. So, in John 9:35, 30–38, Jesus [asks] "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man answers and says, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." Similarly, we have the title *Son of Man*. Jesus uses this title in reference to Himself probably more than any other, 81 times in the four Gospels.

Now, you may recall from your studies of the Old Testament [that] the Old Testament use of the title Son of Man is a reference to deity, to divine glory. Yes, sometimes people might think, "Well Son of God refers to His deity; Son of Man refers to His humanity." The fact is that even the title Son of Man refers to His divine glory, so remember the description given in Daniel 7 where he sees the Son of Man ascending to the ancient of days, and there are many places where divine attributes are given to this title the Son of Man. When you come to the culmination at the end of the gospel of John, Thomas, one of the disciples, looks upon the resurrected Christ and declares openly His divine glory. In chapter 20:28, "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." The whole New Testament unpacks this doctrine: Jesus is true God.

Secondly, Jesus is the revelation of God, and this is connected to what we've just seen. God purposed in the incarnation to reveal His divine glory in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, we read in John 1:14 and then again in verse 18, "and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Verse 18 says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." You see in the incarnation we have a revelation of the glory of God. Likewise, we read in John 14:9, Jesus says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Again, the whole New Testament expounds this theme: Christ is the fullest and final revelation of God.

The Bible describes Christ as the One "Who is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15) and elsewhere, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," (Hebrews 1:3). So, our knowledge of God is tied to His revelation of Himself in the person and work of Christ. To be God-centered is also to be Christ-centered. At every significant event in Christ's life and ministry, we see the revelation of the operations of the whole Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. You see it at His birth, at His baptism, through His teaching, at His death, resurrection, ascension, and at the day of Pentecost, for example. We also see a confirmation of all that we learned about Christ's three offices in the Old Testament. The New Testament sets forth Christ as God's Anointed, God's Messiah, God's Christ, and as God's final Prophet. Remember what we saw in Hebrews 1:1 and following. It sets Him forth as our only High Priest, consider for example Hebrews chapter 7 to 10, and sets Him forth as the King of all kings. This is seen several places, Revelation 1 for example. And so, in considering Christ's person, we see that He is true God, and we see that He is a revelation of God.

Our third main point pertains to Christ's message, the message He delivered in His incarnate ministry. And, the first theme that comes out in the opening of the Gospels pertains to the kingdom, His message about the kingdom. Christ began His ministry proclaiming the kingdom. So, Matthew 4:17, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Likewise, in Mark 1:14–15, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." The idea of the kingdom, as you know, has its roots in the Old Testament, but it comes to fruition in the New Testament.

We see it first of all in the garden of Eden where Adam lived obediently under God's rule; but that arrangement was destroyed by the fall, and the remainder of the Bible unfolds God's plan of restoring His people to serve willingly as subjects under God's reign. We saw the development under Abraham at Sinai where he erected a kingdom of, under the monarchy of David and Solomon, and through the promise proclaimed by the prophets. The kingdom of God is the display of divine glory through God's saving reign and the maintenance of God's rights by

a people who willingly serve as His subjects. It pertains to God's salvific dominion established through Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension and seen in all of His enemies being made His footstool. It was proclaimed in Christ's preaching in parables, and it will be fully consummated at the second coming and return of Christ.

So in the future, the second coming of Christ, the day of judgment, the reign of God, will be seen in its fullest expression. But at present, we also see it through the Messianic preaching of Christ, no less than through Christ's miracles. As in the Old Testament this preaching proclaimed God's claim and His promise and His demands. Christ describes the kingdom in several parables. If you look at Matthew 13, you'll see a collection of them. He describes the kingdom under the parable of the sower, and then the parable of the tares, and then the one of the mustard seed, the parable of the leaven, the treasure hidden in the field, the parable of the pearl of great price, the net, and so on. These speak of the incalculable value of the kingdom and of its gradual growth and expansion throughout history. It starts the kingdom as a mustard seed, and it grows to a full tree. It's like leaven sewn into lump; it fills the whole lump. It's a picture of the expansion of the kingdom of God in history. It's related to the church.

Westminster Confession chapter 25 paragraph 2 says, "The visible church, which is also Catholic or universal under the gospel, not confined to one nation as before, under the law, consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion and of their children and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation." You'll notice in the passage I cited earlier that the preaching of the kingdom, that message, is connected with repentance. So, the message of the kingdom included the demands of repentance. Repentance is turning from sin to God for mercy. Turning with our whole being to Him to receive mercy. It's turning from the reign and dominion of sin, the kingdom of Satan, to the reign of God in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's turning to follow Christ, to take His yoke, to deny oneself, and to go after Him. Christ calls to men and says, "Come unto me," the promised Messiah and Savior. He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

We cannot explore this fully here, but Christ came preaching the kingdom and calling men to repent. He also brings the confirmation of the covenant. Jesus referred to aspects of the covenant throughout His ministry, but this comes out beautifully, for example, at Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper, where He employs the Old Testament language of the blood of the covenant, in setting forth this New Testament, new covenant, ordinance of covenant renewal, the Lord's Supper. At the heart is the message of His sacrificial death in His broken body and shed blood for His people, but you will note that the Old Testament themes of kingdom, of Mediator, and of covenant all terminate in the person of Christ.

All of this has relevance for New Testament preaching, the preaching of the apostles, the preaching of the church today. Paul writes in Romans 16:25-27, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen." The church is called to preach Christ, His person and work. You'll see this all through the New Testament Scriptures. I Corinthians 1:23, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."

As you study the book of Acts, chapter after chapter after chapter records the history of apostolic preaching. Acts 5:42, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to [teach and preach] Jesus Christ." Christ's incarnation provides the display of divine glory. The revelation of God through Christ and the message Christ proclaimed are all tied together. This shapes the content and the focus of the preaching of the present-day church. Christ must have the preeminence. He must be high and lifted up, drawing men unto Himself. To preach biblically, we must preach the whole person and the whole work of Christ through the whole of the Scriptures. As Paul summarizes in I Timothy 3:16, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh," there's the incarnation, "justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Well, in this lecture, we have seen that God displays the fullest and final revelation of His glory in sending His Son into the world. In the next lecture, we will consider how God further expands this revelation through the work of Christ's atonement.

Lecture 23

ATONEMENT

Lecture Theme:

God condescends to reveal his glory through Christ's finished work of atonement.

Text:

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”
(1 Cor. 2:2).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 23

The world cannot see spiritual realities. They're blind, groping about in the darkness of unbelief. Paul says that they look upon the cross and consider it foolishness. What could be more foolish than the apparent weakness of a leader, a king, a savior, who suffers the ultimate defeat of gruesome execution? This does not display the kind of power the world esteems. On the face of these dismissive criticisms, God reveals the truth to us, truth that exposes the world's ignorance. The cross manifests the wisdom and power of God, His upholding divine justice, while granting mercy in securing the salvation of His people. Christ's crucifixion appeared to the human eye as colossal defeat, but in fact, in that very moment God displayed His greatest triumph. Christ won the victory over sin, Satan, death, and hell, and He did so not in spite of the cross but through the cross. So, we can say with Paul in I Corinthians 1:18, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

How does the growing momentum of what we learned in the Old Testament culminate in Christ's work of atonement? How do those Old Testament theological themes come to full expression in the New Testament? Why is the cross central to the New Testament and the Bible as a whole? What are the various components of the atonement, and what do they teach us about the content of the gospel? What exactly did the cross secure in terms of salvation, and for whom did Christ die? In this lecture, we turn our attention to one of the greatest events in God's history of redemption. But first, we should distinguish between the object of accomplishment of salvation and the subjective application of redemption. So, the former speaks of Christ's work for us, whereas the latter pertains to Christ's work in us. In these first four lectures on the New Testament, we're primarily focusing on the object of accomplishment of salvation; that is Christ's work for us. And, some of the latter lectures will concentrate on the application of salvation to the believer, namely, Christ's work in us. But, they must always be

held together in biblical balance. To focus on one to the exclusion of the other would distort the Bible's gospel message. So, let's turn our attention to this theme of atonement.

First of all, we'll note the historical unfolding of this theme of atonement. The revelation of God's plan of redemption began, as you'll remember, in Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Christ's crushing the head of the serpent comes to full fruition in His incarnate work, but in the process, Christ's heel is bruised, a reference to His work on the cross. We read in I John 3:8, "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." This is further confirmed, for example in Colossians 2:15, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made in a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." The whole history of the Old Testament foretold of this grand work, and the New Testament spells out the fulfillment in Christ.

So, regarding the exodus, we read in I Corinthians 5:7, "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." The New Testament opens with John the Baptist's declaration, "Behold, the Lamb of God," and the New Testament ends with that same image. In Revelation 5:12, there is a picture of Christ in heaven after His ascension, and we read, "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." References to the Lamb can be found all the way to the end of the book in chapter 21:14.

As we will explore below, Christ fulfills the Old Testament themes of surety, sacrifice, substitute, ransom, redemption, and so on. The point I want to establish is that your understanding of these New Testament concepts will be very limited without a thorough grasp of the Old Testament theology. The four Gospels reveal the history of Christ's work on earth, each of them contributing a different emphasis. We read of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension. You'll notice that all four Gospels devote a significant proportion of space to everything leading up to and surrounding Christ's crucifixion. For example, nearly half of the book of John is devoted to that last week of Christ's life and the events of His death. The rest of the New Testament is devoted to expounding the implications of Christ's work, especially His atonement. This is why Paul says, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2).

So, secondly, we want to especially focus in this lecture on the theology of the cross, so the theology of the cross: we must see that God provides a revelation of Himself through Christ's atoning work. So, God is showing us Who He is through what He does. God cannot change. He is a holy and righteous God, so His provision of salvation must correspond to His own character. The true gospel is the only means of accomplishing this, which is why when Paul teaches the gospel, he says in Romans 3:26, "To declare, I say, at this time his," that is God's, "righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." How can God remain just and still be the justifier of those who are obviously ungodly? The gospel provides the only answer. So, for example, His justice is upheld in the full punishment of sin and the satisfaction of His wrath by placing it on Christ as the Substitute standing in the place of His people. He manifests His magnificent love for His people, bringing together at the cross both His justice and His love.

We will explore under this point the language and theology found in the New Testament. Let me highlight especially four major examples regarding the theology of the cross. The first is sacrifice, the theme of sacrifice. This is a dominant theme throughout the Scriptures and an important part of the role of the Mediator in offering up Himself as a sacrifice. So, Ephesians 5:2 says, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." As you know, the entire Old Testament economy with its sacrificial system pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ. The central idea in this doctrine is that of substitution. This is what is meant by a vicarious sacrificial atonement. *Vicarious* refers to the substitute, Christ, is our penal substitute. He stands in the place of His people and atones for their sin.

As we learned in an earlier lecture, this atoning sacrifice included both expiation and propitiation. These are two big theological words, but they have a simple and important meaning. *Expiation* refers to blotting out and removing sin, more specifically, taking away the guilt of sin. Revelation 1:5 says, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." But, there's also *propitiation*, and this refers to satisfying divine justice and appeasing the wrath of God. We read in Romans 5:8-9, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be

saved from wrath through him.” Though some object to this aspect of the atonement, it is an indispensable part of the gospel. God, by His nature as a righteous and just God, must reflect wrath toward all sin. So, that wrath must be removed through Christ’s death, His death, to satisfy divine justice, I John 4:10, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

A second theme under the theology of the cross is reconciliation. So, we read one of many examples in Romans 5:10–11, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” Reconciliation is an important part of this theme of atonement and of the theology of the cross. Reconciliation refers to the removal of our enmity with God; so Christ’s atonement eliminates our alienation from God, and it, rather, restores friendship and fellowship with God. This is good news indeed, a message that must be proclaimed in the gospel; and it is an important part of preaching. Listen to Paul’s description in II Corinthians 5:18–20, “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

So, the first theme is sacrifice. The second is reconciliation. A third theme is redemption: Ephesians 1:7, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Redemption refers to our deliverance and the payment of a price to buy us back to Himself, the idea of ransom. This concept was obviously prominent in the Old Testament; the whole event of the Exodus from Egypt was about redemption. You have the same theme in the sanctifying of the firstborn and in the concept of the kinsman redeemer, which comes out not only in the law but is exemplified in the book of Ruth and so on. All of this is crystal clear in the New Testament. This includes the idea of Christ as our Surety. As Surety, He assumed to Himself the responsibility of paying the debt for the sins of His people. The New Testament also makes clear that Christ was the ransom. The price paid for our redemption was the bloodshed of our Savior. Christ refers to Himself in Mark 10:45 when He says, “to give his life a ransom for many.”

More specifically, God’s people are redeemed from spiritual bondage, and you can see this under, really, four points. God’s people are redeemed from spiritual bondage. First of all, they’re redeemed from the bondage of sin, its guilt, its defilement, its power, and so on. So, we read in Titus 2:14 of Christ “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, . . . zealous of good works.” Secondly, God’s people are redeemed from the curse of the law. Galatians 3:13 says, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Thirdly, God’s people are redeemed from the works of the devil. You see this in I John 3:8, for example. Fourthly, the Lord’s people are redeemed from the power of death. Hebrews 2:14 says, “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death.” This is brought up beautifully at the end of I Corinthians 15 as well. So, redemption is another important component of the theology of the cross and of our understanding of the atonement.

A fourth theme is that of obedience, and we often explain this under both Christ’s active and His passive obedience. So, salvation requires obedience to God. That’s clear, but theologians distinguish between two aspects. These are aspects: Christ’s active and His passive obedience. Both of these describe the whole of Christ’s work. Remember the end of II Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Let me explain this briefly. Christ’s active obedience refers to the fulfilling of what the law requires. So, God requires perfect obedience to His law in order to have to be acceptable in His sight. Christ in His life obeyed on behalf of His people the precepts of the law, the full requirements of the law, thereby obtaining a record of perfect righteousness, perfect law-keeping. And, Christ’s perfect righteousness is imputed or credited to His people and received by them by faith. There is His act of obedience.

Secondly, there is His passive obedience. This refers to Him suffering the penalty required by the law. So, God’s law also demands a just penalty for sin. Christ pays the penalty of the law and bears its curse in the place of His people: Philippians 2:8, “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” So, this theme of obedience in connection to the atonement and the

theology of the cross can be traced through the New Testament as well. In summary, under the second point notice how Christ's atonement corresponds to all of our needs.

We looked at four different things. First of all, sacrifice corresponds to our problem of guilt and wrath. Reconciliation corresponds to our problem of enmity and alienation from God. Redemption corresponds to the problem of bondage, and obedience corresponds to the problem of the demands of God's law. In other words, the theology of the cross is perfectly suited to the needs of God's people and bringing them a full salvation. The cross was necessary. God could not have redeemed His people another way. For example, He could not have redeemed them by merely declaring the forgiveness of their sins. This is because God's justice had to be upheld. Christ's work on the cross provides essential content to the message of the true gospel. God reveals what He has accomplished for the salvation of His people, and the cross is an exhibition of both God's justice and His love. We see in the cross what we sing of in Psalm 85:10, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Thirdly, in this lecture, we need to consider the extent of the atonement. So lastly, we need to take up the question, "Who are the recipients of the blessings of the atonement?" Or, another way of asking the question is this: For whom did Christ die? This is an often misunderstood doctrine. There is a system of theology called Arminianism that teaches that Christ died for all men, atoned for the sins of all men, but contrary to this incorrect teaching, the Bible teaches that Christ died for His own elect people. This is important, and it's important because it affects our understanding of the very nature of the atonement itself as you'll see. This doctrine fits within the broader context of what the Bible teaches about man's total depravity and spiritual inability and God's election, His sovereign choice of His people. So, when asking the question, for whom did Christ die?, let's think for a second about the scope of that question. And, it may help to first of all state what is not being questioned. The gospel is to be proclaimed to every last person in the world. Salvation is preached indiscriminately to all those who hear the gospel, and the sufficiency of Christ's work is not being questioned.

On the other side, what is being stated is this: the extent of the atonement - who are the recipients of its blessings? - is rooted in the nature of the atonement itself. That's what's being highlighted here. Christ did not merely create the hypothetical potential for some to be saved. He actually secured and accomplished salvation certainly, definitively, for His elect, chosen people. Since all Christians believe that not everyone goes to heaven, the question is, "Who limits the atonement? God or man? The answer is: God sets the parameters for the atonement. We also need to recognize an understanding of what's being stated. We need to recognize that the sin of unbelief and, correspondingly, the gift of faith are secured in the atonement itself. When Christ died, He died for the sin of unbelief, and He died to secure the gift of faith.

We also recognize that Christ's love for His own bride is different from His disposition toward the rest of the world, and we should note there cannot be a double payment. What does that mean? It means it cannot be the case that Christ pays for the sins of all men, and then some unbelievers must pay for that same sin again in hell. That makes no sense. The whole Bible teaches this particularism: God provides atonement for His chosen people. We see it in the Old Testament. God out of the counsel of His own will chose a particular people for Himself, Israel, as distinguished from the rest of the world, and He provided salvation for them. So, for example, in Deuteronomy 7:6-8 we read, "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

The whole sacrificial system in the Old Testament taught the same truth. The sacrifices, which signified atonement, were applied to a particular people, not the whole world. We could consider a host of other texts. Think, for example, of the pronouns used at the end of Isaiah 52 beginning at verse 13 and through Isaiah 53. We see the same thing in the New Testament from the opening page. In Matthew 1:21 we read, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Jesus teaches the same thing in John 10:14-15, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." Throughout Christ's high

priestly prayer in John 17, He makes repeated references to those whom the Father had given Him, and He says in verse 9, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.” Paul charges the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” We could provide more texts, but this should suffice.

Let me now tie these various threads together by laying out the biblical argument as a whole, and we’re going to turn to John Owen, a 17th century English Puritan, who spells this out very clearly. Listen carefully and try to follow along with what he says. The biblical argument regarding the fact that Christ died for His elect people goes like this:

“The Father imposed His wrath and the Son underwent punishment for either: 1) all the sins of all men, 2) all the sins of some men, or 3) some of the sins of all men. In which case it may be said,” first of all, “that if the last be true,” that Christ was punished for some of the sins of all men, then “all men have sins to answer for, and so none are saved.” We can take that off the list. Secondly, “if the second be true,” that Christ died for all the sins of some men, “then Christ, in their stead suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the whole world, and this is the position that is true,” but thirdly, and this is addressing the Arminians, “if the first be the case,” that Christ died for all the sins of all men, “why are not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins? You answer Because of unbelief.” Owen says, “Then I ask is this unbelief a sin, or is it not? If yes, it is a sin, then Christ suffered the punishment due for it, or He did not. If He did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which He died? But if He did not die for that sin, then He did not die for all of their sins.”

You can see here the force of the biblical argument as it is nicely and compactly summarized by John Owen. The answer to the question regarding the extent of the atonement — for whom did Christ die? — the answer the Bible gives is Christ died for His elect people. Let me illustrate the implications of this doctrine for Christian experience. What would you think of a husband [who] told his wife that he loves her but that he also loves all the other women in the world just the same as he loves her? Well, you would be terribly offended, and rightly so. When the Christian looks at the cross, he sees Christ’s particular love for His bride, not a generic love of a nebulous, undefined mass of humanity. Christ carried His specific people on His heart and in His mind when He offered Himself as a sacrifice for their sins. This is a great aid to the assurance of God’s love. The Christian can say, “Christ was securing the atonement for my sins in particular and securing them in love for me.”

Well, in conclusion, in this lecture we have concentrated our focus on Christ’s sacrificial work, His work of atonement. We see that God condescends to reveal His glory through Christ’s finished work of atonement. The gospel is the heart of the Bible, and Christ’s atonement is the heart of the gospel. In the next lecture, we will explore the next great event in God’s history of redemption. After His death comes the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, we will consider together this event of the resurrection of Christ and its implications for the salvation of God’s people.

Lecture 24

RESURRECTION

Lecture Theme:

God reveals his glory to men and angels through the triumphant resurrection of Christ, through which he secures the promised redemption of his people.

Text:

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (1 Cor. 15:17–18).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 24

The Bible is full of what we might call grand reversals. Over and over throughout redemptive history, God’s people appear to stand on the brink of disaster when suddenly and unexpectedly the Lord turns everything around and brings a great victory. Think of Israel standing with their backs to the Red Sea and the fiercest army in the world, Egypt, pressing toward them. All looks lost. Then, the Lord parts the Red Sea, brings His people across on dry land, and drowns the armies of Pharaoh in the sea. What a deliverance and how unexpected! Or, think of the account of Esther toward the end of the Old Testament era. You find yourself sitting on the edge of your seat as Haman plots the destruction of the Jews, and again, seemingly in a split second, God turns everything upside down and saves His people. The Old Testament is full of these kinds of examples. So, we’re accustomed to God’s pattern.

Now, imagine Christ’s disciples. They must have felt overwhelming defeat at the cross. Their whole world seemed to come crashing down at the death of their Lord, but as we will see in this lecture, the cross was not the end of the story. Christ triumphed over death in His resurrection and secured the most magnificent victory in history. Was Christ’s resurrection anticipated in the Old Testament? Was the nature of Christ’s body after the resurrection the same as before? Was it still a true body? How did Christ’s resurrection serve as a public vindication of Himself? What is the relationship between Christ’s resurrection and the salvation of the souls of God’s people? How is it connected to the future resurrection of the body of believers? In this lecture, we will consider the next great event in biblical history: Christ’s resurrection. We will explore the place of His resurrection within God’s plan of redemption and the implications for the salvation of God’s people.

So, first of all, let’s focus on Christ’s resurrection itself. The Old Testament provides several references to the resurrection of Christ. For example, we sing about it in Psalm 16:10, “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,” or the grave,” neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” In Acts 2:27–31, Peter quotes this text from

Psalm 16 in a sermon and says that it spoke of Christ's resurrection, foretelling that God would raise up Christ to sit on David's throne. Paul refers to the same passage, along with Isaiah 55:3 and Psalm 2:7, in a sermon at Antioch. You can read that in Acts 13:30–37, but there are others. Think of Jesus Himself, Who cites the experience of Jonah as an Old Testament type of Christ's resurrection.

In Matthew 12:38–40 we read, "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." After Christ's death and burial, He rose from the grave on the third day. The resurrection body of Jesus was a true physical body, not just a ghostly kind of appearance of a body. He ate with His disciples, showed them His nail-pierced hands, and invited Thomas to touch and handle His body. It was His true body, the one He had before His death, though now made new; and it would be further glorified upon His ascension into heaven.

Christ's resurrection was the greatest miracle of all, and the definitive and public declaration of His vindication. Let me provide some examples of what the resurrection demonstrated. First of all, it demonstrated that Christ is God's Messiah. In Acts 2:36 we read, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ." It also demonstrates that He is the Son of God as He had proclaimed. In Romans 1:4 Paul says, "and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Thirdly, it demonstrated that His sacrifice was accepted by God for the redemption of His people. In Romans 4:25 says, "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Lastly, we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ reigns as Sovereign over all. In Revelation 1:18, we have this vision of the Lord Jesus Christ to the apostle John, and Jesus says, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Despite the frequent attacks of unbelievers against Christ's resurrection, the truth of His resurrection is abundantly clear. Notice just a handful of things. First of all, we have the empty tomb. The empty tomb was discovered by multiple independent sources. The first witnesses were women, and then His disciples. You'll note that in the first century, and especially among the Jews, women had low social status, indeed, a status that prohibited them from serving as legal witnesses in court. It's obviously the case that the disciples would not have made up a story that had women as the first witnesses if it weren't true. So, the witnesses include women, His followers, and His disciples, but [they] also included Jesus's Jewish enemies. We're told that they bribed the soldiers to lie and say that His disciples had stolen Christ's body away. We read about that in Matthew 28:11–15.

Secondly, there were many eyewitnesses of Christ's physical resurrected body. So, in I Corinthians 15:6 Paul tells us of over 500 people [who] saw Christ after the resurrection and who were still living, most of them, at the time that Paul was writing, and who could therefore be interviewed, and whose collective testimony could not be disputed. Another eyewitness was Paul himself, an archenemy of the church, who was converted through his experience of seeing the resurrected and ascended Christ on the road to Damascus.

Thirdly, the disciples as Jews believed in the future resurrection of the body at the end of time, but they would've had no concept of a defeated Messiah, much less a resurrection prior to the last day. Now, this is of course despite Jesus's teaching. He had been instructing them in these truths, though they were slow to see it and believe it until after it came to pass. But, their experience of Christ's resurrection became the dominant force of the church's ministry and preaching. As you see in Peter's sermon in Acts 2 and throughout the rest of the New Testament, Christ's resurrection was central to the gospel and biblical orthodoxy. In fact, the doctrine of the resurrection is so indispensable to salvation that no one can be a true Christian or go to heaven unless they affirm this truth. We read in Romans 10:9, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And so, the influence of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ on the disciples transformed them. They went out in great boldness proclaiming the person and work of Jesus Christ, and they were empowered, and they were motivated and driven by their experience of seeing Him after the resurrection.

Throughout this first point, we have been considering God's act of raising Christ from the dead. This was a true historical event in the history of redemption, which we're studying in this course. Paul says, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished"

(I Corinthians 15:17–18). To understand the theology of the resurrection, we need to consider the implications for the salvation of God's people. How is Christ's resurrection related to God's plan to save His people? We will consider that under two points. So first of all, we were looking at Christ's resurrection. Secondly, the believers' past resurrection, or the believers' past spiritual resurrection. The New Testament speaks of the believer being already raised with Christ in one sense and not yet raised with Christ in another sense. We will first of all consider how the Christian has already been raised with Christ, His past spiritual resurrection. The Christian experiences the resurrection power of Christ and the salvation of their souls.

Now to understand this, we must first recognize that the New Testament teaches a connection between Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of the believers. That connection is through the believers' union with Christ. We will look in greater detail at union with Christ in Lecture 27. Because the believer is united to Christ, all that Christ has accomplished was accomplished for them and becomes theirs in Him. The power of His resurrection is at work in their salvation. Now why would this be necessary? The answer is because men by nature are spiritually dead. We learned in a previous lecture about total depravity, man's inability. It is through Christ's resurrection power that believers are brought to newness of life. So, we read in Ephesians 2:5–6, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath [he] quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

We see this reinforced again in Colossians 2:12–13, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened," or made alive, "together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." So, you see Christ's resurrection power is brought to bear in the soul and salvation of the believer. Christ's resurrection also secured our justification as we saw earlier in Romans 4:25, "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Furthermore, the believers' ongoing war with sin in the Christian life depends on the outworking of Christ's resurrection power in enabling them to mortify sin. The believer can rightly count himself dead to sin, no longer under the dominion of sin and, therefore, not compelled to serve sin. If you read Romans 6:4–10, you'll see this expounded.

Therefore, the whole orientation of the Christian's mind and affections must be centered on Christ in heaven. We pursue His interest in glory as those that are raised with Him. Paul says in Colossians 3:1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." And so, because of the believer's union with the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Christ includes the believer. They are raised with Him, and that resurrection power is brought to bear in saving them and in sanctifying them. So, this refers to the believer's past spiritual resurrection, the sinner taken from being dead in sins and made alive, raised, as it were, to newness of life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, we have the believers' future bodily resurrection, the resurrection of the body on the last day raised the glory. We read in II Corinthians 4:14, "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." The gospel imparts the hope of the future resurrection of the believer's body, so if you go to I Corinthians 15, that's the fullest or longest chapter in the New Testament devoted to this doctrine; you'll find much help there. But, even in the early period of the Old Testament, we find references to the resurrection. So, for example, we see Job declaring his confidence in the resurrection of his body. What a beautiful passage [is] at the end of Job 19:25–27 where Job, in the midst of all his sufferings, speaks of how he will stand upon the earth in the last day and with his own eyes he will behold his Redeemer and so on.

This future bodily resurrection of the believer is also attached to our union with Christ. We see this both in the concept of Christ as the firstfruits and as the firstborn from the dead. Paul says that Christ has gone ahead of His people, securing their resurrection through His own. Just as He was raised, so those who were united to Him by faith will also be raised and made to sit with Him in heavenly places: I Corinthians 15:20–23, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." So, the firstfruits are like a down payment. They guarantee that all else will follow.

Because the Lord Jesus has been raised, so too, His people in union with Him will also have their bodies raised. He is the firstfruits. Likewise, Paul says in Colossians 1:18, "And he," that is Christ, "is the head of the

body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” Christ is the head. The church is the body. Where the head is, the body must be also. And so, if the head has been resurrected and seated in heaven, the body must follow. He is the firstborn of all those who will experience this resurrection with Him. And so, union with Christ also results in the bodily resurrection of the Christian at Christ’s second coming on the last day.

All men will be raised from the dead. Believers will be raised to glory, and unbelievers, their bodies will be raised as well but to condemnation. Here is how the Westminster Shorter Catechism question 38 describes what awaits the experience of believers. It says, “At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.” When Christ came to save His people, He came to save every bit of them: their whole person, both their souls and their bodies. If there was no bodily resurrection, then salvation would be incomplete. These very bodies, these hands and eyes, the bodies that God has given us which we now present as living sacrifices to Christ, as we see in Romans 12:1, and the members, the parts of our body that we now employ as members of righteousness, as we see in Romans 6:13, will on the last day be raised and glorified to serve and worship the Lord for all of eternity.

This confident hope makes all the difference in our life in this world. It transforms our perspective on risk and sacrifice in Christ’s service. Remember Jesus saying, “Don’t fear those who can kill the body. Fear Him who can both kill the body and throw the soul into hell.” The Christian recognizes that the worst that can be done to him or her is for the body to be destroyed. And what is that when the Christian has confidence that that same body laid in the grave, perhaps even dismembered or otherwise tortured and so on, will on the last day be raised from dust and ashes and glorified before the Lord? This affects even those called to the ultimate sacrifice of martyrdom. Hebrews 11:35 speaks of those who “were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.” The martyrs could look into the threat of doom and death with confidence and hope, knowing that the bodies that they sacrificed for the testimony of Christ would not be gone forever but would be raised by Him. But, it also fuels our daily devotion and service to Christ.

Paul ends that longest chapter on the resurrection with the words in the last verse, verse 58, that say, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Corinthians 15). Look at that language, “steadfastness, being unmovable, always,” not sometimes but always, “abounding in the work of the Lord.” The believer is called to spend and to be spent, to give everything that they have, all of their strength and energy, their time, their resources, their gifts, their graces, and so on, and to expend them, to employ them, in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, looking to the end. Our view of the future affects our view of the present. Indeed, it transforms it. Our confident hope in the resurrection changes everything with regards to the Christian life. Christ’s resurrection was a world-transforming, history-altering event. Its importance is seen in God’s change of the Sabbath from the last day of the week to the first day of the week, the day on which Christ rose from the dead. We remember and celebrate the resurrection of Christ every single week in the Christian Sabbath. The Sabbath serves as a weekly memorial of this stupendous event of Christ’s resurrection.

Well, in conclusion, we have explored the central place of the resurrection in redemption and in the history of God’s plan to save His people. Christ has been raised from the dead, but He has not yet ascended to heaven, in our studies, to be glorified. We have not considered His ascension to this point. In the next lecture, we will consider one of the great results of Christ not only being raised but ascending to the right hand of God the Father Almighty, namely, the gift of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Lecture 25

PENTECOST

Lecture Theme:

The ascended Christ pours out his Spirit upon his people, and the Spirit glorifies the Son, taking the things of Christ to show them to his people.

Text:

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (Jn. 16:13–15).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 25

If you were told by a close loved one, a person on whom you greatly depended, that they were going away and that you would see them no more, you would probably be devastated. You would feel a profound sense of loss. You might wonder how you would go on in their absence. This is precisely how the disciples felt when Jesus foretold of His departure in John chapters 14 to 16, but He assured them that His departure would result in no loss to them. Rather, it would result in tremendous gain for them. How is that possible? The answer is because He promised that He would send them His Spirit, Who would not just dwell with them but also in them. Why is Pentecost a significant event in God’s plan of redemption? What is the connection between Christ’s departure and the coming of the Spirit? How is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to Christ in His earthly ministry essential to our understanding of the outpouring of the Spirit? What is the relevance of Christ’s ascension to Pentecost? What is the role of the Spirit in the salvation and life of every believer? In this lecture, we will consider the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to send the Holy Spirit. The outpouring of the Spirit would change everything both for the salvation of God’s people and the mission of His church. Pentecost was a one-time event in God’s history of redemption that would have ongoing ramifications for the rest of time.

First of all, we will note in this lecture Christ’s promise of the Spirit. And so, we begin with Christ’s promise of the Spirit. As Jesus approached the time of His sacrificial death upon the cross, He delivered to His disciples what has come to be called His farewell discourse, recorded in John 14, 15, and 16. He told them of His coming departure and His going to prepare a place for them so that they would be with Him where He is. This was obviously disconcerting to the disciples. We see that in John 16:6, but he assured them, as we see in chapter 14:18, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” How could he both go and come? Well, the answer is He would come to them through His Spirit. Just as He had been a Comforter to them, Christ had been a comforter to

them, the Father would send them another Comforter: John 14:16, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.” You see the same thing in chapter 14:26. It is for this reason that Christ insists that it is to their advantage that He go away. In John 16:7, Jesus says, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” The Holy Spirit would take the place of Christ as His representative on earth. The Spirit is the only true Vicar of Christ, not the Pope of Rome, who is a usurper and an enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two things would coincide at once: Christ’s going and the Spirit’s coming, both Christ ascending and the Spirit descending. All of this instruction was preparation for the outpouring of the Spirit on God’s people, but before we can consider the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Christian, we must first begin by exploring the relationship of the Holy Spirit to Christ. This is indispensable to understanding the theology of the New Testament. So, that brings us, secondly, to Christ and the Spirit. We read in Psalm 45:7, “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” This text is fulfilled in Christ as we see in Hebrews 1:9. Christ was given the Spirit without measure. The Spirit came upon Christ before Christ gave the Spirit to His people. Indeed, Christ received the Spirit for the purpose of His people being able to receive the Spirit.

So, we must begin by considering the relationship of the Holy Spirit to Christ throughout His ministry. The Puritan John Owen, really more than any other that I’ve discovered, has developed this wonderful theme. I want to highlight a handful of, I think, important points regarding this. First of all, the Holy Spirit was present from the beginning of Christ’s incarnation. Jesus was miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Just as the Spirit hovered over the waters at creation in Genesis 1, so likewise we read in Luke 1:35, “And the angel answered and said unto her,” that is Mary, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Secondly, the Holy Spirit was active throughout Christ’s ministry. So, we read in Isaiah 11:2 of the prophecy of Christ, which says, “And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.” This is referring to Christ. The Son of God in His humanity grew in wisdom by the Holy Spirit, not from sinful folly to wisdom but from one degree of sinless, holy wisdom to another degree, a growing degree, of wisdom. At His baptism, the Holy Ghost descended upon Him like a dove. Christ entered into the fullness of the Spirit at the inauguration of His public ministry, and then He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, as we see in Matthew 4:1, and He came forth preaching and accomplishing signs by the Spirit. All throughout, it is the Spirit upon Christ working in Him, and through Him, and with Him in His earthly ministry.

Thirdly, we see the ministry of the Spirit at the cross. So, in Hebrews 9:14 we read, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” The Spirit sustained Christ in His sacrificial death upon the cross, and just as He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, so the Spirit preserved His body from corruption in the grave, in the tomb.

Fourthly, all three persons of the Trinity were at work in Christ’s resurrection, including the Spirit. Romans 8:11 says, “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” So, the Spirit has a role in the resurrection of Christ, and you will note here again the connection of union with Christ. That same Spirit, that Spirit that was on Christ, Who raised Christ, is the Spirit Who quickens, makes alive, the mortal bodies of God’s people as well. We will consider the role of the Holy Spirit in Christ’s ascension under the next point.

Lastly, the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit is a Christ-centered ministry after Christ’s ascension. In John 15:26 we read, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” The Spirit’s ministry is to testify of Christ. The focus of the Spirit is on Christ, glorifying Christ, showing Christ to His people. In John 16:13–15 it says, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me,” that is Christ,

“for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.” You see, the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit is to testify of Christ, to glorify Christ, to take the things of Christ and to show them to His people. Under this second point, we see something very important: the relationship of Christ and the Spirit.

Thirdly, Christ giving the Spirit. The ascension of Christ marks another notable event in God’s history of redemption. Christ is taken above the highest heavens to be enthroned and to reign as the King of kings and to serve His people as their exalted Mediator. We sing of this wonderful event in several Psalms: Psalms 2, 24, 68, 110, and others. In this lecture, however, we are focusing on one primary consequence of Christ’s ascension and exultation, namely, His pouring out of the Spirit upon His people. Just as He promised, this great event in the history of redemption took place on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. We read Peter saying in Acts 2:33, “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which you now see and hear.” All that we’ve seen under the previous point means that the Holy Spirit cannot be rightly known or enjoyed apart from Christ. This is why He is called the Spirit of Christ in various places throughout the New Testament.

All of the blessings of God purchased by Christ become ours through the Spirit. Our communion with the Spirit is shaped by the Holy Spirit’s communion with Christ. Now, you realize there is only one Holy Ghost, the same Spirit Who dwelt on Christ is the same exact Spirit Who indwells His people. It’s not as if there are many; there is one. The same Spirit dwelling in Christ, dwells in the hearts of all His people. Christ gives the same Spirit to all who are united to Him by faith. This lies at the heart of the new covenant, the Covenant of Grace, as prophesied in Ezekiel 36:27, “And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” This does not mean that the Old Testament believer did not have the Holy Spirit at all, which was obviously necessary for their salvation, when David can pray in Psalm 51:11, “and take not thy Holy Spirit from me,” but it does mean that at Pentecost all the fruits of Christ’s completed Spirit-filled work resulted in a greater measure of the Holy Spirit being given to His people.

As in all the actions of God, this was a ministry of the whole Trinity. The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father, we see that in John 14:16 for example, and the Holy Spirit was sent by the Son as we see in John 15:26. Specifically, the Holy Spirit is sent to indwell God’s people, to dwell in them. So, contrary to the teaching of some, every Christian has the Holy Spirit. There are some who wrongly teach that there are Christians [who] still need to receive the Holy Spirit, who haven’t received the Holy Spirit yet. That’s not what the Bible teaches as we read in Romans 8:9, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” So, every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit serves as an earnest, or a pledge, or a down payment of their full and completed redemption at the final resurrection. The Holy Spirit is the seal of all that Christ did for His people. He is the gift of the ascended Christ. So, what do we see? We see Christ sending a Spirit. Christ ascends to heaven. He is given the fullness of the Spirit, which He then pours out on the day of Pentecost on His people and that Spirit comes to indwell the Lord’s people, taking all that belongs to Christ and bringing it to bear in their own souls.

So, that brings us fourthly to the Spirit and the Christian. The Bible teaches that the Christian is born of the Spirit. One example is John 3:6, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” The Holy Spirit regenerates the believer and indwells the believer, bringing him from death to life. He takes all that Christ is, all that Christ has accomplished, in the salvation of His people, and the Spirit applies Christ’s work to the souls of His elect. And so, without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, there would be no one who is a recipient of all of the provisions and all of the attainments of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spirit is the One Who applies these things. He also convicts people of sin. He comes to convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come. The Holy Spirit enlightens the Christian, comforts the believer, supports, sanctifies, and empowers the Lord’s people. The place of the Spirit in the life of the Christian is indispensable. We need to recognize that the ministry of the Spirit can never be separated from the Scriptures.

So, the Word and the Spirit must always be held together. Otherwise, you end up in trouble. If you have the Word without the Spirit, you end up in rationalism. If you have the Spirit without the Word, you end up in mysticism. They have to be held together. The Spirit Who inspired the Scriptures, as we see in II Timothy 3:16, is also the same Spirit Who illuminates the mind of the believer, opening their eyes, enabling them to understand the

Bible. The Spirit does not give new revelation to the contemporary Christian. He accompanies the revelation of the Scripture with power, making its influence powerful in the soul.

So, to be led by the Spirit is to believe and obey what the Bible teaches. To walk in the Spirit is to walk in the Word according to the Word of God. The singing of Psalms is an example that we saw in a previous lecture. In Ephesians 5:18–19, Paul says to “be filled with the Spirit,” singing the songs of the Spirit. In the parallel passage of Colossians 3:16 he says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” He goes on to speak about singing the Word of Christ in the Psalms. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the believer through the Word as we meditate on it in reading and under the preaching and in singing and applying the Bible to our lives. And so, to rightly understand the ministry of the Spirit, we need to understand the place of the Scriptures in the life of the believer.

Conversely, we’re not to resist the Word of God as the Jews did under the Old Testament and under Stephen’s ministry. We see references to this in Acts 6:10, in Acts 7:51. They were resisting the Word of God. Nor are we to grieve the ministry of the Spirit, Ephesians 4:30, thus losing the power and pleasure of our obedience. We’re also warned of quenching the Spirit by dampening His ministry through a sinful lifestyle, rather than burning with love for His holiness. After all, He is called the Holy Spirit.

The modern charismatic movement has placed great emphasis on particular gifts of the Spirit such as various miracles and extraordinary signs and wonders. This is a great mistake. These unique gifts of the Spirit were given as signs and confirmations of new revelation in the New Testament. Mark 16:20 says, “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.” Likewise, Acts 2:22, “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” Miracles were temporary signs attached to the apostolic era, not permanent features for the church in history. Furthermore, the charismatics have confused the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit by thinking that walking in the Spirit means exercising supernatural powers. We cannot separate the gifts of the Spirit from the person of the Holy Spirit, nor the gifts of the Spirit from the knowledge of Christ.

As we saw earlier in this lecture, the Holy Spirit’s main work is to magnify the Son and to take the things of Christ and to show them to us. When the Spirit does this, it results in conformity to Christ. We read in II Corinthians 3:18, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass,” that’s referring to the Bible, “the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” The ministry of the Spirit is at work. We behold the glory of Christ in the Scriptures, which the Spirit enables us to see. He shows us the things of Christ, and we’re changed into the likeness of Christ. The truth is that the New Testament places the greatest emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit’s ministry producing holiness in Christ’s likeness in the life of the believer. You’ll know the well-known list of the fruit of the Spirit as it is given to us in Galatians chapter 5. In all of this, you can see the pieces coming together of the relationship of Christ and the Spirit, the outpouring of the Spirit upon His people, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life of the believer. It affects, doesn’t it, the way in which we preach God’s Word. We preach Christ. Why do we preach Christ? Because the promise is that the Spirit will magnify the Son, that He’ll take the things of Christ and show them to us. And so, when we’re preaching Christ throughout the whole Bible, we do so with the assurance that this is indeed the very vein in which the Holy Spirit operates.

Lastly, when Christ ascended and poured out His Spirit, He bestowed other gifts on His church through the Spirit, namely, church officers. So, in Ephesians 4 Paul speaks of grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ in verse 7. Then he refers to Christ’s ascension in Psalm 68:18 (Ephesians 4:8) and applies it to the giving of church offices. Ephesians 4:11 says, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” The offices of apostles and prophets ceased with the period of the New Testament, but pastors and teachers continue until Christ’s second coming.

How are church officers gifts of Christ through the Spirit to the church? Well, the verses that follow in Ephesians 4 explain that the purpose of these gifts is to build up and to edify the body of Christ and to strengthen the maturity of God’s people in sound doctrine. So, Paul can write to the Corinthians and say in I Corinthians 3:21–22, “For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours.” The Spirit’s role is indispensable in the life of the Christian and

in the corporate church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the head of His body, the church, and the church is indwelt by Christ's Spirit, Who carries forward God's work of redemption, magnifying the Son.

Well, in conclusion, in this lecture we have learned that the ascended Christ pours out His Spirit upon His people, and the Spirit glorifies the Son; It takes the things of Christ to show them to His people. You can see how this fits within the overarching theme of this course, how God is throughout the history of redemption unfolding, disclosing the revelation of Himself in Christ. The ministry of the Spirit fits perfectly within that framework: the way in which God reveals Himself and His glory to His people. In the next lesson, we will turn our attention to the recipients of this blessing. We will consider what the New Testament teaches us about the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lecture 26

CHURCH

Lecture Theme:

The Church is built on Jesus Christ, the chief corner stone, as a habitation of God through which he magnifies his glory to the whole world.

Text:

“And Jesus answered and said...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:17–18).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 26

Throughout history, great institutions have come and gone. We read of the rise and fall of one great nation after another. When they rise to their height of power, they seem invincible and even as if they will remain forever; but they may fall and disappear from the earth, only to be read about in history books. We could say the same about wildly successful businesses and companies as well as powerful and influential families with international influence and connections. They all follow the same course. Only one kingdom remains truly permanent and indestructible. Only one institution endures through all the ages, while everything else withers around it; and that is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said Himself in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” It endures throughout time and all of eternity. God reveals that the church is the central institution in the world, in history, and therefore, in our own understanding.

So, what is the nature of the church? Who are the members, and why is that so important? Why are the marks that distinguish the true church from false ones so important? How did Christ structure the government and oversight of the church? What are the purposes of the ordinance of church discipline? What benefits flow to members of the church? In this lecture, we will consider the development of the church on the heels of Christ’s death, resurrection, ascension, and the gift of the Spirit. We have seen throughout this course that God’s plan of redemption in history reveals His intention to save a people for Himself as a means of displaying His own glory. He has erected a kingdom in the world that serves as the habitation of God, so it is essential that we understand some of the salient features of how God designed the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The book of Acts provides us with God’s inspired record of the early history of the church. And, the New Testament epistles supply details of God’s instructions about the life and function of the church under the New Testament.

So, first of all, we'll consider the nature of the church, and this underlines really the importance of the church in the world. We have noted several times in earlier lectures the continuity between the Old Testament and New Testament. There is one people of God throughout history existing under two different administrations. Stephen refers to Old Testament Israel as the church in Acts 7:38, "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us." Likewise, Paul refers to the New Testament church as the Israel of God and Jerusalem and Mount Zion. Part of the glory of the New Testament includes the expansion of the church to include a large proportion of Gentile believers, as we saw promised from the early chapters of Genesis and throughout the Old Testament.

God's purposes in history center on the redemption of a people for Himself. He is erecting a kingdom in this world for His own name and glory. Many of the Old Testament themes that we have previously considered find their culmination in the New Testament doctrine of the church. God provided His Son as the foundation upon which the church is built so that it might serve as the habitation of God. We sing about this in Psalm 118:22-23, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes." We read of the fulfillment of this in Ephesians 2:20-22. It speaks about the church as "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

God dwells in His church and He manifests His presence there. In I Corinthians 14:24-25, we see described the experience of an unbelieving visitor to the public worship of the church. It says, "there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."

Not only is Christ the foundation, He is also the only head and King of His church as we will see more in a moment. The church exists for the display of Christ's glory. Colossians 1:18 says, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." So, as we explore the New Testament theology of the church, we recognize that everything is connected to God's history of redemption and the magnifying of his glory. We cannot abandon the biblical doctrine of the church without impugning Christ's honor. The church is not a practical human convention. It is the divine institution established by God for the advance of His cause and the display of His glory in the world. And, He has blessed it; in Acts 2:47, the very early history of the church, it says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Consequently, the Bible does not permit believers to jettison or detach themselves from His visible and divinely appointed church.

The Belgic Confession Article 27 says this, "We believe since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved and outside of it there is no salvation, that no person of whatsoever state or condition he may be ought to withdraw from it content to be by himself, but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it, maintaining the unity of the church, submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof, bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ, and as mutual members of the same body, serving to the edification of the brethren according to the talents God has given them." That's a long quote, but it's a good summary from one of the historic reformed confessions about the importance of the church of the Lord Jesus.

Now, the word *church* in the Bible is used in a variety of ways, especially in the New Testament. Sometimes it's used in reference to the invisible church, other times to the visible church. Sometimes it refers to a local congregation, other times to the regional church. And, it also refers to elders sitting in a judicial capacity for church discipline. We need to define a few of these important points of theological terminology beginning with the distinction between the invisible and visible church.

We're not talking about two different churches. There's only one church. Rather, we are looking at the one church from two different angles. The invisible church refers to all of the elect for all of time. That, of course, is invisible; we can't see that. The visible church refers to all professing believers and their children, to whom are given the ministry and oracles and ordinances of God. While all within the visible church enjoy precious privileges, not all are necessarily born again. Far from it. We see this distinction throughout both the Old and New Testaments. For example, in Romans 2:28-29, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that

circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

Another phrase is the *catholic church* the word *catholic* means *universal*, so we’re not talking at all about the Roman Catholic Church, which teaches false doctrine. The universal church refers to the true church throughout the world. We have seen throughout our study the preeminence of Jesus Christ at the center of the nature of the church is the New Testament doctrine concerning the headship of Christ. Many passages refer to this. The head of the church is not, for example, the Pope of Rome, who is the usurper, an enemy of Christ. Christ is the only King and Head of the church and all authority, for all that we are to believe regarding doctrine, worship, church government, and the Christian life must be derived from His authority communicated to us in His Word.

The Bible supplies us with many pictures of the church, so I’ve compiled of a list of them to read off to you, but you’ll need to investigate them more fully yourself. Listen to some of the descriptions that God gives of the church in the New Testament. He describes it as a house and as a body. He describes it as our mother in Galatians 4:26, our mother, which is Jerusalem which is above. He describes the church as the people of God, as a building, as a kingdom, as the Israel of God, as Jerusalem, as Mount Zion, as the temple of God. He describes the church as a field, the habitation of God, the city of God, a flock, the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, branches of the vine, and a community. That gives you some of the pictures that God has provided for us in His Word with regards to the church.

Let me also mention briefly the marks of the true church, which you’ll learn more about in your studies of systematic theology. The marks of the true church include three things: the faithful administration of the Word; secondly, the faithful administration of the sacraments; and thirdly, the faithful administration of church discipline. These are our marks that distinguish the true church from false ones, but recognize that faithfulness does not mean perfection. Westminster Confession chapter 25 paragraphs 4 and 5 speak to this. It can be more or less visible in history. It is always mixed with purity and error. Even the best churches have such a mixture. Some churches can so degenerate as to become no longer the church of Christ at all but rather, a synagogue of Satan.

Secondly, we’ll discuss the membership in the church. The necessity of membership in the church flows from what we have seen about the nature of the church. Some have insisted that church membership is nothing more than an extra biblical convention without any warrant in the Word of God, or that at the very least, the use of a communion roll, or membership roll, is a pragmatic concession that can be ignored. But, as we will see, being a Christian in the Scriptures included admission into a visible body with the ministry, doctrine, ordinances, discipline, organization, and authority entrusted to it by God. Consider the biblical warrant that we find in Acts and the epistles.

First of all, the members of the church were baptized and added, it says, to a local, visible church and required to be committed to it. We see that in a wide array of texts throughout Acts and in I Timothy. We also read of others who refused to join the church, such as Acts 5:13, and of course public profession of faith was mandatory. Even Jesus underlined this in Matthew 10:32–33. Secondly, the members of the church could be numbered or counted and were thus visible and distinct; whether counted on paper or on fingers does not matter.

Thirdly, there was a repeated New Testament distinction between those who were outside distinguished from those who were inside. That language is taken from Scripture like Colossians 4:5. Mere attendance at the public assembly did not qualify because the apostles even made the distinction in those gatherings. We saw that earlier in the quotation from I Corinthians 14:23. The household of faith is distinguished from the world, and membership in a household is basic to the whole concept.

Fourthly, there was a distinction between those who were under the rule and oversight of the elders, who were responsible to know and care for them. Elders do not have authority over any and all persons. In fact, you’ll see language, for example, in I Peter 5:3, that literally means that folk are assigned by lot, or you think of Acts 20:28–29 where the elders are told to “take heed to the flock.” That means knowing whether one is being attacked by wolves or not. Hebrews 13:17 shows that the elders are held accountable for specific saints entrusted to their oversight.

Fifthly, church discipline involved being taken away from among you, to use the language of I Corinthians 5:2 and Matthew 18. Well, this would be impossible if there was no distinct membership, and of course those who repented could also be reinstated. Sixthly, members traveling to areas where they would be unknown were

given letters of reference and commendation. We see this all throughout the New Testament. Seventhly, the biblical titles of the church would not make sense without membership in Christ's visible church. You think of some of the things he mentioned earlier like the church being a house, a body, building, family, a kingdom, the city, a flock, and so on. Eighthly, the church has a responsibility to verify or falsify the credibility of a person's claims to be a Christian. The man in I Corinthians 5 thought he was a Christian and was not. I John makes reference to this principal as well.

Lastly, under this point, we stated at the beginning of this lecture that the church consists of professing Christians and their children. This flows from the household principle we have observed throughout the Old Testament and into the New Testament. You will notice the reference to household baptisms in the New Testament paralleling the pattern of circumcision in the Old Testament. Both baptism and circumcision share the same significance and meaning which includes, among other things, incorporation into the visible people of God. Both are a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace, which accompany the promise to believers and their children. Just as the Lord's Supper replaces Passover, so baptism replaces circumcision. Neither circumcision nor baptism presume that the child, for example, is regenerated, but it does seal the promise and reflect the substantial privileges of membership in the visible church. A thorough exposition of the biblical doctrine of infant baptism is really beyond the scope and time we have in this lecture.

Thirdly, the government of the church. God has appointed different structures of authority in the world, each with its own symbol of authority. You think of the state. The Bible says the sword is given to the state, but to the church keys are given, and in the family the rod is given. We are concerned in this lecture with the church in light of the development of the history of redemption. Christ's kingship is displayed in this government of His church. Just as with the ordinances of worship, the structure and/or organization of the church is not left open to human innovation and creativity. Christ as Head of the church, has appointed a specific church government, and we are not free to depart from His appointment. All of the authority lies with Christ, the King. This can be seen in considering what the Bible says about the authority of church power itself.

What authority does the church have? Well, we recognize first of all, the source of authority is found in Christ alone as Head of the church, and that the standard of authority is Scripture alone, not the church or its traditions. But, think about the nature of this church power. It is declarative, not legislative, so the church is to uphold God's Word, declaring that Word, and not fabricating new ordinances, doctrines, or rules.

Secondly, it is ministerial, not magisterial. It is given for serving the flock, not lording over them. It is also spiritual, not physical. The church is given the keys, not the sword. So, the church's power is not discretionary. The church is to consult Scripture, and it is not left to the freedom of choice or judgment in matters of faith and doctrine. Within these parameters, the exercise of church authority under Christ reflects real power. It is the power of Christ mediated through the representatives Christ has ordained to serve Him. It is, however, derived power from Christ, not inherent power residing in the church itself or its officers.

All of this brings us to the question of what Christ, the Head, appointed and sanctioned for church government. He has ordained a specific church government for His people through which His authority is exercised. We're obligated to submit and follow the pattern He has instituted in the Scriptures. So, think for example of the officers He has appointed in church government. Qualifications for church office were given so that, as Scripture says, "thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." That's I Timothy 3:15. After the expiration of the offices of apostles and prophets, the Lord appointed three primary offices to continue until the end of the age.

First of all, ministers or pastors. Christ calls ministers to the primary responsibility of preaching, teaching, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Their office includes that of a preaching elder who shares with the ruling elders the responsibility of government, shepherding and overseeing the flock. But, the minister has a distinct calling, a distinct ordination, and distinct gifts connected to the ministry of the Word.

Secondly, we have elders. Christ calls ruling elders to serve as overseers and shepherding the flock of God. The terms *bishop* or *overseer* and *elder* do not refer to two separate offices but are synonymous for the same office. In fact, they are used interchangeably in the New Testament. You can consult Titus 1:5-7 and Philippians 1:1 and elsewhere. The Bible specifies a plurality of elders in each congregation, and both ministers and elders serve with

complete equality in matters related to governing, ruling, and overseeing the flock. They also have authority to exercise church discipline and resolve conflicts with the authority of Christ. Hebrews 13:17 says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

The third office is that of deacons. Deacons were appointed for the purpose of tending to the practical works of mercy and compassion. This would include the physical material and financial care of widows and orphans and others in need within the church. In tending to these practical needs, they thereby free the elders to focus their attention to spiritual matters.

In all three offices, like all positions of authority, they’re given for the sake and benefit of those committed to their care and not for their own self-gratification. This places the proper emphasis on being servants of the people. So, we have these three offices of minister, elder, and deacon. And, the Bible specifies the qualifications for these offices in places like I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and elsewhere. In addition, there is a privilege of appeal to higher assemblies of elders and the right of government by them. You see this expressed in Acts 15.

So, at the local level you have perhaps a minister and a group of ruling elders, and they form what we call a *session* or *consistory*, elders of the local congregation. But then, you’ll have various local congregations that are brought together under one overseeing body, where the ministers and elders from those local churches come together and form what we call a *Presbytery* or *Classis*. And then, beyond that, you have what’s called a Synod or General Assembly, the highest level, and this includes all the elders and ministers from all the presbyteries in a given denomination. So, there are these structures that God’s given; and all of the structures are given for the benefit of the Lord’s people.

Fourthly, and lastly, we need to speak about the divine ordinance of church discipline, which is one function of church government and, as we noted earlier, one of the marks of the true church. Discipline generally displays God’s love to His people within the Christian life. What we call church discipline, or censures, is only one biblical example of that broader concept of discipline. Church discipline is the exercise of the authority that Christ committed to His visible church for the preservation of its purity, peace, and good order. The word *discipline* comes from the same root word as *disciple*. It is a means of training the Lord’s people. Church censures apply to all members of the visible church, and it pertains to any serious or scandalous offense in the doctrine and practice of a member that is contrary to the Word of God. Faithful and loving church discipline is indispensable to a healthy church just as it is to a healthy family. Love is the motivation behind godly church discipline.

We spoke earlier about the keys of the kingdom. In the faithful exercise of these keys, whatever is bound or loosed on earth is ratified in heaven by God Himself. It is the authority of Christ vested in the church, and therefore it is done in the name of Christ and with the power of Christ as we see in I Corinthians 5:4–5. The special presence of Christ is with His church when they act as a church for the purpose of discipline. The elders are charged with this duty before Christ and His elect angels, we see in I Timothy 5. But, God Himself is the One exercising the discipline through these appointed censures.

What is the purpose of church discipline? Let me give you a quick summary with a few passages. Galatians 6:1 tells us that one purpose is the restoration or recovery of an erring brother. Secondly, I Timothy 5:20 tells us that discipline also has the purpose of deterring others from like sin. I Timothy 1:20 tells us that it is a means of correcting the offender. I Corinthians 5:7 tells us that there is a purpose in purging the leaven from the lump. In that same chapter, verses 9–13, we learn that it is for the purpose of vindicating the honor of Christ and gospel profession. And, as we see in I Corinthians 11 and elsewhere, it has the purpose of preventing God’s wrath on the church. So, the ordinance of church discipline is also an important function within the New Testament legislation that God has given to us.

Well, in summary, from even the brief points that we have considered together, the substantial benefits of the church should be obvious. Let me summarize just a few of them. The church is given the public means of grace, those appointed means that God has given to convey His grace. So, that would include the Word read, sung, or preached. It would include the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and prayer. Another one of the benefits is the public corporate assembly of God’s people for worship. Indeed, this is the centerpiece. The public worship of God is the pivotal force in framing the piety of God’s people. The number one priority in our life should be the public assembly of God’s people for worship. Another benefit is the shepherding that takes place,

the oversight, the nurture, the accountability and care that the flock and sheep of God receive. We also have mutual exhortation. So, think of throughout the New Testament all of those “one another” passages, passages that use the language “one another” in the way in which the body is to operate together. Think of the diversity of gifts within the church among the Lord’s people, the contribution that each member plays in building up of the whole body. And, there is, of course, participation in taking the gospel to the world.

In conclusion, we have seen that the church is built on Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone, as the habitation of God through which He spreads His glory to the whole world. In the next lecture, we will turn our attention to consider the place of union with Christ within New Testament theology.

Lecture 27

UNION

Lecture Theme:

God magnifies the Savior by revealing that all the benefits of salvation come through the believer's union with Christ.

Text:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 27

Imagine a poor beggar sitting on the side of the road crying out to a rich man way down the street, pleading for a piece of money. Now imagine a destitute widow buried under a mountain of debt who ends up marrying a wealthy prince. You can feel the stark contrast between those two scenarios, and the difference illustrates an important biblical truth. The true believer is not like the beggar who finds himself separated from Christ and calling out from a distance for some benefit. No, he is like a hopeless widow who has been married to a prince with limitless resources. In being united to Christ, all that belongs to Christ becomes the Christian's. Our debts are canceled, and Christ provides every benefit and blessing we will ever need. The crucial point is union with Christ. We'll consider that theological theme in this lecture.

What is the connection between the accomplishment of redemption in history and the application of redemption to the individual soul? How do we define union with Christ and understand its meaning? How pervasive is this doctrine in the New Testament? What biblical images does God provide for our understanding of it? What are the implications of being united to Christ? Can we separate Christ from His benefits? In this lecture, we will consider this doctrine of union with Christ. You cannot understand the unfolding of God's history of redemption without grasping this significant component in the theology of the New Testament. Union with Christ connects all that we've learned about Christ's work in His incarnate ministry to the benefits received by believers. Comprehending this is necessary for what follows in the next lecture on the application of redemption to the believer.

First of all, we'll consider the importance of union with Christ. Union with Christ lies at the heart of the gospel as something basic and central to all of salvation. It describes how believers become recipients of all that Christ has done and accomplished in redemption. They are made one with Him. Once you come to see the doctrine of union with Christ, you will discover that it is pervasive throughout the whole New Testament, literally

hundreds of references to this doctrine. Everything that Christ accomplished in His life and ministry He did as a representative of His people. The believer enjoys the benefits through union with Him.

The New Testament employs two phrases to describe this union coming from two different directions. First of all, it says that the believer is in Christ. So, the believer is in Christ, and there are many, many, many, many passages of Scripture that make this reference. And secondly, the Bible describes Christ in the believer. Again, there are many references to this as well, and in some places we find both expressions together, as in John 6:56 and John 15:4, or for example, I John 4:13 says, “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” We see both of them brought together there.

Christ is not only for us, among us, and before us, but He is described as in us, and the Christian is found in Christ. Scripture often uses the propositions *in* and *with* to describe this spiritual reality: union with Christ. Consider Ephesians 1:3–14. Paul begins this breathtaking passage by stating in verse 3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now listen, “who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” All the benefits are found in Christ. Then, he goes on to expound the implications, noting that everything from the believer’s election to redemption by Christ’s blood to the gift of the Spirit to heavenly inheritance is all found in Christ. Union with Christ extends from eternity past to eternity future. The Bible says that Christ is formed in believers, dwells in our hearts. It describes the fact that believers put on the Lord Jesus Christ, that the church is the body of Christ, that the church is one flesh with Christ, and that believers gain Christ and are so found in him.

John Calvin spoke of union with Christ as having the highest degree of importance. He goes on, “for this is the design of the gospel that Christ may become ours and that we may be engrafted into His body.” He wrote elsewhere, “for we await salvation from Him, not because He appears to us a far off, but because He makes us engrafted into His body, participants not only in all His benefits but also in Himself.”

First of all, we have considered the importance of union with Christ. Now secondly, the meaning of union with Christ. We must understand the nature of this very real union, which is both a representative, or federal union, as well as a personal, or mystical, union. The Bible provides us with a series of pictures to illustrate this truth. First of all, Christ is united to the church as the Head of the body; so believers are members of the body of which Christ is the Head. That’s a picture of our union with Christ.

Secondly, we learn that Christ is married to His people, so in Ephesians 5:30–32, it says in part, “for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,” going on to verse 32, “this is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” And so, we read in the Song of Solomon, “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine” (Song of Solomon 6:3). So, the second picture of union with Christ is this: Christ being wed to His bride.

Thirdly, believers are described as living stones and are joined to Christ and built upon Him as the foundation, the church thereby becoming the habitation of God. Peter speaks about this; Paul speaks about this, and so on.

Fourthly, believers are described as branches grafted into Christ as the vine, John 15:4, “Abide in me, and I and you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”

A fifth picture is this: Christ uses the image of food being consumed by the eater. So, by faith we are united to Christ and feed upon Him. In John 6:56 he says, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I and him.” This is a picture of union with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible also describes this union in a variety of other ways. It teaches us that union with Christ is spiritual, not physical. It also teaches us that it is a mysterious and glorious union beyond our full ability to comprehend. You see this in a variety of places. For example, Colossians 1:27 says, “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” It’s also described as an intimate union: Christ in us, we in him. It’s an indissoluble union. Once a believer is in Christ, the believer is forever joined to Him. So, we’re describing some of the language that the Bible uses to convey this doctrine both in terms of images or illustrations as well as descriptions, but we must connect this to Christ’s ministry.

The Bible teaches that all of Christ’s work was on behalf of the believer. They are united to Him at all points of His activity. Notice how Scripture draws these connections in our union with Christ. In His crucifixion, we are crucified with Him (Galatians 2:20). In His death, we are baptized into His death (Romans 6:3). In His burial, we are buried with Him (Colossians 2:12). In His resurrection, we are resurrected with Christ (Romans 6:5). In His ascension, we have been raised with Him (Colossians 3:1) and following. In His heavenly session, we sit with

Him in heavenly places so that our life is hid with Christ and God (Ephesians 2). In His promised return, what do we read?, when Christ, Who is our life, appears, we also will appear with Him in glory. You see that in a variety of places: in Romans 6, Colossians 2, and so on. Well, this is only a partial list, and we could go on, but you see the importance of this.

All that Christ was accomplishing in His earthly ministry was done as a representative of His people, and we share, in our union with Christ, in the significance of all of His activities. But, the question remains, and perhaps it's in your own mind just now: How are believers united to Christ? what is the bond that brings them together? So, how is it that we're united to Him? Physical union comes through contact, but Christ is in heaven, and we are on earth, so how can this union take place? Well, the answer is twofold. As the Puritan John Flavel said, "The Spirit on Christ's part and faith, His work, on our part are the two ligaments by which we are knit to Christ." And Flavel was right, that's what the Bible teaches. So, the first and primary bond of union with Christ comes through the Holy Spirit. So, on Christ's side, union is brought about through the Holy Spirit. Christ takes the sinner into union with Himself through the agency of the Spirit, whereby He joins Himself to the soul. The same infinite Spirit that dwells with Christ dwells in His people. You can connect all of this to what we learned in our lecture entitled Pentecost.

But secondly, on man's side, we are united to Christ by faith, which is of course a gift of God granted by the Spirit, Ephesians 3:17, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." So, it is by faith the believer receives Christ. The believer is united to Christ in time through faith. We appropriate and continue to live out of this union through faith in God's Son. So, the believer is united to Christ through the Holy Spirit and through faith in Christ. These are the two sides, if you will, the two parts of the bond that bring about union with Christ.

Thirdly, the implications of union with Christ. In answering the question "How is redemption applied to the sinner?" The first answer must be by uniting the sinner to Christ. We can give many scriptures to demonstrate this. Ephesians 1:7 says, "In whom," in speaking of Christ, in Christ, "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Everything else we will learn in the next lecture flows from this point.

Westminster Larger Catechism question 69 in its answer says, "The communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ is their partaking of the virtue of His mediation in their justification, adoption, sanctification, and whatever else in this life manifests their union with Him." The believer partakes of Christ's benefits through union with Him. The believer is of course chosen and elected in Christ, Ephesians 1:4, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." But furthermore, the Bible specifies a connection between union with Christ and the various aspects of the application of redemption; and I'll give you some examples.

We are called in Christ (Ephesians 1:9). We are made alive and regenerated in Christ; we see this in Ephesians 2. In Christ we are justified (Romans 8:1 and about half a dozen other passages). Our adoption comes through union with Christ. We are sanctified in Christ as well. Again, a long list of passages that could be cited here. We are created anew in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). The believer perseveres in the life of faith in union with Christ. Even at death, the bodies of believers remain in union with Christ. In I Thessalonians 4:14, it speaks about being asleep in Jesus, and of course, we shall be raised with Christ on the last day and shall be eternally glorified with and in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you take any one of these and begin to put together all of the passages that support them, you're going to have a very long list which demonstrates to you how significant and how central this doctrine is. If you merely look for those two words *in Christ* or *in Him*, you'll begin seeing it pop up everywhere throughout the New Testament, and you'll be able to connect the dots with these various aspects of the redemption that Christ provides for His people.

It is important to note that we cannot separate Christ from His benefits. No one can have forgiveness, no one can have heaven, without having the whole Christ. John Calvin speaks of Christ coming to the believer clothed in His benefits. Likewise, we cannot divide Christ, for example, receiving Him as Savior without having Him as Lord. We either have the whole Christ or none of Him, so it's important to see that we can't separate Christ from His benefits. Both justification and sanctification flow as benefits from union with Christ. You can't have one without the other, so the true believer who is justified by faith in Christ will also grow in holiness as a result of God's activity secured in the history of redemption.

In Romans 8:29, we read, “for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” All who are chosen in Christ, all who are made alive in Christ, all who are justified in the Lord Jesus Christ, will be sanctified in Lord Jesus Christ as well. So, this notion that you will sometimes encounter, where a person will say, “Well, I’m trusting Jesus to save me and deliver me from hell,” but there is no evidence in their life whatsoever of any transformation that has taken place and no fruit of godliness and holiness, should raise a red flag in their mind as well as in the mind of others. You can’t say, “I’m going to have Christ in order that I’ll be clothed in His righteous garments and acceptable before the presence of God” and continue to live as you lived before. One of the benefits include sanctification and all that Christ has secured for making holy people for Himself, a bride that will be presented without spot and blameless. The church is the body and bride of Christ.

Union with Christ provides the basis for communion with Christ or fellowship with Christ. The latter, that is communion, flows from the former, from union with the Lord Jesus. In I John 3:24, it says, “And he that keep his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” And so, the union with Christ results in an ongoing and sustained communion and fellowship between the believer and the Lord Jesus. The two sacraments portray the reality of this blessed union and communion. Notice I Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” So, union with Christ is being connected to both sacraments there: baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Baptism signifies union with Christ. Jesus said in Matthew 28:19, “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Paul develops the connection of baptism in union with Christ in Romans 6 at some length. It represents the believer’s engrafting into Christ, incorporation into the death, burial, and resurrection of the living Christ.

Likewise, the Lord’s Supper signifies the communion between Christ and believers. That derives from the privilege of union with Him. The supper is chiefly about spiritual nourishment, about feeding upon Christ by faith. I Corinthians 10:16 says, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” Christ gives us Himself for sustaining us through this feast. Those in union with Christ continue to receive Christ through His spiritual presence in this ordained means of grace. So even, baptism and the Lord’s Supper are very much connected to union with Christ and the consequent communion that flows from them.

In summary, this doctrine places Christ at the center of history and salvation. Everything imaginable, everything needful is to be found in Him alone. All the benefits and all the blessings of God’s plan of redemption are wrapped up in Christ and received through union with Him. Well, in conclusion, we have seen in this lecture that God magnifies the Savior by revealing that all the benefits of salvation come through the believer’s union with Christ. In the next lecture, we will explore these particular benefits of the application of redemption in greater detail.

Lecture 28

APPLICATION

Lecture Theme:

God applies Christ's completed work of redemption in history to every individual believer throughout time.

Text:

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:29–30).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 28

Imagine a scientist who has devoted his whole life, all of his time, energy and resources, to preparing a cure for a deadly disease that kills thousands of people each year. Would he be satisfied with merely having developed such a cure if all that he achieves remains in his lab? Well, of course not. The purpose of his work is to provide for the needs of real people in hopeless situations. The fulfillment of his work comes in its application to those who need it. So it is with Christ. What is the purpose of Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, and ongoing reign? The ultimate answer is, well, to display God's glory, but the more immediate or proximate answer is for the salvation of His people through which He magnifies His glory.

Christ's work in history finds its fulfillment in every one of His people being brought to salvation. Where do we find Christ's ongoing work after His ascension? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in relationship to this work? How is the accomplishment of redemption related to the application of redemption? What is included in this application? What are effectual calling, regeneration, justification, adoption, and sanctification? And how do they relate to revealing God's glory in the world? Last time we explored the place of union with Christ in New Testament theology. We noted that all the benefits of redemption derive from this union. In this lecture, we will consider some of these benefits in the application of Christ's work of redemption to His people. This marks the transition from Christ's work for us to Christ's work in us. The biblical history of Christ's redemption is final and not repeated, but it is applied in the life history of individual believers over and over throughout time. This constitutes part of His ongoing work.

So, first of all, let's consider the ministry of the Spirit. We saw in an earlier lecture that at Christ's ascension, He poured out His Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Christ's ongoing work would be mediated through His Spirit, Who would magnify the Son, take the things of Christ and show them to His people. The Holy Spirit

is the One Who applies the fruits of Christ's person and work to His individual people. We read in John 16:8, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The Holy Spirit is Christ's great promise as seen back in Ezekiel 36:27, "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." The Spirit gives a new heart, faith to receive Christ, and carries on the work of sanctification in the soul. II Corinthians 3:18 says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Furthermore, we learned that the Holy Spirit does all of this by bringing the believer into union with Christ, which is the source of all the benefits received in Christ.

We must now consider these benefits and the work of Christ's Spirit in the application of redemption. The application of redemption begins with calling and regeneration. We'll consider, first of all, effectual calling. The terms *call* and *calling* are used in two different ways. This has been frequently distinguished by the terms *external call* and *internal call*. The external call is the simple presentation of the gospel. It includes setting forth the promise of the gospel as the warrant for saving faith and repentance. It is addressed universally to all those who hear the gospel. Therefore, it is obviously broader than election. Jesus says in Matthew 22:14, "For many are called, but few are chosen."

The internal or effectual call is the work of God efficaciously and savingly applying the gospel to the soul of an individual. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, [is] the efficacious supplier of effectual calling. John 6:63 says, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." What does this entail? We learned that the Spirit convinces of sin and misery, that the Spirit enlightens the mind to understand the truth and renews the will, and the elect are thereby persuaded and enabled to embrace Christ freely offered in the gospel. At some point in time, the external call and the internal call take place simultaneously in the elect, whereas others remain unchanged under the external call. It is only made effectual by the Holy Spirit in the heart of His people.

The word *calling* in Scripture refers to the internal or effectual call the vast majority of the time; and think of a few of the characteristics of effectual calling. It is the divine summons which actually unites the believer to Christ. It is based on the sovereign eternal decree of God, and it is through the irresistible and persuasive power of the Spirit. Effectual calling is closely connected to regeneration.

The New Testament uses a few words for regeneration. It speaks of the rebirth and regeneration, and of one who is begat again. It refers to being born from above. Regeneration is often referred to as the new birth or being born again. It is that act of God by which the principle of new life in grace is implanted in man. God removes the heart of stone and gives a new heart of flesh, bringing the soul from spiritual death to life. The Holy Spirit comes to indwell the believer, and the governing disposition of the soul is made holy. Jesus describes all of this to Nicodemus in John 3.

Contrary to Arminianism, regeneration precedes faith and repentance. Regeneration is the commencement of all saving grace in us. God's call requires, of course, a response of faith, but given man's depraved condition, how is it possible for him to respond? How is it possible for these to be brought together? It is God's grace and power in regeneration that resolves this tension. He quickens the dead through the new birth. Conversion, or faith and repentance, signifies the first exercise of the gracious disposition implanted in regeneration.

Being born of God produces these fruits of faith and repentance, and you can see, therefore, the glory of God in regeneration. God the Holy Spirit is the agent Who applies the work of redemption, including regeneration, to the elect. While the Spirit is the divine Initiator and Re-Creator, if you will, the mode regeneration is the rather mysterious as Jesus says in John 3:8. It is the Spirit who causes those who are spiritually blind to see, and the spiritually dead to rise, and the spiritually ignorant to understand. The glory of God is displayed in this grace, mercy, and love. We read in Titus 3:5, "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."

In terms of the history of redemption, the theme of our course, think with me. Adam heeded the call of the devil in the garden, and mankind was plunged into sin by the fall. This resulted in spiritual and eternal death. Christ's redemption results in the believer being irresistibly called by God, quickened, and raised to life by the Holy Spirit. Next, we should consider justification and adoption. Martin Luther described justification as the doctrine by which the church stands or falls. Justification answers the question: how can a person be made right with God and acceptable to Him? The Shorter Catechism question 33 says, "Justification is an act of God's free

grace wherein He pardoneth all our sins and accepteth us as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.” This is expounded in places such as Romans 3, 4, and 5.

We learned in a previous lecture about the doctrine of imputation. In justification, God imputes the righteousness of Christ to the believer. This is a legal transaction of God crediting, or reckoning, declaring a sinner righteous in His sight, only through Christ’s righteousness credited to their account before God. It is a one-time legal act, so it’s not a process that takes place over time, and it is by grace alone and received through faith alone. You notice those last words. They mark a very important distinction. The ground, foundation, of justification is the righteousness of Christ that is outside of us. In other words, it is not the righteousness that is generated in us or produced by us, nor is it even our personal faith in Christ. It is Christ’s righteousness that provides the ground for acceptance before a holy, just, and righteous God.

The instrument of justification, on the other hand, is faith. So, faith is the vehicle, if you will, or the way of appropriating the blessing of justification. So, faith is not the ground. Otherwise, it would be the one good work that we contribute to our justification, which contradicts the biblical teaching that it is by free grace. We shouldn’t think of faith as something that provides the basis. Why are you acceptable before God? Well, because I did the right thing and believed, and my faith merits that. No. Faith neither brings, nor contributes anything. It is merely receiving what Christ is and has done and what Christ offers to us. It is believing, trusting, resting in what Christ alone has done.

So, if you think about the relationship of justification to good works, things should begin to become clear. Justification is not faith plus works equals salvation, so as if we believe and then do a lot of good deeds that are added to our faith and that results in salvation. Rather, if you’re thinking in terms of a mathematical formula, it’s not faith plus works equal salvation, but rather faith equals salvation plus works. In other words, the fruitfulness of sanctification flows by necessity out of justification. We can distinguish between the demonstrative aspect and a declarative aspect of justification. Well, what does all of that mean? In Paul’s writings especially, he’s emphasizing the declarative aspect. He’s emphasizing that God declares His people righteous in the Lord Jesus Christ, that Christ’s work is the ground. But, for example, in James 2:21, he’s emphasizing the demonstrative aspect, the fact that those who are justified by faith alone will demonstrate the fruitfulness of that lively, saving faith. So, he says that faith without works is dead; it should be accompanied by this fruitfulness. The reformed Dutch theologian Bavinck said, “Paul battles against dead work and James against dead faith.”

So, if you put these things together, we have what we could call the great exchange. You have the sinner, on one hand, and you have the Lord Jesus Christ on the other. And, if you take some of the pieces that we’ve learned previously and put them together, what do we find? The sin of the Lord’s people is imputed to Christ. So, it’s legally credited, reckoned, to Christ’s account. He doesn’t become sinful, but He bears the sins of His people. He assumes, as it were, responsibility, the place of the sinner. And so, that helps us understand the cross; and Christ is dying as a substitute in the place of His people. He has had credited to Him the sins of His people, and He pays the full punishment and penalty for the sins. He bears the just wrath and righteous indignation of God on their behalf and thus, satisfies the demands of the law, and appeases and pacifies a righteous God. That’s half of the exchange.

On the other hand, we have Christ. And, what do we see? In His ministry, His life, we find Him obeying fully and completely all the demands of God’s law. There’s a sinless record of perfect righteousness that is found in Christ. And so, the second half of the exchange is that in justification, we also see that righteousness of Christ credited, legally reckoned, to the Lord’s people so that when God looks upon His people, He sees them clothed in the righteous garments of the Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore, on the merits of Christ, they are acceptable before Him and received by Him. And so, this is the great exchange: sins of God’s people placed on Christ, Christ’s righteousness credited to His own people for their salvation. In connection with this, we can also think about adoption. This is a beautiful part of the application of redemption. The Puritan John Owen wrote, “If the love of a father will not make a child delight in Him, what will?” Adoption, like justification, is a legal one-time act.

Justification pertains to our being accepted as righteous in God’s presence. Adoption pertains to our acceptance as sons and daughters and becoming part of His family. You think of Romans 8:14–17, Galatians 4:4–7, and I John 3:1–2. Both justification and adoption pertain to our status before God, and this adoption brings with it all sorts of privileges. God’s name is put on us. We have access to His throne with boldness. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time

of need.” Another privilege is that we’re enabled to cry, “Abba, Father,” as we see in Galatians 4. We’re pitied, protected, and provided for by Him, Psalm 103:13–14, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”

Another privilege is that we are chastened by Him. There’s that wonderful passage in Hebrews 12 beginning in verse 5 and following where the Lord says the chastening of the Lord is actually proof or evidence that he’s the Father. We don’t chasten children [who] live down the street [who] are not part of our own household. The Lord shows His love and training, and in bringing forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness in the life of His people, and our inheritance. We have an inheritance as children, and that includes the promises and everything that is involved in everlasting salvation, heaven, and glory. The Lord also gives us the spirit of adoption as we see in Romans 8 and Galatians 4. And this goes beyond merely bestowing objective promises to the witness of the Spirit to these facts.

This includes the creation of filial trust and affection within God’s people. It also includes, however, the joint witness of our spirits with God’s Spirit that we are His children. God graciously stirs up our hearts to draw near to Him and have confirmed that He is our Father. Again, in terms of the history of redemption—think with me—God drove Adam out of the garden at the fall, leaving him alienated and cut off. This also resulted in the imputation of Adam’s sin to all his posterity. In Christ’s work of redemption, Jesus secured a record of perfect righteousness to be imputed to His people. He opened a way for acceptance with God and for reception into His family as children of the living God.

Another benefit of union with Christ includes what we call *sanctification*. Again, the Shorter Catechism has a helpful definition in question 35. It says, “Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness.” Unlike justification and adoption, which are a one-time, definitive act of God, sanctification is an ongoing work. It is a process, an ongoing work of the Spirit. It is the process by which the believer dies to sin and is renewed in holiness after the likeness of Christ and conformed to His image. This is an important part of redemption. Remember Romans 8:29, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” We are to be holy as He is holy. This is connected to a proper view, a biblical view of good works. John 15:1–8 makes clear that the fruitfulness of good works flows from our union with Christ, the branch engrafted into the vine. So, if there is no fruit, no good works, then there is no root, no conversion, no saving faith. Sanctification is evidenced by gospel fruitfulness.

Going back to James 2, you see this in verses 14–26, which says that faith without the demonstration of works is not true saving faith. And there are many other passages, for example I Peter 2:12, that teach that our chief end is to glorify God, and God is glorified through the believers’ good works. Well what does that mean? What are these good works? What is the nature of them? Well, the ability to do good works comes directly from the work and constant influence of the Holy Spirit, which requires believers to dependently draw upon Him for grace and energy to do what the Word requires. These good works must be in obedience to the commands given by God in His Word. So, they cannot be acts stemming from additions to the Scriptures and based only on human authority.

Believers must be diligent in performing the duties prescribed by God and in stirring up the grace of God that is in them, but the works of believers are not meritorious. They don’t earn something. We’re not paying for salvation. They cannot bolster, if you will, our standing or acceptance with God, satisfy the debt of our sins, or earn eternal life in reference to justification. But, the persons of believers and their good works are accepted in Christ as covered by His merits, and thus bringing glory to God. He rewards the good works of believers when done in genuine faith and love, even though they’re fraught with imperfection. The works of the unregenerate cannot please God because they do not come from a heart purified by faith, are not done in love and repentance toward God, and are not done to God’s glory. Think of some of the benefits of good works in the believer. Well, they strengthen his assurance. They adorn the profession of the gospel. They are a means of expressing our thankfulness and love to God. They also edify the brethren, while shutting the mouths of God’s enemies. And, they bring glory to our heavenly Father. And so, in all of this, they testify to our progress in holiness. Well, we can connect this to the big story of the history of redemption as well.

In our earlier lecture on creation, they learned that man was made in the image of God and that this consisted of a broad aspect and a narrow aspect. After the fall, man retained the broad aspect. He's still a moral, rational creature, but he lost that narrower aspect, the narrow aspect consisting of spiritual knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. But, in Christ's salvation, he secures the recovery of this. We learn this in places like Colossians 3:10, Ephesians 4:24, and Romans 8:29. We learn that the believer is renewed after the likeness of Christ and knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.

The glory of God is displayed in and through His people and the fruitfulness of their salvation, all of which magnifies God's glory. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Well, you'll learn far more about the matters we've covered here in your future studies of systematic theology, but our survey in this lecture does not bring us to the end of the application of redemption. The final consummation of salvation comes in the believers' glorification, but we will consider that in our last lecture.

In conclusion, we have seen that God applies Christ's completed work of redemption in history to every individual believer throughout time. In order for this to take place, Christ's gospel must first be taken to them. So, in the next lecture, we will consider the commission that God gave to His church to take His message of redemption to every creature throughout the world.

Lecture 29

MISSION

Lecture Theme:

God calls his Church to proclaim his gospel to every tribe, tongue and nation, thereby displaying the glory of God through redemption in Christ and its power to bring many throughout the world to worship him.

Text:

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Mt. 28:18–20).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 29

The pursuit of any project requires clear instructions. You must know both the goal, or end, and the plan and steps to get there. You need answers to both questions: what is the objective? and what is the strategy? This is true of everything from building a house, to engaging in a military exercise, to completing a project at work. Jesus did not ascend to heaven without providing clear instructions to His people. In erecting His kingdom, He supplied a clear sight of His final intentions as well as specific directions that His church must carry out in fulfilling them. He supplied precepts backed by promises.

What mission did Christ give to His church? What did the Old Testament foretell of this important work? How is the New Testament different from the Old Testament in the approach God gave to proclaiming the gospel? How is the glory of Christ connected to evangelizing the nations? What should we expect as result? What level of priority does God place on the church’s mission in the New Testament? How is worship related to evangelism? What is the ultimate end of taking the gospel to distant lands? Last time, we saw that God applies Christ’s completed work of redemption in history to every individual believer throughout time. In order for that to take place, the good news in Christ must be proclaimed to them.

In this lecture, we will consider the mission that Christ gave to His church to set forth His glory to every creature throughout the world, but let’s begin, first of all, by considering what the Old Testament had to say and how it promised all of these things. We have seen from the early chapters of Genesis that God’s plan of redemption was intended for people throughout the whole world. This is tied to Christ’s redemptive work in history. We read, for example, of the Father’s promise to the Son in Psalm 2:7–8, “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto to me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” We read in Genesis 9:24 that God

would use the Jews, the seed of Shem, to establish His covenant and church, and the Gentiles would come into it and greatly expand it in the future. God also told Abram in Genesis 12:3, "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." When the law was given under Moses, we read in Deuteronomy 4:6–8, that it would be a light to all of the surrounding nations, showing the wisdom of God. The Psalms are full of references of the gospel going to the nations of the world. For example, Psalm 67:2–4 says, "That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth."

There are countless references in the Old Testament prophets to the same thing. For example, Isaiah 60:3 says, "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." In Daniel 7:14, it foretells of Christ's worldwide reign at His ascension. It says, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." We have seen throughout this course many other examples of the building momentum within the Old Testament pointing forward to the fact that the Gentiles would be enveloped in God's plan of redemption. The early stages began with the chosen seed of Abraham, but it was to be taken to the Gentile nations. So later, Paul can say to the Romans in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

As we turn to the New Testament, we see the fulfillment of all of this. We also see an important transition within God's unfolding plan. Whereas the Old Testament employed a "come and see" emphasis, the New Testament issues a "go and tell" mandate. So, under the Old Testament, people could come to Jerusalem, come and see, to learn of Jehovah and of His salvation. We saw this with the Queen of Sheba, for example, who heard from a far-off of the wisdom of God and came to see it for herself. And, some Gentiles were brought into the covenant this way. Remember Rahab, who was one of the Canaanites in what became Jerusalem, or you think of Ruth who was a Moabitess, or Uriah [who] was a Hittite, and many others. They were brought into the covenant through their knowledge of the gospel, but it was a "come and see" emphasis, if you will.

But, before Christ's ascension He gave His church the great commission, which states, Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." It's a "go and tell" mandate. The presence of God would no longer be confined to the geographical location of Israel. Instead, Christ says in Acts 1:8 just before His ascension, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This is a picture of expansion that would fill the whole earth.

Think back to Matthew 13 where Jesus tells a series of parables about the kingdom of heaven. They teach this point about expansion. And so, He'll speak of the mustard seed, which is the smallest, the tiniest, of all seeds, and how it grows into an enormous tree and fills the earth. He says this is a picture of the kingdom. Or, He uses the parable of leaven, leaven that is sown, if you will, into the lump and then fills the whole lump, or piece of bread; the kingdom begins small, and it fills the whole earth. In each case, it's a picture. You remember, Jesus had 12 disciples and a handful of other followers, or you think before Pentecost, 120 people are gathered in the upper room. It's a small beginning. And yet, Jesus says that the gospel would be taken to all creatures.

Jesus has conquered sin and death, Satan and hell, so He can promise to His church as He does in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The book of Acts describes the earliest historical development of all of this. Paul is raised up as the apostle to the Gentiles. and many join with him in his labors; but within the lifetime of the original disciples, the gospel spread from Jerusalem and Judea through Samaria and all the way through Asia and into Europe. Paul takes the gospel all the way to Rome, but he had his sights set even beyond that, on Spain, though he apparently died before reaching it. But, he writes in Romans 15:24, "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company." The success of this gospel enterprise is secured by Christ Himself through His omnipotent reign.

Notice the words that precede the great commission. So, if you go back to Matthew 28, notice in verse 18 it begins with "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” You see the connection? Christ’s ascension and Christ having all power and authority is the basis for Him telling them, “Go, and teach all nations.” The spread and triumph of the gospel throughout the world is guaranteed because it is attached to Christ’s glory, which is why we read in Revelation 11:15, “and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom, of our LORD, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

Well, the description of heaven itself exemplifies this gospel fruitfulness that the gospel is taken to the nations. In Revelation 21:24, nearly at the end of the Bible, it says, “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.” But, Christ not only provided precepts for His church to follow, He also issued a precious promise, “Lo, I am with you always.” We have the promise of His presence throughout the Old Testament and New Testament and now to the end of the age, and it is His presence that makes all the difference. The gospel commission from Christ to disciple the nations lies near the heart of the true church. She can never be indifferent to the spread of the gospel through the work of foreign missions. Christ’s mandate establishes a divine priority on this glorious pursuit. The church’s mission is to make glad the nations through the spread of Christ’s glory, but the question remains: to what end? to what end is all of this? And, that brings us, thirdly, to the worship of God.

Taking the message of the gospel to the ends of the earth results in believers being brought to worship the living and true God. We read in Revelation 7:9–10, “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” Here you see the glory of Christ on full display and those of the nations that have been discipled worshiping at His footstool. Evangelism is the means, but worship is the end. In heaven, evangelism ceases, but worship continues for all of eternity.

The history of redemption consists in the display of God’s glory and bringing people through the redemption of Christ to worship the God of glory. This aim fulfills the original purpose for the creation of mankind. As we see in Revelation 4:11, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” In John 4:23–24, Jesus said, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

Biblical worship is central everything in biblical Christianity. Protestant reformer John Calvin said, “If it be inquired, then, by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence among us, and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity. That is, a knowledge, first, of the mode in which God is duly worshiped; and secondly, the source from which salvation is to be obtained.”

The public corporate worship of God is set apart from the rest of life, just as the Sabbath is set apart from the rest of the week and just as the Lord’s Table is set apart from all other meals. When God’s people have gathered for worship, it has always been a microcosm of heaven. This is illustrated in the tabernacle and in the temple, as well as in the New Testament assemblies, as we see in Hebrews 12:22–29. If the aim of our mission is to bring men to worship God, then we better be clear on what this worship entails. When Christ said in the great commission, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” that included the importance of worship. Again, John Calvin remarked, “He sends away His apostles with this reservation, that they shall not bring forward their own inventions, but shall purely and faithfully deliver from hand to hand (as we say) what He entrusted to them.” The whole Bible lays overwhelming emphasis on how we approach God in worship.

We learned in earlier lectures that the biblical law of worship teaches us that we are only to worship God as He has appointed. Any human innovation contrived by the vain imagination of the fallen mind of men, not commanded by God, that is introduced into the worship of God is idolatry. What he has positively prescribed is permitted, and what he has not instituted is forbidden, Deuteronomy 12:32, “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.” Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 21 paragraph 1 summarizes this when it says, “But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshiped according to the imaginations

and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.” So, for example, in the New Testament, the acts of worship that God has sanctioned include the reading of Scripture, the preaching of God’s Word, the singing of Psalms, prayer, administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper as the ordinary actions of worship. All of the strands gathered throughout Scripture are woven together to emphasize the priority of pure worship.

The goal is to bring people throughout the world to worship God in the way that He has appointed in His Word. Unregenerate men always have a natural propensity toward idolatry and false worship. Pagans worship what they please and as they please. Paul rebuked the Athenians in Acts 17:29 saying, “We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.” We see the same thing underlined in Romans 1:21–25.

We need the Scriptures, which are alone sufficient to instruct us on how best to worship God. They teach us that Christ alone, as Head of His church, has the authority to appoint ordinances of worship. Westminster Confession chapter 20 paragraph 2 states, “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.” The church cannot invent new acts of worship as an independent, autonomous, sovereign body. We are to submit to what Christ has commanded. The second commandment establishes this principle, as you’ll remember, and the fear of God drives us to meticulous care in ordering our worship according to His Word.

We see this demonstrated throughout both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The first instance is found, of course, in the account of Cain and Abel, which we considered earlier in this course. In Leviticus 10:1–3, Nadab and Abihu were killed for worshipping in a way that God had not commanded them. Even kings were punished for this; think of Uzziah and Jeroboam. And, godly magistrates upheld this principle, for example, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Nehemiah. In Matthew 5:17–19, Jesus insists on the maintenance of the 10 Commandments. He rebukes the Pharisees for holding their manmade traditions of worship and rejecting God’s commands. When He cleanses the temple, He demonstrates His holy jealousy for the sanctity of the house of God. The rest of the New Testament teaches the same. Hebrews 12:28–29 say, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.” And we could go on.

The gospel delivers men from their natural idolatry and brings them to worship God in spirit and in truth, so we must be clear on the purity of worship that God specifies in the Bible, lest we bring men from one form of idolatry and replace it with another. The worship of God is attached to His glory. God gave His church the mission of taking the gospel to the nations to proclaim the good news of redemption found in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ so that those who are saved might be made glad in the sight of His grace and glory and enjoy the pleasure of ascribing unto Him all of the praise. So, you can recognize how this mission of taking the gospel to the nations is a means to the end of bringing men and women, boys and girls, from every nation, tribe, and tongue to worship the living and the true God according to His Word. This is very much central to the church.

So, in conclusion, we’ve seen that God calls His church to proclaim the gospel to every tribe, tongue, and nation, thereby displaying the glory of God through redemption in Christ and its power to bring those throughout the world to worship Him. What will be the end result of all of this? In our final lecture, we will explore what God reveals about the culmination of history on the last day and beyond.

Lecture 30

GLORY

Lecture Theme:

The culmination of history, like its inception, sets forth the glory of God in Christ, which is magnified through the consummation on the Last Day.

Text:

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21:22–23).

TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 30

Perhaps you've seen pictures taken from a satellite looking over the face of the earth. In a glance, you can survey the big picture of continents, countries, and oceans. Well, throughout this course, we have looked at the theology of the Bible as a whole and studied the contours of the landscape of the history of redemption. In doing so, we have sought to connect some of the big pieces in God's overarching story. We have seen that we need the whole Bible because from beginning to end, it reveals the knowledge of God in Christ and unfolds the wonderful plan of redemption throughout biblical history. Christ is not confined to the New Testament. Far from it. His glory is displayed throughout the Scriptures, and He has provided one way of salvation through one Covenant of Grace for the one people of God throughout time.

There is a dominant continuity that connects all the parts of the whole Bible. What transpires on the last day? What is the nature of Christ's second coming? Why is the resurrection of the body essential to the salvation of God's people and damnation of the unbelieving? What is involved in the final judgment, and what are the consequences? How does all of this relate to the revelation of Christ's glory? What is the culmination of the believers' redemption? What in particular makes heaven so glorious? In this final lecture, we will consider the end and culmination of all of history. This means that we are looking forward into the future, rather than backward into the past, like we have throughout most of this course.

We will consider the last great events of redemptive history, but we are unable to consider the book of Revelation in particular. You should note that it is an important book for understanding the theology of the Bible. It pulls together essential connections between the Old and New Testaments and provides significant truths for understanding God's character and glory. It also picks up where the book of Daniel leaves off and connects the history from the period of the apostle John through the last day.

We will note a few things. First of all, the last day. The natural man cannot see the future, despite all of his scientific instruments and intellectual prowess. But, the believer can see what would be otherwise impossible through the revelation that God has given of the future in the Bible. God alone has foreordained the future. He alone knows it. In I Corinthians 2:9–10, we read, “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.” So, we must fast-forward to the end of time, the conclusion of this age. In this world, we experience day after day after day after long day, but the Bible teaches that there is a last day beyond which there are no more days known in the present world.

We will highlight a few of the events awaiting the end of time. First of all, Christ’s second coming. The New Testament teaches that the first coming of Christ will be followed by a second and final coming. Jesus foretold of this Himself in several places, for example John 14:3, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” At His ascension, the angels also reassured His disciples of this reality, Acts 1:11, “which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Well, there are numerous references to this throughout the epistles, but this will only take place after the gospel has been preached to all nations. And, all that the New Testament says must first be fulfilled in connection with that, which we will not take time to cover here.

But regarding Christ’s second coming, we learn a handful of things by way of summary. We learn that He will return personally, as we saw just a moment ago in Acts 1:11. We also see that He will return physically: Revelation 22:20, “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” We see that He will return visibly. We see this in many passages, but in Revelation 1:7 it says, “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” It will be a glorious and triumphant coming: I Thessalonians 4:16, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” But, it will also be a final coming. When Christ returns, it will be at the end of the world. He does not come a third time with other events taking place in the intervening period, contrary to what premillennialists teach. No, we read in the Bible, for example 1 Corinthians 15:22–24, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.” Christ will bring about two great events that coincide with His second coming: the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment.

So next, we consider the resurrection. The Old Testament teaches the future bodily resurrection, and Christ defends it against the errors of the Sadducees. Likewise, the New Testament epistles are full of references: most notably, I Corinthians 15. We learn that it will be a resurrection of the physical body. Romans 8:11 says, “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” This will involve both the resurrection of the just and the unjust, as we read in Acts 24:15, “and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” The unbeliever will be raised to condemnation and the believer to glory.

The resurrection of the body is a necessary part of the salvation of the Christian. Christ came to redeem the whole person, so without the resurrection of the body, their salvation would be incomplete. Shorter Catechism question 38 says, “At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.” Just as Jesus Christ rose as the firstfruits, so those in union with Christ will also be raised up to glory.

But, in connection with this, the last day will also be the judgment day. Christ’s return and the resurrection will lead immediately to the final judgment of all men. This belongs to part of Christ’s exultation and glory. Paul says in Philippians 2:9–11, “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.”

Both the Old Testament, and numerous passages throughout the New Testament, foretell of this sober event. We learn that Christ as the mediator will be judge and will assemble all men before His seat of judgment. Paul writes, II Timothy 4:1, “I charge thee therefore before God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.” We learn that all mankind will appear before His judgment seat: II Corinthians 5:10, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” The consequences of this judgment are equally clear in Scripture. The judgment will result in the great divide, the divide between heaven and hell. The unbelieving will be cast into the lake of fire, deprived of all comfort, and [suffer] the pains of body and soul under God’s just wrath for all eternity without end.

The final state of believers will be in the gracious presence of God in the new heavens and new earth under the enjoyment of eternal life. For the believer, the weekly Sabbath in this world will be fulfilled in an eternal Sabbath in heaven. We read this in Hebrews 4:9, where it says “there remaineth therefore a rest.” That word *rest* in the Greek is different than the other words *rest* in the surrounding verses. It literally means a *Sabbath-keeping*. “There remaineth, therefore, a rest,” or Sabbath-keeping, “to the people of God.” This will bring about the culmination of the Covenant of Grace.

Notice that the covenant promise that we’ve heard so much about throughout the Bible in Revelation 21:2–3, “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.” Listen, “and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” That leads us, next, to the consideration of the eternal glory that belongs to the believer, and we’re going to spend some more time on this particular point.

We’ll turn our attention to the eternal glory that awaits the believer in eternity. What might that be? For many in our generation, they conceive of heaven as a celestial playground where they indulge in all of the enjoyments of this world to a maximal degree, but that would be far too paltry. Christ did not die to bring His people to heaven so that they would only cling to the things of this world. The salvation of men centers on God and His glory. The final destruction of Christ’s enemies and the receiving of His redeemed bride is the eternal delight and reward of Christ, of which, His bride is a humble partaker, His bride being the church.

The glory of heaven is the sight of God, what theologians call the beatific vision, or the blessed or happy sight of God. We sing of this in Psalm 17:15, “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” At the fall, man was thrust out of the garden, separated, alienated, cut off from God’s gracious presence, but through Christ, Who is the Door, believers are given entrance into glory. Christ’s prayer in John 17:24 will be fulfilled. Jesus prayed, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.” In this world, the Christian beholds the glory of God indirectly through a mirror. They behold the glory of God by faith, but in heaven they will see Him directly, face to face, no longer by faith but by sight.

Seventeenth century English theologian Thomas Manton said, “We go to heaven to study divinity,” or theology, “in the Lamb’s face.” Even Job, in the Old Testament, spoke of beholding Christ, Job 19:25–27, “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” It is God’s glory that will fill the expanse and atmosphere of heaven. Revelation 21:22–23 says, “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” This will result in the pure pleasure and maximal satisfaction of adoring God Himself. That means both in the destruction of His enemies, as well as the deliverance of His people. We read in Revelation 19 about this in verses 1 to 7, and I’ll cite a few of those verses.

It says, “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore.” It goes on a little bit later, “and a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent

reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him.” The fact is that nothing that is created can bring ultimate satisfaction or truly fill the soul, and children see this. They look forward with eager anticipation to perhaps receiving a toy, and they talk about it, and they dream about it. The day comes; they finally receive the toy, and they’re all excited. And for the first day, it’s great deal of fun. The next day it continues, perhaps. And then, the day after that and the day after that, the pleasure diminishes a little; until a few weeks later, the toy is found along with the rest of the others, and it is of no great pleasure more than the others. What’s true of children is true of every adult as well.

We see that there is nothing that is created that can bring ultimate satisfaction if that’s ultimately what we crave. But, we can sing in Psalm 16:11, “Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” This led Jonathan Edwards, the American theologian to conclude, “The beatific vision of God, that is the tip of happiness.” If a glimpse of God by faith is so great, then what will be the sight of Him? What will the sight of Him be like? Think with me. God is infinite, but men are finite. We’re very limited. That means the believer can never exhaust what there is to see and know about God. Finite cannot contain what is infinite. That means every new sight will be new and truly fresh. It’s not as if they’ll be merely rehearsing things that we’ve already seen, heard, and known, but rather, there will be a gradual disclosure of the glory of God. And, the believer’s abilities will expand with the growing revelation of God throughout eternity, and this will go on and on. So, Paul tells the Philippians that to depart and be with Christ is far better. Well, no wonder!

In this life, joy enters the Christian, so the Christian has joy. But in heaven, they will enter joy. Contrast the difference between taking a glass of water, pouring water into your mouth, water’s going into your mouth; now, contrast that with going out into the wide-open ocean and jumping into the ocean. Now, you’ve gone into the water. That’s how the Lord describes it. He says in the last day that He will say to His people, “Enter thou into the joy of the Lord.” True happiness is the enjoyment of God Himself. All of this is revealed to the believer now, ahead of time. When you set out on a journey, your destination determines which way you will turn when leaving your home, going right or left; and it will determine which way you go at every single intersection you come to along the way. Do I go straight? Do I go right? Do I go left? Knowing the end of the journey affects our present actions.

This is true in God’s present plan of redemption. We read in I John 3:2–3, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” The believers’ destination defines their daily decisions. Moses saw this. In Hebrews 11:24–26 we read, “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;”—Why?—“esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” The believers’ present pilgrimage focuses on “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

Paul says in Colossians 3:2, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Like Moses’s face that shone when he came out of the tabernacle, so when Stephen beheld the ascended Christ in Acts 7, the onlookers said that his face was like that of an angel. God, of course, is beauty. It’s not just that He has beauty. He is the definition and the source of beauty. And, the believer is transformed, beautified if you will, by beholding Him. We saw this earlier in II Corinthians 3:18. We behold Him through the revelation that He provides in the Scriptures.

This knowledge of heaven also transforms the believer’s perspective on suffering. Romans 8:18 says, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” In other words, the glory to come is so disproportionate that the sufferings in this world will fade into insignificance. All of the believers’ afflictions have an expiration date on them. They’re not permanent. One Puritan said, “He that rides to be crowned will not be bothered by a rainy day.” Think of Paul’s words in II Corinthians 4:17–18, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” The Christian life is a journey to see clearly. It starts with faith and ends with sight, but both set before the Christian the sight of God. The

believer has been predestined for this glory. We have seen that the whole of biblical history from Genesis to Revelation serves to reveal to us the glory of God in Christ through His overarching plan of redeeming His people.

In our very first introductory lecture, we considered the interview between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba in I Kings 10. We saw how the Scripture connects Solomon and his kingdom to Christ and His kingdom. You can now see, in this last lecture, more of the significance of that interchange. You'll remember that when she took in all that she saw of Solomon of his glory, his kingdom, his servants, his wealth, and the house of the Lord, the Bible says that it took her breath away. And she said, "When I was in Sheba, I had heard many things about all of this, but the half was not told to me." This is true of the believer. When he or she arrives in glory to behold the glory of the Son of God, the one greater than Solomon, the Bible compels us to say that "it will take your breath away." And, though you have diligently read your Bibles and listened to countless sermons and studied deeply these matters, you will be forced to conclude "the half was not told to me." It will far surpass our expectations and fully satisfy all of our longings.

In conclusion, we have now come to the end of our course of lectures on biblical theology, but this is only the beginning of your journey. We have explored the history of redemption and highlighted only a small selection of the dominant themes. As stated at the outset of this course, the aim was to provide you with the basic building blocks for personal, in-depth study. These lectures are a door, not the destination. You must take up these tools to press on in your study of God's Word. There is far more to see and learn, and the prospects are exhilarating. May the Lord richly bless the time and energy you devote to your ongoing studies of Scripture. You can be assured of my own ongoing prayers for those who hear these lectures. While I will not have the privilege of meeting most of you in this world, my prayer is that we will be brought together under the throne to bask in the glory of the full revelation of God, no longer by faith but by sight. As you have heard in this lecture, the best is yet to come.