

§ X. DOCTRINE OF MAN

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§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 1

Man as the Image of God

Introduction

Today we start a new locus in our survey of Christian doctrine. For the past many months – it seems like over a year – we have been studying the Doctrine of Creation. When you think that the Doctrine of Creation includes within its scope *everything* in existence apart from God himself, it is no surprise that it would be a subject that would merit such lengthy and in depth discussion. But having completed that locus now, we turn to a brand new section of the course and this is going to be on the Doctrine of Man.

Psalm 8 raises the question, “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” There are different approaches to answering this fundamental question about the nature of man. *Theological anthropology* attempts to answer this question in contrast to what we might call *empirical anthropology* and *philosophical anthropology* by exploring the question with regard to man’s relationship to God. Theological anthropology in contrast to empirical and philosophical anthropology sees the answer to the Psalmist’s question to be found fundamentally in our relationship with God. The Doctrine of Man, or theological anthropology, typically includes within it two subsections. First would be man as created in the image of God – what is man by nature? Then, secondly, would be man as sinner – man in his fallen state of alienation from God. Man justified in Christ and restored to his relationship with God will typically come in the Doctrine of Salvation, or *soteriology*, which we will look at later. So there are two subsections in the Doctrine of Man – man in the image of God and then man as sinner.

Empirical Anthropology

Let’s draw the contrast with these other approaches to anthropology. *Empirical anthropology* can be defined as a collective name for a whole series of sciences which respectively investigate different aspects of man through the observation of analyzable phenomena, through experimentation, and through the consequences of that data. So, for example, empirical anthropology would include studies on the biological origins of man – where did the human species come from? It would study the relationship of the brain and states of consciousness – the famous mind-body problem. Psychoanalysis and psychology would be included in empirical anthropology as would be social studies. All of these would provide partial answers, at least, to the question “What is man?”

Philosophical Anthropology

Philosophical anthropology, by contrast, tries to answer the question “Who is man?” If the empirical anthropologist tried to answer the question “What is man?” the philosophical anthropologist explores the question “Who is man?” That is to say, philosophical anthropology seeks a self understanding of man in light of the analysis of what it is to be a human being. This will usually be bound up with ethical considerations – what our moral obligations and prohibitions are – and the intrinsic worth of human

beings and human rights.

There are various approaches to philosophical anthropology as you might imagine. For example, one of these would be materialism or physicalism or naturalism. This has a very long pedigree. Particularly influential in modern materialism would be conceptions of man like that of La Mettrie¹, the French thinker who talked of man as *L'homme machine* – “man the machine.”² This is very similar to what Richard Dawkins says about human beings today – that we are machines for propagating DNA. The *L'homme machine* is the notion of man as just a mechanistic device – a “moist robot” as I think one contemporary naturalist puts it.³ The German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach⁴ had a nice way of expressing this materialistic view of man that is very catchy. He said “*der mensch ist, was er isst*” – that is to say, “man is what he eats” – a pun in German at least. Man is what he eats – he is just a purely material organism. Another school of philosophical anthropology in contrast to this would be idealism which would be represented in German philosophy again by Hegel⁵ who thought that it is mind, or spirit, which is constitutive for man. What it means to be human is to be mind as opposed to material. Yet a third philosophical approach to anthropology would be existentialism. Existentialism emphasizes individual authentic existence by free choice through which a person realizes his uniqueness. So the emphasis in existentialism is on individual authenticity which is achieved through radical freedom thereby realizing one’s uniqueness. Another example would be the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre who was an atheistic existentialist.⁶ Sartre says that man is condemned to freedom. There is no essence of man which precedes his existence and defines who he is. Rather, man is condemned to freely define his own existence because he does not have an essence established by God in advance. He determines his own meaning and value. So existentialism seems to lead to a sort of radical relativism about the meaning and value of human life. Finally, one might mention Marxism or Marxism-Leninism – another philosophical anthropology. According to Marxism, society is constitutive for what it is to be a human being. This is a kind of economic determinism. Far from having freedom of the will, man’s choices are determined by the economic status of society into which he is born. This view of man has a view of human beings involving the perfectibility of human existence. If the state can be made to respect and work for the interests of the masses then the masses can achieve a kind of perfect society – a perfect humanity – so that there is no inborn sinful fallenness of man that would prevent having a perfect society in which human beings live. Those are all examples

¹ Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709 - 1751) was a physician and philosopher. He published *L'Homme machine* (“Man a Machine”) in 1747 which was a materialistic, atheistic work in which he argued that consciousness is related to physical causes. Hence, he denied dualism (that is, he denied that man was comprised of a soul separate from the body).

² 5:11

³ The term “moist robot” was actually coined by Scott Adams, creator of the “Dilbert” comic. “Free will is an illusion. Humans are nothing but moist robots.” See <http://dilbert.com/strips/comic/2012-03-18/> and http://dilbertblog.typepad.com/the_dilbert_blog/2007/10/curious-robot-m.html for examples.

⁴ Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach (1804 - 1872) was a German materialist, atheist philosopher whose work later influenced Karl Marx.

⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 - 1831) was a German philosopher with liberal, unorthodox Christian ideas.

⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre (1905 - 1980) was one of the main philosophical thinkers of 20th century existentialism.

simply of various philosophical approaches to the subject of anthropology and the question, “Who is man?”

Theological Anthropology

In contrast to both empirical and philosophical anthropology, *theological anthropology* approaches these questions with respect to man’s relationship to God. Like philosophical anthropology, it also seeks to answer the question, “Who is man?” What is the meaning and nature of human existence?⁷ But it finds the answer in relationship to God, usually as involving man being created in God’s image and then as a fallen being – a sinner – before God. As I say, man as justified in Christ would typically belong to soteriology, or the Doctrine of Salvation. But man is created by nature to be in the image of God though he now stands in rebellion to God. So there is a kind of paradox in Christian anthropology; namely, the so-called natural man is not really the natural man! Man as he was created to be, by nature, is in the image of God; he is innocent and not fallen – that is the way Adam is presented in Genesis prior to the fall. But what Paul calls the natural man today is fallen humanity. So Paul’s natural man is not really the natural man. Sin doesn’t belong to man by nature; it is a corruption of human nature. Human nature in its uncorrupted form is the image of God.

Inter-Relationship

What is the inter-relationship between these different approaches to the Doctrine of Man? Well, some persons think that theological anthropology is excluded all together. Obviously, if you are a materialist or a naturalist then there simply is no room for answering these questions with respect to our relationship to God. For many people on the modern scene who are influenced by secular philosophical approaches, theological anthropology is simply out of the question.

Among those who do take a theological approach, it will be very frequently said that there is no relationship between theological anthropology and empirical anthropology. They try to separate empirical studies of man from theological approaches to the question so that there can be no conflict between the two. If these are utterly non-intersecting domains of study then there can be no conflict arising for theological anthropology from empirical anthropological studies. This, however, seems to me to be a cave-in or a failure of nerve on the part of theologians. It involves a retreat of theology into an unverifiable and hence irrelevant sanctuary. It achieves security and safety from the studies of empirical anthropology only at the expense of becoming irrelevant to the real world in which we live. It seems to me that theological anthropology has empirical consequences. For example, about the nature of human evolution and the origins of humanity or about materialism and the mind-body relationship – are we simply chemical machines or is there an immaterial part of our nature? Freedom versus determinism – is everything we do and think determined by the input of the five senses and our genetic makeup or do we have genuine freedom of the will? In all of these ways, theological anthropology and empirical anthropology have the potential of either verification or falsification of theological positions.

⁷ 10:00

It is clear, I think, that theological anthropology can come into conflict with philosophical anthropology. The philosopher seeks to answer the same question – “Who is man?” – but totally from the human side without taking any account of what God has to say about the matter or what difference God would make to the question “Who is man?” whereas the theologian seeks God’s viewpoint on human nature and on who we are. So obviously conflict can arise between theological and philosophical approaches to anthropology.⁸

So it seems to me that, again, what we want to find is an integrative approach – a synoptic approach – which will take into account all of the insights of empirical, philosophical, and theological anthropology. The Christian worldview is properly a synoptic worldview that integrates all of the sources of knowledge that we have in order to answer life’s deepest questions.

DISCUSSION

Question: The way you defined things, it seems like, properly done, philosophical should be just what you are saying the theological should do. It is also interesting the way you defined existentialism. I never knew it was defining what yourself is – that is very close to Paul (*inaudible*) when you get close to God you see yourself more as he intended you to see in his image. So defining and finding – I can see how especially somebody who would embrace the evidence and try to do the things you say would just turn into a theological Christian.

Answer: I was speaking there of atheistic existentialism. There are Christian existentialists, clearly, who would not ignore the relevance of God to the question of “What is man?” So the conflict that I imagined here would be between people who pursue this philosophical question from a purely secular point of view. For someone like Sartre, since there is no God to define the nature of man, we literally have no nature objectively. Each person can just create his own meaning and value in life which results in all sorts of great difficulties that Sartre himself struggled with. I would agree with you that, for the Christian philosopher, he will also take into account all sources of knowledge including revelation from God and therefore seek to have an integrative sort of approach as I have suggested. So when I talked about philosophical anthropology I was thinking of purely secular approaches.

Question: You mentioned Sartre struggling with his existentialism and denying and having problems with certain things in the world like, for example, he was radically against the Vietnam War. Did people ever attack him or bring that into light to say how hypocritical that was?

Answer: Sartre wrote an essay in the aftermath of the Second World War called “Existentialism is a Humanism.” In this, he seemed to take back the obvious implications of his view that our existence is prior to our essence and that therefore we are free to create whatever values we want. He said that a philosophy that leads to mass extermination and genocide is not an equal option with its opposite. Therefore, he recoiled, I think, from the implications of his own view for which, yes, he has been, I

⁸ 15:00

think quite rightly, criticized. I think that what he saw was that he could not really live with the implications of his own system in view of the Holocaust and therefore, I think, inconsistently pulled back in affirming that existentialism is a kind of humanism that affirms the value of human beings. I don't see any reason to think that would be the case on atheism. It has been very interesting to note more recent philosophers like Alex Rosenberg that I debated in February at Perdue⁹ or Joel Marks¹⁰ are biting the bullet with respect to this question and are saying what Sartre felt he couldn't say – namely that our lives are utterly meaningless, utterly valueless, and to think otherwise is to lack the courage that the atheist needs to have if he is to stare the consequences of atheism in the face without blinking.¹¹

Question: Could you say more words about why we want to have a synoptic . . . why are we considering . . . these seem to be mutually exclusive. I can understand considering all of the facts but their conclusions, why do we want to have in our philosophy something that . . .

Answer: What I mean by synoptic is that it would be a worldview that takes advantage of all of the sources of human knowledge. The naturalist will often say that the physical sciences are our only source of knowledge and that, therefore, the physical sciences will lead your worldview by the nose and you have to follow out to its logical conclusions whatever physics says. But I think the philosopher rightly protests that this is a sort of blinkered view of the sources of human knowledge. There are sources of human knowledge that are non-scientific in nature. Mathematics and logic, for example, would be sources of knowledge that are not based upon empirical science. Even an example that someone gave in a review¹² I read of Rosenberg's book – literary criticism. He pointed out that literary criticism tells us that in Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Collins is not the hero of the story. Now that is not something you can discover through physics or biology or chemistry but clearly that is a piece of knowledge. The person who understands *Pride and Prejudice* sees that that is a true statement. So the philosopher I think will rightly insist that the sources of human knowledge are much broader than science alone and ought to be taken into account. And the theologian will then say, but there is also divine revelation which is a source of human knowledge and that needs to be considered as well. But I don't think the theologian should say, "Well, I am going to discount these other sources of knowledge." That would be as blinkered as the scientistic person who says there are no other sources of knowledge other than science. So I think the theologian should rightly say that, as Christians, we want to have an integrated, or synoptic, worldview that will draw upon the resources of all of the sources of human

⁹ For a video of this debate, see <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/media/craig-vs-rosenberg-purdue-university> (accessed May 19, 2013).

¹⁰ For example, see Joel Marks' opinion piece "Confessions of an Ex-Moralist" at <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/08/21/confessions-of-an-ex-moralist/> (accessed May 19, 2013).

¹¹ 20:02

¹² "According to Professor Rosenberg, naturalism treats literary criticism as fun, but not as knowledge. Does he really not know whether Mr. Collins is the hero of 'Pride and Prejudice?' Every normal reader has that sort of elementary literary critical knowledge." - Timothy Williamson, "On Ducking Challenges to Naturalism," September 28, 2011, *New York Times* online blog at <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/09/28/on-ducking-challenges-to-naturalism/> (accessed May 19, 2013).

knowledge including divine revelation and try to construct a view that is then true to what we know about the world. That is what I meant and I do think that that is a legitimate project.

Question: To follow up your discussion about Sartre, Bertrand Russell says in *Why I Am Not a Christian* that the universe will grind to a halt and we are an accidental collection of particles and there is no meaning and no purpose. He says something interesting – he says, “Therefore you should build a habitation of your soul on the firm foundation of unyielding despair.”

Answer: Yes, this is in Russell’s *A Free Man’s Worship* – a kind of confession that he wrote of what the naturalist or atheist should believe. As someone earlier points out, Russell was one of these, like Sartre and Nietzsche, who stared atheism in the face and did not blink and drew the consequences. So he says that the whole temple of human achievement is going to be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins. Someday in the far future everything will be dissolved, science says that the universe will suffer some sort of thermodynamic heat death and human civilization – everything! – will come to an end. And Russell says only within the scaffolding of these truths, only upon the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation be henceforth safely built.¹³ A very profound statement of the human predicament. This is another point (in answer to someone earlier) – I find in the writings of people like Sartre and Russell perhaps the most penetrating analysis of the human predicament to which then I think we, as Christians, can speak. Let’s hear from these atheists what their own worldview implies and realize the poignancy and the anguish of such a worldview. That will, I think, then enable us to better speak to that human predicament.¹⁴

Man as the Image of God

Biblical Data

Man as the Image of God

Let’s begin with our first subsection – man as created in the image of God. The classical term for this in Latin is the *imago dei*. Man is created in the image of God – the *imago dei*. Let’s look first at the biblical data pertinent to man as the image of God.

Let’s turn to the classical biblical passage on this subject, which is Genesis 1:26:

¹³ “That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man’s achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins -- all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation henceforth be safely built.” – Bertrand Russell, “A Free Man’s Worship,” (1903) – see <http://www.philosophicalsociety.com/archives/a%20free%20man's%20worship.htm> (accessed May 19, 2013).

¹⁴ 24:58

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

Notice here that two words are used to express the resemblance of man to his Creator. The first is the word “image” or, in Hebrew, “*tselem*” which has the idea of a resemblance or an image. The second word translated “likeness” is “*demut*.” Man is said to be created in God’s image after, or according to, his likeness. There is probably, in the Hebrew text, no difference between the two. It is not as though these represent two aspects of man’s nature – image and likeness. It is simply a kind of parallelism to describe the resemblance or relation of man to God. This is also referred to in Genesis 5:1 where it says, “This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness [*demut*] of God.” Finally, Genesis 9:6 is the command concerning capital punishment, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image [*tselem*].” These are the passages in Genesis that describe man as made in the image and likeness of God. We might also compare to this Genesis 5:3 which speaks of Adam begetting his son Seth. Genesis 5:3 says that Adam “became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.” Here the offspring of Adam is also said to be in Adam’s image and likeness in the way that Adam is in the image and according to the likeness of God.

That is the *locus classicus* for the image of God in Scripture. But there are also a couple of passages in the New Testament that speak of this as well; for example, 1 Corinthians 11:7. Here Paul says, “For a man ought not to cover his head,” – he is thinking here of covering one’s head in worship. “For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.” Here we have a reference in the New Testament to man as being created in God’s image. Finally, in James 3:9, speaking about controlling our tongue, he says, “With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the likeness of God.” The word in the Greek for likeness is “*eikon*.” That is the word for image – the *eikon* of God, or the image of God.¹⁵

So in both the Old Testament and the New Testament we have this notion of human beings as being special and singled out as being created in God’s image unlike all of the rest of the biosphere. None of the other animals are created in God’s image.

You will notice there is no indication that this image or likeness is lost through sin, even after the fall of man. In the command in Genesis 9:6, concerning capital punishment where a person who sheds man’s blood shall also be killed himself, it says that man is in the image of God even in his fallen state. So there isn’t any indication in the biblical text that this image and likeness to God is something that is lost through the human fall into our sinful condition.

Christ as the Image of God

So man is in the image of God is found in both the Old and New Testaments. There is another use of the word image with respect to Christ as God’s image. Christ is the image of God. Colossians 1:15 says that Christ “is the image of the invisible God, the first-born

¹⁵ 30:05

of all creation.” In a special sense, Christ is God’s image.

Man in Christ as the Image of God

Finally, thirdly, man in Christ is said to be conformed to God’s image. Romans 8:29 says, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.” Here we are said to be destined toward conformity with Christ’s image. Also, 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” Here we are said to be sanctified in being brought into the likeness of Christ, the Lord. Finally, Ephesians 4:24 says, “and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” So there is a kind of image or likeness to Christ to which believers are destined and progressing.

This is the biblical data with respect to this concept of the image of God. Man is created in God’s image, Christ as God’s image, and then man in Christ as being brought into the conformity with the image of Christ.

DISCUSSION

Question: If man in Christ conforms to the image of God then does that imply that the fallen state is out of the image of God?

Answer: That would seem to be a correct inference. Insofar as the image of Christ, or of the Lord, to which we are going to be conformed suggests that those of us who are in a fallen, corrupted state are not yet in that image. So here it is rather different than the idea of being created originally in God’s image and now this is an image toward which we are moving. So, yes, I think you are right. This has a kind of goal orientation to it and those who haven’t yet reached the goal aren’t yet in that image. I think that is the implication.¹⁶

Question: The Greek seems to agree with you regarding *demut* and *tselem* – they seem to be interchangeable. Because in the Greek it doesn’t say two things – it just says it is in the *eikon* of God in Genesis 5.

Answer: You are talking about in the Septuagint?

Followup: Yes. The Septuagint writers agree with that; that they are just the same thing and they compress both.

Answer: So you are saying that they used the same word in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for “image” and “likeness.”

Followup: Yes, it just says “in the *eikon* of God.” So instead of saying image and likeness – instead of *tselem* and *demut* – it is just “in the *eikon* of God”. It compresses both into one word.

Answer: All right. I had not looked at what the Septuagint says. What he is speaking there of is the Greek Old Testament which the New Testament writers knew and used. So this

¹⁶ 34:57

was an ancient translation of the Old Testament into the Greek language so that Hellenized Jews and others could read the Scriptures in the language of the day. His point is that the word “*eikon*” is used to translate this idea of the image and likeness.

Question: I have to ask, in view of the writing in James; clearly it says we are discussing males in the image of God. So are females just a lesser image of God, as secondarily reflected through Adam or are we left to just find our own existence through existentialism? *[laughter, and a few “Thank you!” exhortations from some of the female audience members!]*

Answer: I was afraid someone might bring that up! OK, so let’s go back to the passage in 1 Corinthians 11:7 where Paul says, “For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.” Now, notice the asymmetry there – he does not say “woman is the image and glory of man.” He doesn’t say that. He knows that woman is created in the image of God just as much as man is. So he says “man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.” But she is just as much in the image of God as he is. I am not importing something into the Scripture in saying that. When you go back to Genesis and look at the *locus classicus* for this notion – Genesis 1:26 – it uses the plural. “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let *them* have dominion over the fish of the sea,” and then verse 27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Clearly, in Hebrew thinking, man and woman alike are created in God’s image. So mankind is created in the image of God and mankind comprises both male and female – they are equally in the image of God. I don’t think Paul is contradicting that when he says “woman is the glory of man.” He doesn’t mean to suggest that women are created in man’s image rather than in God’s image.

Question: Could you compare the sense in which Christ is the image of the indivisible God and that in which Adam was created as the image of God?

Answer: We will say more about this when we begin to analyze these. All I have done so far is pretty much just read the passages. But we haven’t really discussed their import. I think that, as you intimate, when Christ is said to be the image of God, this is clearly a very different sense than Adam’s being in the image of God. There, in Colossians, the contrast is between something that is visible and something invisible. Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. But Adam isn’t the image of God in that way. He is not the visible representation of God himself. We will have to differentiate the different ways in which image is used. I think an earlier question also brought out that when the Scripture speaks of us as being conformed to Christ’s image, again, this is a very different use of the word “image” than the notion of man as created in God’s image. I’ve simply read the passages that speak of the image of God or the likeness of God but I think we will see as we unpack this that not all of these are talking about the same thing.

Next time we will begin to look at various attempts to systematize and make sense out of this biblical data.¹⁷

¹⁷ Total Running Time: 40:30 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 2

Image and Likeness

Attempts to Systematize Data

We have been talking in our lesson about man as created in the *imago dei* – or the image of God. Having looked at the biblical data on this, we now want to look at various attempts to systematize this data. The first one we want to look at would be the contrast that is drawn between real and relational understandings of the *imago dei*.

Roman Catholic View

Let's first talk about the Roman Catholic view. The Roman Catholic view differentiates between the image and the likeness of God. These are two different things in man – the image of God and the likeness of God. You will remember that is how Genesis says man was created. In the original state of righteousness in which man was created, man had the *likeness* of God. We can illustrate this by drawing this solid line which indicates the original righteousness – the likeness in which man stood to God. Similarly, man in that original state was in God's *image* as well.

But then comes the Fall of man and with the Fall of man that original righteousness is lost, and therefore man in his fallen condition no longer stands in the likeness of God. The image of God, however, though impaired and disrupted by the fall, still exists even in the fallen state and so is not entirely lost. Finally, in the state of grace of persons as they are in Christ, the likeness of God is restored because we now have Christ's righteousness, and the image of God is also healed and restored from the disruption it felt.

So there is a distinction drawn between the image and the likeness of God and man. The image is distorted by the Fall into sin and repaired in the state of grace but the likeness of man to God – that original righteousness – is lost in the fallen state.

Protestant Reformation View

By contrast to this, the Protestant Reformation theologians did not distinguish between the image of God and the likeness of God. They said the image of God *is* the likeness of God – these are not different aspects of man. So in that state of original righteousness man was in the image or likeness of God. With the Fall, the image and likeness of God are lost and then restored only in the state of grace.

The difference between the Protestant Reformers and the Catholic view would be with respect to whether fallen man is still in the image of God. The Reformers' view implied that fallen man is no longer in God's image. Nevertheless, they did try to affirm some sense in which fallen, sinful human beings are still in God's image by differentiating between a *general* image and a *special* image of God. They would say that only the special image of God is lost and that in a sort of general sense even fallen man would still be in God's image. Luther, for example, says that man almost lost the image of God in

the Fall. Calvin says that a relic of the image of God remains in this fallen condition.¹⁸ The difference in emphasis here would be on this notion of seeing it as lost because of the identity of the image with the likeness.

Ontological vs. Functional

A different view of the image of God and man would be to interpret these functionally. Rather than thinking of God's image as an ontological component of man's being, the image of God is thought of functionally.¹⁹ It is a way in which humanity functions or exists. So, for example, some have suggested that the image of God consists in man's lordship over the earth and its creatures. It is not that there is an ontological component or feature of human beings that make them in God's image. Rather, to be in God's image means to have lordship over the earth and its creatures. It's a functional understanding of God's image rather than an ontological one.

On the other hand, there are those who identify being in the image of God with having some ontological feature of human being that reflects God's nature. For example, reason or rationality is one that has traditionally been identified as what makes man in God's image. God is supremely rational. He is the Logos in John 1 – "In the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with God and was God." Similarly, we being in God's image means that we are rational creatures. This would be in line with Aristotle's view that humans beings, or the nature of humanity, is to be a rational animal. It is our reason that differentiates us from the animal realm.

Or, again, it might be suggested that the image of God consists in our relative freedom. We have freedom of the will. We are not like animals which are ruled by instinct but we have the ability to make morally significant choices. So it is our freedom that constitutes the image of God in us.

Or, again, another possibility would be our answerability to God. This would seem to be, again, a functional interpretation where it is our responsibility and relationship to God that constitutes being in God's image. We have moral duties to fulfill and are answerable and accountable to him.

Or, finally, one might suggest, as we've seen here, that the image of God is simply the original righteousness in which Adam and Eve were created. They were created innocent and unfallen and it was that original righteousness that they had that made them in God's image. On that view, the image would be lost.

As you can see there is quite a wide variety of interpretations of what it means to say that man is created in the image of God and according to his likeness.

Evaluation

Image and Likeness

What might we say by way of evaluation of these alternatives? I think, first of all, we

¹⁸ "... we can trace some remains of the divine image distinguishing the whole human race from other creatures." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 2, Chapter 2, Section 17.

¹⁹ 5:11

have to agree with the Reformers that there is no difference between the image and likeness of God. I've already indicated that when we looked at this biblical material from Genesis. To say that man is created in God's image according to his likeness is just an example of Hebrew parallelism. They are virtually synonymous. They are not meant to indicate two different aspects of human being. Rather, these are synonymous ways of designating man as in some way reflecting God in a special way. Therefore, I think we have to say, contrary to the Reformers, that this is not lost in the Fall because fallen man clearly is in the image of God as we saw. Fallen man is referred to as being in God's image. Therefore, it is not simply a relation to God that was lost in the Fall, or original righteousness or something of that sort. We shouldn't think of the image of God as something which is given up or lost as a result of man's fall into sin. So the first point would be that the image and likeness of God are synonyms – they mean the same thing – and that they are not lost in the Fall and therefore a sort of relational interpretation is not possible.

When it is said that Christ is the image of God here I think we are dealing with just a totally different concern.²⁰ The word may be the same – “image” – but it isn't in the same sphere of discussion as when we discuss man in God's image. In Colossians, Paul is saying that Christ is the visible exemplification of the invisible God. When you look at Christ, you are looking at God. It is God in the flesh; God incarnate. But this isn't the same sphere of discussion as when we talk about what it means for man to be in God's image. Similarly, when the Scriptures talk about Christians being in Christ – as being conformed to the image of Christ – that is just, again, a separate discussion. It is not relevant to the question of what it means for man to be in God's image. There the concern is ethical or spiritual. Man is being conformed to the character of Christ through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. This is about sanctification. So even though the vocabulary may be the same – using the word “image” – it is not the same discussion as what it means for man to be in God's image.

Man, then, is in the image of God even as a sinner. His relationship with God may be broken because of sin – he finds himself estranged from God, spiritually alienated from God, condemned and under God's wrath – but nevertheless he still is in God's image.

What does this mean then? Well, this is a question, I think, which comes down to whether or not you take the image of God to be an ontological term or a functional term. Is it specifying some aspect of human being that reflects God's nature or is it merely the way we function? This is going to depend upon how you interpret a couple of Hebrew propositions – “*ba*” and “*ke*.” It says that man is created “in” God's image – the Hebrew word there is *ba*. And it is “according to” his likeness – the Hebrew word there is *ke*. Notice that it doesn't say that man *is* God's image but that he is created *in* God's image. He is in the image of God; he is not God's image, but he is in the image of God. These words are usually translated as “in” (man is created “in” God's image) and “according to” God's likeness. That would be the normal translations of these prepositions. But the first one of these – *ba* – can be taken in the sense of identity which we will symbolize with the equals sign. Not that man is created *in* God's image but that man is created *as* God's image. They are identical to each other. Man is God's image; not *in* it but he *is* it. Now, *ke*

²⁰ 10:01

is not the same. This cannot be translated to mean “as” but in Genesis 5:1 the earlier word *ba* is used with the word “likeness” to indicate that someone is in or as God’s likeness. So even though *ke* doesn’t mean “as” and doesn’t indicate identity, the word “likeness” could also be used with *ba* which could be interpreted to mean, therefore, identity – that we are God’s likeness, we are God’s image. Those who defend this view would then usually interpret being God’s image or likeness to mean that we are God’s co-regents on this planet. We are his representatives. He has placed us on this planet to be the lord over it and its creatures so that we are serving as God’s co-regents on this planet.²¹ There is not some ontological component of our being or nature that is like God’s – it is simply that we function on this planet as his co-regents and that is what it means to be “as” his image and likeness.

This involves, as I say, reinterpreting these prepositions from their normal meanings which is “in” and “according to.” I think, ultimately, it is based upon a false dichotomy. It assumes that a functional role requires no ontological component or commonality of man with God. That strikes me as obviously false. In order to function as God’s co-regent on this planet, man has to have certain faculties like rationality, self-consciousness, freedom of the will, and so forth. So in fact we shouldn’t be playing off functional versus ontological understandings of God’s image. The reason that we can function as God’s image is because we are created in God’s image. That is to say, we do have some ontological similarity to God which enables us to serve as his representative and co-regent.

Man as Personal Being

What would this be? Well, it seems to me that this would imply or necessitate that man is a personal being. In that respect, he is like unto God and different from everything else in creation. This recurs back to our discussion of the attributes of God. Remember we saw that God is the personal, infinite being. Insofar as man is finite, there is a chasm that separates him from God. Man is like the rest of creation in his finitude. So how is man like God? Well, he is like God in that he, too, is personal. Then the chasm that separates man and God from the rest of creation is that they are not persons.

God (infinite)	God (personal)
CHASM	Man
Man	CHASM
Animals Plants Rocks	Animals Plants Rocks

On this view, the reason that man can serve as God’s co-regent and representative on this

²¹ 15:07

planet and govern the earth is because he is in the image of God. That is to say, he is a person in the same way that God is personal and thus has the attributes of personhood. Things like self-consciousness, rationality, and freedom of the will. This would combine both an ontological similarity between man and God with a functional understanding of man's role on this planet.²²

²² Total Running Time: 18:45 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 3

Nature of Man

Last time we were talking about the issue of the image of God in man and what this means. I suggested that those who see some sort of a fundamental dichotomy between an ontological understanding of the image of God and a functional understanding of the image of God are guilty of making a false dichotomy. In fact, the reason that man can function as the image of God is precisely because of certain properties which he has ontologically. So it is the ontology that is the basis for the function.

We saw that God is the personal, infinite God. That is to say, on the one hand God is personal (tri-personal), but on the other hand God is infinite – omnipresent, eternal, omnipotent, perfectly good, and so forth. Insofar as God is personal, man is like God and unlike the rest of the created order (animals, plants, and inorganic material). But insofar as God is infinite, man stands on the side of the chasm which belongs to creatures. Man is himself a finite created thing and in that respect is like animals, plants, and inorganic substances.

To say that man is in the image of God ontologically, I think, is to say that man is personal. He is a person in the same way that God is a person and he has the essential attributes of personhood. Though he is not infinite, he has these to a finite degree. Therefore, this enables him to function in certain ways – in relation to God as God's co-regent on this planet in stewarding the planet and its resources. So I would understand the image of God in man to involve both ontology and function and the function flows out of the ontology.

In relationship to God, of course, man is separated from God in virtue of his sin. But that is not destructive of the image of God in man. Man is still a personal being, still in the image of God, even though his relationship with God is ruptured because of the fall into sin. So, in his state of original righteousness – or, perhaps better stated, in his original state of innocence – there is an open and free flowing relationship between God and man unobstructed by sin. But then in man's fallen state as a sinner the relationship between God and man is now severed. There is an obstacle, namely man's guilt and sinfulness, that prevents him from being related to God in the way that he was created to. He now finds himself alienated from God and estranged from God in this fallen state. But then finally in the state of grace man finds his relationship with God restored through Jesus Christ. Now, in the state of grace, man is able to experience the relationship with God that he was created to have albeit a relationship of a flawed and fallen creature but forgiven and redeemed and regenerated in Christ. So I see this as something that is not related to the image of God and man. Fallen man, like man in the original state of righteousness, is in God's image but this has to do with the relationship with God that man was created to have that is ruptured in his fall and then restored in Christ.²³

Finally, when the New Testament speaks of being conformed to the image of Christ, this

²³ 5:16

is yet a third category which has to do with our sanctification. Insofar as we are in Christ and are being sanctified by the indwelling Holy Spirit and bearing the fruit of the spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and so forth – we become like Christ and so bear his character or his image in ourselves.

This is how I would understand the image of God that man is created to be.

DISCUSSION

Question: Just for clarification (because earlier we were talking about persons) – to separate man from, let's say, other animals, would you take that as Aristotelian because we are able to rationalize or reason? Is that what differentiates them from having personality?

Answer: I would see rationality as essential to personhood. I think this would involve things like self-consciousness and freedom of the will as well. So self-consciousness, rationality, freedom of the will would seem to be necessary and sufficient conditions for personhood.

Question: Do you believe that on, let's say, something like an evolutionary model that personhood emerged over time or would you try to make it more of a distinct act like one person was picked out and – bang! – they have freedom of the will now?

Answer: Obviously, there can be higher and lower animals in terms of their intelligence, right? Porpoises and chimpanzees exhibit higher degrees of intelligence than turtles and lizards and other reptiles for example. So clearly there can be a sort of grade in terms of increasing intelligence. But it would seem to me that there isn't any sort of half-person. Either you are a person or you are not a person and there isn't any sort of in-between. So even if, in the evolutionary process, you have beings of greater and greater intelligence emerging, at some point it would seem to me there needs to be imbued in some creature a soul which has the sufficient cognitive faculties for full rationality, freedom of the will, and self-consciousness. Absent that, you don't have a real person.

Question: Are you going to get to communicable and non-communicable attributes of God?

Answer: No, because that was more when we talked about the attributes of God. When we did that other chart of personal and infinite, that is originally from that early section of the class on the attributes of God. I explained the difference between the communicable and incommunicable attributes of God and said that I really didn't find that to be the most helpful rubric for classifying God's attributes, especially since I don't think that God has certain attributes like simplicity or immutability or timelessness. So the number of incommunicable attributes gets winnowed down to very, very few. It would be things like aseity and necessity perhaps. I found it more useful to distinguish between the attributes God has in virtue of being personal and those in virtue of which he is not a person. I am not going to say anything more about that now unless you had a specific attribute in mind.

Followup: Not necessarily. It seems like we talked about that before but never really why

certain attributes are communicable whereas others are not.²⁴

Answer: Right. Well, I think that is part of the problem! What is the rationale for this? For example, take eternity. Usually, this is thought to be an incommunicable attribute of God because God is timeless whereas everything else is in time. But, that is not clear to me. In the first place, it is not clear that God is timeless as we saw when we looked at Scripture. Very often Scripture speaks of God as being everlasting throughout all time. As the Psalmist says, “Before thou hast created the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”²⁵ And it thinks of God as an everlasting duration rather than outside of time. And there could be creatures that are timeless. Think of abstract objects, for example, like numbers. These would seem to be prime candidates for things that exist timelessly. So this attribute isn’t really incommunicable, it seems to me. It could be communicable and it is not clear that God has it. I just found that that attempt to say that God’s attributes can be conveniently divided between those that can be communicated to creatures or shared by creatures and those that creatures cannot share isn’t really that helpful or discriminating. As I say, it seems to me that in terms of attributes that creatures cannot share because they are creatures, about the only ones I could think of would be something like divine aseity – being self-existent. Because everything else is created, so it can’t be self-existent. Maybe necessity because everything is created at some point in time and there are no co-eternal things with God then God’s necessity would maybe be incommunicable to things. But beyond that, it doesn’t seem that there are a whole lot of incommunicable attributes. The difference, for example, between God’s omnipotence and our potency is just one of degree. We both have power – God has power, we have power – but he has infinite power and we have finite power. So there is no difference in the attribute *per se*, it is just the quantity. Similarly for omniscience – God knows certain things to be true and we know certain things to be true but he knows infinitely more than we know. So that is a communicable attribute even though God is omniscient and we are not. I guess I just don’t find that to be all that helpful.

Question: What evidence do we have that God’s attributes are communicable to us? Namely, our understanding of the universe through cosmology and also our understanding of evolution and biology are natural ways of seeing the world. What evidence is there that we would know that God is communicating his attributes or interjecting himself in the world as opposed to just setting it at a start?

Answer: To say that the attributes are communicable doesn’t mean that we have a divine attribute. It just means that, for example, as God is personal, we, too, are persons. And how do you know you are a person? Well, you know it through self-acquaintance. God is powerful. We are powerful. How do you know you are powerful? Well, because you have causal ability to influence things. How do you know that you share the property of knowing things? Well, because you do know them! There are things that you undeniably know to be true. It seems to me that it is obvious that there are lots of attributes that God has that we also share and I’ve listed some of these.

Followup: The question is the other way around. We know those about ourselves because we are ourselves. But what evidence do we have that we would know them about God?

²⁴ 10:05

²⁵ cf. Psalm 90:2

Answer: That would require you to go back to the lectures on the existence and nature of God. There I said there are two sources for our knowledge of God. One would be divine revelation – he reveals himself to us in this way. And the second would be *perfect being theology* – God is by nature the greatest conceivable being.²⁶ If there were anything that could be conceived of that were greater than God then that would be God. There are certain properties that a greatest conceivable being has to have in virtue of being the greatest being conceivable. So the marriage of perfect being theology with divine revelation will enable us to flesh out a doctrine of God that will teach us a considerable degree about his properties and attributes.

Nature of Man

Biblical Data

Old Testament

Let's go on to the next subpoint which is the nature of man. First we want to look at the biblical data pertinent to man's nature.

The Old Testament includes a number of anthropological terms referring to man's nature. For example, *nephesh* is the Hebrew word for "soul." Another anthropological term would be *ruach* or "spirit." *Besar* is "flesh," designating the physical body. However, these anthropological terms in the Old Testament do not draw clear distinctions between different aspects of man. Indeed, sometimes the word *nephesh* or "soul" is actually used to refer to dead corpses. It is used for the physical body that has perished – of a corpse. For examples of this, look at Leviticus 21:11. It gives the instructions for the priest and says "he shall not go in to any dead body, nor defile himself" and the word for "dead body" there is not *besar* but it is *nephesh* or "soul." Similarly, Numbers 6:6, "All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body." So *nephesh*, though the word for "soul," can actually be used to refer to the physical body. In English, this same usage has been adopted. For example, we've all heard the nursery rhyme about Old King Cole who was a merry old soul. Nobody thought that Old King Cole was a disembodied, unextended, immaterial substance! So when we say that Old King Cole was a merry old soul, we are not necessarily referring to that immaterial part of human being.

New Testament

In the New Testament, we confront in Paul's letters a number of anthropological terms that are significant in the nature of man. First among these would be the word *soma* which means "body."

Unfortunately, under the influence of materialism and existentialism, mid-20th century theologians came to reject the distinction between the soul and the body. It was claimed by theologians like the German New Testament theologian Rudolf Bultmann (an extremely influential mid-20th century German theologian) that *soma* actually refers, not to the physical body, but to the self – the "I," the whole person in abstraction from the

²⁶ 15:04

body. Under the influence of existentialist philosophy, Bultmann took *soma* to mean “I” or the person, the individual, but not the body.

This is extremely important because if that is correct then Paul’s affirmation of the resurrection of the body doesn’t necessarily imply the resurrection of this physical substance. Rather, it would simply mean the self lives on – the resurrection of the “I.”²⁷ To say, “I will be raised bodily from the dead” would simply mean “I will continue to exist” so someone like Bultmann could affirm the bodily resurrection of Jesus while believing that the tomb contained the corpse of Jesus which rotted away and that no one will be raised physically from the dead. I think you can see how important it is that we understand what the proper reference of *soma* is. Is it the body or is it simply the whole person in abstraction from the body?

Robert Gundry, a very fine New Testament scholar, has subjected Bultmann’s exegesis to a withering criticism in his book *Soma in Biblical Theology*.²⁸ What Gundry argues is that *soma* is never used in the New Testament to denote the whole person in isolation from his physical body. Rather, it is used much more to denote the physical body itself or the man with special emphasis upon his physical body. Let’s look at how Paul uses the word *soma* in this way.

First, critics like Bultmann will often allege that because Paul uses the word *soma* and personal pronouns like “we” or “I” or “you” interchangeably that proves that *soma* actually refers to the person. If I were to say to you something like this: “You should present your body as a living sacrifice to God” I might also say “You should present yourself as a living sacrifice to God” and this would show that the word “body” really just referred to yourself – to you, the person – not to your physical body. Because the personal pronouns can be used interchangeably with the word *soma*, *soma* simply refers to the person. But Gundry points out that the presupposition of this argument is that the pronoun, when used for *soma*, expands the meaning of the word *soma* rather than restricts the meaning of the pronoun. This is, I think, unjustified. The word *soma* rather than being expanded by the pronoun can actually serve to restrict the reference of the pronoun. Gundry gives the following example.²⁹ Suppose you say “She slapped his face.” Well, you might also say “She slapped him.” Now, obviously, the fact that you can use the pronoun instead of his face doesn’t mean that a person’s face refers to the whole person in abstraction from the body. Rather, the expression “his face” limits the meaning of the pronoun to that part of him that she slapped. So “she slapped his face” restricts the meaning of “She slapped him” so as to specify the physical face. When you look at all of the places where Paul uses *soma* interchangeably with personal pronouns, you find that they are exactly like this. In every case, the emphasis is on that physical aspect of human being.

Let’s look at some examples. Romans 6:12-14 and 16a, Paul says,

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal *bodies*, to make you obey their passions.
Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield

²⁷ 20:02

²⁸ Robert H. Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology: With Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

²⁹ cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. . . . Do you not know that if you yield *yourselves* to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey . . .

So this is a passage where you have *soma* used interchangeably with these personal pronouns.³⁰ But I think it is obvious from the context that the emphasis is on the physical body because Paul talks about your mortal bodies, he talks about obeying the passions that are in the body, and he uses the word “members” to designate the members of the physical body – don’t yield them to sin as instruments of wickedness. So all of this emphasis will be on bringing the physical body into submission to Christ. The passage in no way proves that *soma* can refer to an individual in abstraction from his body. Rather, here the emphasis is physical and on bringing the body into submission to Christ – to God.

Similarly, take a look at 2 Corinthians 4:10-12 where Paul says,

always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, [notice there the personal pronoun – “we” are being given up to death for Jesus’ sake] so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Again, I think, clearly the emphasis in the context is on the physical body. Notice he is talking here about physical persecution that they endure. He goes on to talk about the difference between the outer man and the inner man. He talks about having this treasure in earthen vessels. Clearly, the emphasis in the passage is on the physical body and not the person in abstraction from his body.

Ephesians 5:28-29, Paul says in giving charge to husbands,

Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church because we are members of his body.

Again, I think that the physical orientation of the passage is very evident from the use of the word “flesh” as a synonym for body – no man ever hates his own flesh but takes care of it. That is a synonym for cherishing one’s body and therefore one’s wife. Again, the interchange of pronouns with *soma* by no means implies that *soma* refers to the person in abstraction from his body. Rather, in every case where these pronouns are used in interchange with the body, the emphasis is on the physical life and body of the person involved.

I find Gundry’s case compelling. It seems to me when you read those passages the emphasis is clearly on the physical, even the sexual, aspects of the human person and therefore these do not in any way go to sustain Bultmann’s claim that the *soma* refers to the self or the “I.”

What we will do next time is look at Paul’s other uses of the word *soma* in various

³⁰ 25:14

contexts in his letters, and I think that we will see that in those other usages as well the emphasis is equally physical.³¹

³¹ Total Running Time: 29:55 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 4

Paul's Anthropological Terms

In our lectures, we have been talking about Paul's anthropological terms. The principal one that we have been looking at so far is his term *soma* which means literally "body." But we saw last time that some mid-20th century theologians, under the influence of materialism and existentialism, treat the word *soma* to mean not the physical body but the self – the individual, or "I" – and this will enable, as I said, the existentialist theologian to say that he believes in the bodily – the somatic – resurrection of Jesus and ourselves while in fact denying that the corpse of Jesus ever was reanimated. It is just that Jesus' self or person lives on and our self or person might live on but unconnected with the physical body.

What I did not mention is that, for the materialist, it has quite a different implication than for the existentialist. For the materialist, because he equates the body with the self, that means that he will actually argue in favor of the resurrection because he will think that apart from the resurrection of the body the self cannot survive death. Therefore, what he is led to deny is not the resurrection but the intermediate state between death and resurrection. For the materialist, when we die we are extinguished – we cease to exist. Then, at the end of the world, when God raises the dead he reconstitutes the physical body and so the self comes back into existence again. But it means that those who have, so to speak, fallen asleep in Christ have perished as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15. There is no intermediate state for the materialist.

I think you can see that there are different and serious theological implications from the position that would equate the *soma* not with the body but with the self or the self with the body. Last time we saw that the principal argument that is used for this is a weak one. Paul will use the word "body" or *soma* interchangeably with personal pronouns like "you" or "we." But that doesn't mean that these have the same meaning any more than when someone says "She slapped his face" or "She slapped him" that "face" means the same thing as "him" or that they are somehow synonymous terms. Rather, the term "body" can serve to restrict the meaning of the pronoun to emphasize the physical aspect of it. We looked at those passages in Paul's letters where he uses interchangeably personal pronouns and the word "body" and in every case you will remember we saw that in fact the emphasis was upon the physical body.

Paul's uses of the word *soma* elsewhere are equally physical. Let's look at some of these.

In 1 Corinthians 7:4 Paul writes, "For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does." Clearly, the word "body" is being used here in reference to the physical body because the emphasis is on sexual relations and how these are to be conducted in marriage. Similarly, in Romans 1:24 we have a similar emphasis upon sexuality and hence physicality. Paul says, "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves" and he describes the sexual practices that these degenerate persons engaged in.

The same is true in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.³² Paul writes,

“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything. “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two shall become one flesh.” But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Here the emphasis upon sexual purity and the union of two persons in sexual intercourse makes it quite clear that he is talking about the physical body when he uses the word *soma*.

Also, in Romans 12:1-2 Paul says,

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Here Paul envisions the presentation to God of our physical bodies as living sacrifices and then the transformation of our minds. So both the physical life and the mental life are to be consecrated to God. This is a passage that is dualistic in nature – mind and body.

1 Corinthians 9:27 Paul says, “I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” Here he is thinking of the physical aspect of his life and keeping that physical aspect in check and under discipline. The context with the athletic metaphors of boxing and running, I think, also serve to show that the physical part of the human life is what Paul has in mind here.

1 Corinthians 13:3 Paul says, “If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.” Here he seems to contemplate martyrdom or giving his physical body up to be destroyed. Certainly the self or the “I” is not something that can be burned up so Paul is talking here about his physical body again.

Philippians 1:20, “as it is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.” Here, again, is the contemplation of martyrdom – whether he will live or die, whether the body will be physically killed or whether he will live on seems to be the thing that Paul is speaking of. He is talking about remaining in this life versus dying. So in verse 1:24 he says, “But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on

³² 4:51

your account.” There he uses the word “flesh” in a morally neutral sense to indicate the physical presence in this world.³³

Finally, in Romans 8:11 Paul says, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.” The use of the adjective “mortal” shows that he is speaking here of our physical bodies. Just as Christ was raised from the dead, so God will give life to our mortal bodies when we are raised from the dead.

So I think it is evident that when you look at how Paul uses the term *soma* that he is talking about the physical body. Let me quote from Gundry’s conclusion. Much of this study is based upon Robert Gundry’s fine book *Soma in Biblical Theology*. Gundry summarizes by saying,

The *soma* denotes the physical body, roughly synonymous with ‘flesh’ in the neutral sense. It forms that part of man in and through which he lives and acts in the world. It becomes the base of operations for sin in the unbeliever, for the Holy Spirit in the believer. Barring prior occurrence of the Parousia, the *soma* will die. That is the lingering effect of sin even in the believer. But it will also be resurrected. That is its ultimate end, a major proof of its worth and necessity to wholeness of human being, and the reason for its sanctification now.³⁴

I think the importance of Gundry’s conclusion cannot be overemphasized. For far too long, 20th century theology has been told that when Paul uses the word *soma* he is not referring to the body but is referring to the self, the ego, the “I” of a human person. But Gundry’s study, like a dash of cold water in the face, brings us back to the authentic consciousness of a 1st century Jewish person. The notion of the *soma* as the “I” or the self is a perversion of its biblical meaning into virtually its opposite – namely, a symbol for the immaterial part of man. Robert Jewett, who is a New Testament theologian, says “Bultmann has turned *soma* into its virtual opposite: a symbol for that structure of individual existence which is essentially non-physical.”³⁵ Gundry concludes that existentialist treatments of *soma* like Bultmann’s have actually been a positive impediment to a correct exegesis of Pauline thought, particularly 1 Corinthians 15, on the resurrection and has sacrificed an accurate understanding of New Testament theology for a philosophical fashion that is already passé.³⁶

DISCUSSION

Question: I would think the Old Testament verse about “in an honorable man’s house there are many vessels and if you take out the things of those vessels that were not good” is comparing the same thing as *soma* – a body.

Answer: Many times in Scripture I can think of other references. The metaphor for the

³³ 9:53

³⁴ Robert H. Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology: With Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 50.

³⁵ Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (AGAJY 10; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), p. 211.

³⁶ Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology*, p. 167.

body is that of a vessel. Like Paul says, we have this treasure in earthen vessels³⁷ or Peter says to bestow honor on your wife as the weaker vessel³⁸. He is thinking there of her physical body – she is physically weaker than you are, not that she is weak morally or intellectually or in some other respect. He is referring to the body. So yes that would be a biblical metaphor for the body.

I've already briefly said something about the word *sarx* which is the word Paul uses for the "flesh." *Sarx* means "flesh." Theologians who are familiar with the word *sarx* know that in the New Testament "the flesh" is often used as a term metaphorically for the evil proclivity which is in human beings.³⁹ It is not referring to the physical stuff of our body. The Scripture does not teach that our bodies are evil because they are material.⁴⁰ But the flesh will often be used in the Scriptures to represent fallen human nature. So this touches a very sensitive nerve within theology because in Germany, at least, where I studied, the Creed affirms "I believe in the resurrection of the fleisch (the flesh)." In English, we say "I believe in the resurrection of the body" but in German it affirms "I believe in the resurrection of the flesh" or the "fleisch" and theologians are rightly nervous about any sort of affirmation that the flesh in the sense of this evil fallen principle within human nature will be the object of the resurrection. But because of that they are prone to overlook the fact that Paul often uses the word *sarx* in a morally neutral sense to just mean basically organic stuff – the material out of which a living thing is made – the physical flesh or the body; essentially meat, if you will. In this morally neutral sense, to affirm the resurrection of the flesh is unobjectionable; it just means the resurrection of the physical body. Look at 1 Corinthians 15:35-41 for Paul's disquisition upon the nature of the resurrection. Paul, imagining some Corinthian opponent of his doctrine, says,

But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

Here Paul uses some analogies to explain the notion of the resurrection of the body. The first analogy is that it is like a seed. The body is planted in the ground as it is buried and then, just as a plant that is quite different will come from this seed, so the resurrection body that comes from the earthly body that is sown is vastly different from a supernatural body endowed with powers and abilities that this earthly body doesn't have. His third analogy is from celestial and terrestrial bodies. The stars and the sun and the moon all

³⁷ cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7

³⁸ cf. 1 Peter 3:7, KJV

³⁹ 15:13

⁴⁰ Such a teaching was espoused by the early Gnostics and is considered heretical by orthodox Christianity.

have a different luminosity, which is what the word glory refers to here. Just as these different bodies have different luminosities so the resurrection body will differ from the earthly body in being more honorable and more glorious than the body that is sown.

But the second analogy is the one that we want to focus on here and that is from the different kinds of flesh. Paul is clearly using the word here in a morally neutral sense – biological flesh, if you will. He says there is one kind of flesh in men, there is another one in animals, another one in birds, and another one in fish. So here he is using the word flesh in a very morally neutral sense to basically mean “meat” or the organic stuff of which a living thing is made. Jewett, in his commentary on this passage, draws attention to the “striking departure from the technical ‘flesh’ category and an appropriation of traditional Judaic use of *sarx* as interchangeable with *soma*.”⁴¹ So in this passage, Paul is not using the word *sarx* in this theological sense of fallen human nature.⁴² Rather, it is basically used as a synonym for body – the sort of bodies that are in the biological realm. In this physical sense, the idea of the resurrection of the flesh is quite unobjectionable. The resurrection body will be a physical body though vastly different from this corruptible, mortal, dishonorable, and weak body that we presently possess, but a body nevertheless.

DISCUSSION

Question: (off mic) Is the rest of the New Testament consistent with this?

Answer: Paul is the principal author that we need to look at with regard to these terms. I can’t think of any place else in the New Testament where the words “flesh” and “body” would be used in any different sense than what we have described here. But certainly Paul’s letters are where you have the real theological reflection on these words that needs to be understood.

The third term that we want to draw attention to is the term *psuche* which means “soul.” We will talk about Paul’s use of this anthropological term next time.⁴³

⁴¹ Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms*, p. 454.

⁴² 20:15

⁴³ Total Running Time: 21:43 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 5

Dualism-Interactionism

In our lesson, we have been looking at the biblical doctrine of man and specifically at Paul's anthropological terms. We looked at the word *soma* and saw that that refers to the "body" or the physical side of human being. We looked at the word *sarx* which, although it has a theological use, can also be used in a theologically neutral sense to mean "flesh" – the organic stuff out of which animal bodies are made. Then, finally, the word *psuche* which is the Greek word for "soul." We get our word psychic from this Greek term *psuche*.

Paul, in his letters of the New Testament, doesn't teach a consistent dualism of *soma* (body) and *psuche* – body-soul dualism. He will often use other words as well for that immaterial part of man like the Greek word *pneuma* – which is the word for "spirit." We get our word "pneumatic" as in a pneumatic drill from this Greek word *pneuma*. So Paul doesn't always speak of soul and body. Sometimes he will use the word *pneuma* or spirit to indicate the immaterial part of man. Look, for example, at 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here Paul uses all three of these terms – the *soma*, the *psuche*, and the *pneuma* (the spirit).

But the Bible does teach a duality of this immaterial part of man in addition to the physical part of man. Look at 2 Corinthians 4:16 into chapter 5:10, he says,

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, so that by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.

Here Paul speaks of our outer nature, the body; he uses the metaphor of a tent which

connotes frailty and a transitoriness – a tent is not a permanent dwelling, it is going to be struck down.⁴⁴ This represents our earthly body. He speaks then of the resurrection body that we shall receive as a house not made with hands. The contrast between the transitory frail tent and this substantial building from God shows the immortality and the incorruptibility of the resurrection body in contrast to this earthly body in which we live. In between our death and our eventual resurrection comes this intermediate state where we are without a body. Paul talks about being away from the body and at home with the Lord. He speaks of this state as a state of nakedness. It is the soul existing without its body. Paul says that it is not that we want to be in that kind of a state; he says what we'd really prefer would be to not be unclothed (that is to say, have the body stripped away from the soul and left naked) we would rather be further clothed. The verb here has the idea of pulling on top clothing, like pulling on a sweater over your shirt. Paul is saying we'd rather live until the return of Christ so that we receive our resurrection bodies immediately without having to go through this intermediate state of nakedness existing as a disembodied soul. But, whether we do go to be with the Lord by dying and so going into that intermediate state or not, he says we are of good cheer because to be away from the body is to be present with the Lord and that is better.

So here I think you can see the importance of this body-soul dualism in Christian theology. As I said a couple of weeks ago, the materialist who denies that there is any soul distinct from the body has to think that when a person dies that person is extinguished. He literally ceases to exist and there is no intermediate state of the dead as the souls await the resurrection because there are no such things as souls. And it seems to me that that is very difficult to reconcile with the teaching of a passage like this which I think clearly contemplates the existence of the soul in a disembodied condition.

So whether we refer to the immaterial part of man as soul or spirit is of secondary importance. What is important is that we are not in the biblical view, in Paul's view, simply material entities. Rather, we have an immaterial component called the soul or spirit which will continue to exist after the death of the physical body until its reunion with the resurrection body at the return of Christ.

DISCUSSION

Question: Do you think it is possible to reconcile a view like non-reductive physicalism with the existence of a soul after the body? Could God somehow preserve that in the absence of the material body and then reinstate it later?

Answer: OK, the question was could we have a view of the relation between soul and body which would be a non-reductive physicalism? That is to say, a view which would not say that the mind *is* the brain or *is* the body but it is somehow contingent upon or emerges from the brain. It seems to me that such a view can't make sense of a passage like the one I just read from 2 Corinthians which suggests that the soul can continue to exist in the absence of the physical body and brain. So the mind is not just a supervenient reality; that is to say, a reality that depends upon its material base for its existence. If you say, well, no my non-reductive physicalism doesn't say that this base is essential to the

⁴⁴ 5:08

existence of the soul then I guess I don't understand the difference between that and dualism. That just seems to me to say that the soul is something distinct from the body and therefore can exist without it.⁴⁵

Attempts to Systematize Data

Trichotomous Nature

Let me proceed then to talk about different attempts to systematize this. One attempt is to interpret human persons as trichotomous in nature. That is to say that human beings have three parts that make them up: the body, first of all, and then secondly the soul, and then the spirit. So there are really three parts to the human person, a trichotomy. This is the view of human beings that was adopted by the early Greek church fathers and represents the heritage of Platonism. On Platonic doctrine the soul is that which animates the body and makes the body alive and animals have souls as well as human beings. But the spirit is a higher faculty than that and is distinct from the soul. The Greek church fathers adopted such a trichotomous view.

Dichotomous Nature

By contrast, the dichotomous view holds to dualism of the body and soul or spirit – whatever you want to call it, it is that immaterial aspect of man so that we are made up of two parts – the material aspect and the immaterial aspect. This is the view that was adopted by the Latin Western theologians. Those church fathers that lived in the Latin speaking realms of the Roman Empire tended to be dichotomous where as those who were in the Eastern Greek speaking part of the empire were trichotomous.

Unitary Nature

Now, today, many theologians would want to have a sort of unitary view or what we might call anthropological monism. That is to say, human beings are just made up of one thing – a unitary nature – and there is no dualism whatsoever in human beings. We are just physical bodies – you are your body. You are identical to your body and there is no immaterial aspect to your being. These thinkers will often ridicule dualists as believing in a “ghost in the machine” to quote the British philosopher Gilbert Ryle.⁴⁶ Our bodies are like a machine supposedly inhabited by this ghost – the soul – which moves it about and animates it and Ryle rejected that kind of dualistic view as absurd. Similarly, in theology, after the First World War, many theologians tried to play off the doctrine of the resurrection against dualistic views of human nature. They would often insist that the Bible does not teach the immortality of the soul but it teaches rather the resurrection of the body. And to believe in the immortality of the soul is to reject the Jewish view of immortality which is resurrection of the body – the physical body – in favor of a Greek view of immortality in which the body is sloughed off, the body is regarded as evil, the

⁴⁵ 10:17

⁴⁶ “Such in outline is the official theory [dualism]. I shall often speak of it, with deliberate abusiveness, as ‘the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine.’ I hope to prove that it is entirely false, and false not in detail but in principle.” Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 5.

material is regarded as less worthy and the soul then would be freed from the prison house of the body and will fly away to heavenly realms. These theologians said that this Greek view of the soul and body which depreciates the body in favor of the soul is fundamentally un-Jewish. The Jewish view is the resurrection of the physical body and therefore we should reject dualistic views in favor of some kind of anthropological monism that we just are our bodies and that these will be raised from the dead.

I mentioned before the influence of existentialism upon theology in this regard.⁴⁷ German theologians like Rudolf Bultmann who had absorbed the influence of German existentialism identified the body with the “I” or the “self” of a person and said, therefore, on that view the resurrection of the body really doesn’t even entail the resurrection of the physical body. So the materialists and the existentialists are kind of taking different views of exactly what human beings are.

It seems to me that this is an illegitimate attempt to play off the doctrine of the resurrection against a dualistic view of human nature. In fact, as we will see in a few moments, the typical Jewish view affirmed both of these – namely, both the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul. But I am getting ahead of myself.

Evaluation

Dualism-Interactionism

We’ve got then three alternatives to contrast – trichotomous, dichotomous, and this unitary or monistic view of human beings. Which of these represents the most biblical view? I would argue that a form of *dualism-interactionism* best represents the biblical view. By that I mean that the human being is made up of two components (a body and a soul or spirit) and that these interact with each other in order for that human being to function as a human person – in order to think in this life. If you look in the Old Testament for example, although you do not have clear distinctions drawn there between the soul and the body as we saw, nevertheless the Hebrew idea of Sheol seems to be the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek idea of a disembodied soul. The people who go down to Sheol are regarded as wraiths, as having a kind of shadowy existence in the underworld in these nether realms of the dead. It is not that they are just extinguished, but they seem to be the sort of equivalent of what the Greeks would regard as a disembodied soul – not really fully human in a proper way but nevertheless still existing.

During the intertestamental period, dualism became the standard Jewish belief. If I could have my Jewish pseudepigrapha, I would like to read a couple of passages from some of this very interesting intertestamental literature on this topic. For example, in the book of 2 Baruch 30:1-5 we read as follows:

And it will happen after these things when the time of the appearance of the Anointed One has been fulfilled and He returns with glory, that then all who sleep in hope of Him will rise. And it will happen at that time that those treasures will be opened in which the number of the souls of the righteous were kept, and they will go out and the multitudes of the souls will appear together, in One assemblage, of one mind. And the first ones will enjoy themselves and the last

⁴⁷ 14:55

ones will not be sad. For they know that the time has come of which it is said that it is the end of times. But the souls of the wicked will the more waste away when they shall see all these things. For they know that their torment has come and that their perditions have arrived.

In 2 Baruch, the author envisions the souls of the righteous dead as kept by God in treasuries – some sort of treasure box – and when the day of the resurrection comes, the bodies will be raised then the souls of these righteous dead will be taken from these treasuries and united with their bodies and they will go into the immortal state.⁴⁸

Similarly, in the book of 4 Ezra 7:26-44,

For behold, the time will come, when the signs which I have foretold to you will come to pass, that the city which now is not seen shall appear, and the land which now is hidden shall be disclosed. And every one who has been delivered from the evils that I have foretold shall see my wonders. For my son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years. And after these years my son the Messiah shall die, and all who draw human breath. And the world shall be turned back to primeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings; so that no one shall be left. And after seven days the world, which is not yet awake, shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish. And the earth shall give up those who are asleep in it, . . . and the chambers shall give up the souls which have been committed to them. And the Most High shall be revealed upon the seat of judgment, and compassion shall pass away, and patience shall be withdrawn; but only judgment shall remain, truth shall stand, and faithfulness shall grow strong. And recompense shall follow, and the reward shall be manifested; righteous deeds shall awake, and unrighteous deeds shall not sleep. Then the pit of torment shall appear, and opposite it shall be the place of rest; and the furnace of hell shall be disclosed, and opposite it the paradise of delight. . . . Then the Most High will say to the nations that have been raised from the dead, ‘Look now, and understand whom you have denied, whom you have not served, whose commandments you have despised! . . . Look on this side and on that; here are delight and rest, and there are fire and torments!’ Thus he will speak to them on the day of judgment – . . . a day that has no sun or moon or stars, . . . or cloud or thunder or lightning or wind or water or air, or darkness or evening or morning, . . . or summer or spring or heat or winter or frost or cold or hail or rain or dew, . . . or noon or night, or dawn or shining or brightness or light, but only the splendor of the glory of the Most High, by which all shall see what has been determined for them. . . . For it will last for about a week of years. . . . This is my judgment and its prescribed order; and to you alone have I shown these things.”

So here the prophet is given a vision of the resurrection of the dead and in it again we find the same thing that we saw in Baruch: the earth gives up those who are sleeping in it – the bodies of the dead are raised – and then these chambers in which the souls of the dead are preserved are opened, and these souls are reunited with the body. So this is the sort of Jewish view of the resurrection that we have expressed here.

⁴⁸ 20:00

Next time, I will look at a third piece of Jewish intertestamental literature, the book of 1 Enoch, and look at the view of the resurrection there. I think we'll find the same thing in all of these. The standard Jewish view is a dualistic view – the souls of the righteous dead are preserved by God until the resurrection on the judgment day when they are reunited with the bodies and the persons then go into everlasting delight or into everlasting torment.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Total Running Time: 24:13 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 6

Intermediate State Between Death and Resurrection

Last time we began our evaluation of theological anthropology and I suggested that the Bible supports and we ought to affirm *dualism-interactionism*. I suggested it although in the Old Testament you do not have clear distinctions made between soul and body. Nevertheless, the idea is still there in the concept of a shade in Sheol. A shade in Sheol is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek idea of a disembodied soul.

During the intertestamental period dualism became the standard Jewish belief. We looked at a couple of passages from the Jewish pseudepigrapha, those intertestamental books that are not in the canon and were written under false names. We looked at a passage from 2 Baruch 30 and also from 4 Ezra 7 which indicated that when people die their souls are preserved by God in chambers or treasuries where they are kept until the resurrection of the body at the end of the age. Then when God brings about the judgment day the dead will be raised, the souls will be united with their bodies, and they will be judged by God.

Just one more verse from the Jewish pseudepigrapha to indicate this – this is from the book of 1 Enoch 22:1-5. He writes,

Then I went to another place, and he showed me on the west side a great and high mountain of hard rock and inside it four beautiful corners; it had in it a deep, wide, and smooth thing which was rolling over; and it the place was deep, and dark to look at. At that moment, Rufael, one of the holy angels, who was with me, responded to me; and he said to me, “These beautiful corners are here in order that the spirits of the souls . . . of the children of the people should gather here. They prepared these places in order to put them, that is the souls of the people, there until the day of their judgment and the appointed time of the great judgment upon them.” I saw the spirits of the children of the people who were dead, and their voices were reaching unto heaven until this very moment.

So the view of anthropological dualism is abundantly attested in the Jewish intertestamental literature. The standard view came to be that when a person dies his body (or his bones in particular) rest in the ground until the Day of Judgment and his soul goes to be with God where it is kept until the judgment day and then soul and body will be reunited and the person will be judged.

When we come to the New Testament, the language of the New Testament is indisputably dualistic throughout. It is consistently talking about the soul and the body. That this is meant to be literal rather than just figurative or metaphorical language I think is clearest when you consider the intermediate state between death and resurrection. Take a look, for example, at 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. Paul says,

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, so that by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not

that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.

I think you can recognize here that Paul is expounding the typical Jewish belief about the intermediate state in anticipation of the resurrection.⁵⁰ The earthly tent that we live in is this frail, mortal body that is easily struck down. The building from God eternal in the heavens will be the resurrection body which is incorruptible and immortal and powerful. Paul says that we groan while we are in this earthly body; not that we would be unclothed, that is to say, not that the body would be stripped away and we would be in this state of nakedness where he is referring to the state of being a disembodied soul in that intermediate condition waiting for the resurrection of the body. He says it is not that we want to be unclothed – we don't want to go through this state of nakedness – but he says we want to be further clothed. And the word in the Greek here has the idea of pulling on top clothing, like pulling on a sweater over your shirt, so that you are being clothed on top of the clothing you have. What Paul is thinking of here is receiving the resurrection body without having to go through the state of nakedness, of being disembodied. As we will see later, he believed that for those who are still alive at the return of Christ they will be immediately transformed into their resurrection bodies without the need of passing through the state of nakedness first. So he is expressing here his preference to live until the return of Christ. That is what he really wants so that he doesn't have to go through this state of disembodiment which is a less than fully human existence. But he nevertheless sounds this note of cheer – he says, still we are of good courage because we know that to be away from the body is to be at home with the Lord. When you are away from the physical body, even as a disembodied soul, nevertheless you are with the Lord. It brings a condition of closer communion to Christ. So he says whether we are in the body or away we try to please him, but his real desire would be, if he had his way, to live until the return of Christ and not have to go through that intermediate state.

It seems to me that this powerfully suggests that soul-body dualism is not just a metaphor or a figure of speech. It is ontological. There really is a soul which survives the death of the body and will be eventually reunited with the body.

Compare in this regard what Paul has to say in Philippians 1:21-23. Here he is contemplating his own possible execution and martyrdom and he says,

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

⁵⁰ 5:47

So for Paul, even though this death of the body would mean this state of disembodiment which is a less than fully desirable state, nevertheless it brings him closer to Christ and therefore is actually better to die and go to be with Christ.

For the doctrine of the resurrection, look at 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17. Paul says,

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.

What Paul is describing here is the return of Christ bringing with him those who have died – those who have fallen asleep.⁵¹ He brings the souls of the departed dead with him to receive their resurrection bodies. Then Christians who are still alive at that time are immediately transformed into their resurrection bodies. So on Paul's view, the immortality of the soul does not mean that our ultimate state is to go to some ethereal, disembodied heaven. It is not the platonic idea of the escape from the prison house of the body. Neither is it the annihilation of the soul during this intermediate state. Rather, the soul will go into conscious, blissful communion with Christ to await the day of Christ's return and resurrection and its reunion with the resurrection body.

In summary of Paul's view then, when a Christian dies the soul goes to be with Christ until the second coming. When Christ returns the remains of the body, if any, will be transformed to a resurrection body which will be incorruptible, immortal, powerful, and spirit-filled. And the soul will be simultaneously united with that body. Then those who are alive will be similarly transformed to their resurrection bodies. So I think you can see that Paul's view is essentially the traditional Jewish view with the addition of the Christological focus; namely, it is not going to be simply the judgment day but Christ is the agent who will conduct the judgment on that day. It is at the return of Christ that Christ will then be the judge of the living and the dead. Although he changes the Jewish view slightly by adding this Christological element, he basically affirms the same dualistic view that was traditional in Judaism.

In addition to this, let's just look at a couple of other New Testament passages that suggest that we are dealing with an ontological dualism of soul and body. Luke 16:19ff – this is Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Jesus said,

There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me,

⁵¹ 10:42

and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’

Now, it is always dangerous, I grant, to try to draw doctrine out of a parable because a parable is meant to teach a central point and you can’t press the circumstantial details of it for doctrinal precision. But nevertheless it seems clear here that Jesus is assuming this traditional Jewish view – that when a person dies the souls of the evil and the souls of the righteous are separated, that there is a continued conscious existence in that state, and that a person doesn’t simply cease to exist when he is dead and buried.⁵² So I think this would also suggest a dualism of soul and body.

1 Peter 3:18-20, Peter says,

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey.

Here, Peter is talking about the state between Christ’s death and burial and his resurrection on Sunday morning, and he says that even though he was dead in the flesh he was alive in the spirit and he went and preached to the spirits in prison. These would be these evil dead who are in Hades. Not only are they alive in this intermediate state but Christ himself exists in this intermediate state. One again, the assumption, I think, is that this is a real state – this state of the disembodied dead before the resurrection – and therefore is not simply a metaphor.

Next time I want to look at a couple more passages in the New Testament that suggest that we are dealing here with serious ontology with respect to human persons. Then we will turn to the question of the origin of the soul and how we best should understand its interaction with the body.⁵³

⁵² 15:04

⁵³ Total Running Time: 17:04 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 7

Theological Consequences of Denying the Soul

We have been talking about the reality of the soul and last time I suggested that the strongest reason, biblically, to believe in the reality of the soul rather than seeing the body-soul language of the New Testament as merely metaphorical or functional is the passages dealing with the intermediate state of the dead – that is to say, the state of the dead between physical bodily death and the resurrection. The Scripture seems to teach consistently that when you die you are not extinguished, you don't go into soul-sleep, but you are in a conscious either blissful communion with Christ until he returns or else you are separated from him and in a state of anguish until the Judgment Day. We looked at several Scriptures including Paul's 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16, and in 1 Peter 3 the passage concerning Jesus' own activity during the intermediate period between his crucifixion and death and his resurrection when he went and preached to the spirits in prison who formerly had been disobedient.

Look at just a couple more passages to reinforce the point. 2 Peter 2:9 – here Peter says, “The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.” There it indicates that the unrighteous dead are in a state of punishment until the time that they will be raised from the dead and judged.

Finally, Hebrews 12:22-23, the author says,

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Here it is talking, again, about the saints who are with Christ awaiting the final return of Christ, the resurrection, and the Judgment Day. It refers to these glorified saints as “the spirits of just men made perfect.” Here again we would have the notion of a disembodied soul in communion with Christ waiting until the time of the resurrection.

So it seems to me that we have ample biblical reason in the teaching about the intermediate state of the soul for believing that soul-body dualism in the Scripture is to be taken seriously, and that we are composite entities made up of a soul and a body and these are ontologically distinct from each other. In addition to that, I would want to point out that the denial of the reality of the soul is not only unbiblical but I think it has theological consequences that undermine all of Christian theology if you deny the soul.

1. Notice that *God is an unembodied mind*. God just is an unembodied soul in the same way that when we die we will become disembodied souls. God is an unembodied soul – he is an unembodied mind. So if you do not believe that unembodied souls are possible, it is very difficult to see how you can believe in the existence of God since that is what God is. I remember the first time I met Nancy Murphy, who is a professor of theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, at a conference at the University of Notre Dame and she informed me “I'm a materialist.” I was stunned. I said, “But how can you believe in the

existence of God?” and she said, “Oh, well, I make an exception for God.” Well, I’m glad she did, conveniently, but that seems a rather *ad hoc* move, doesn’t it?⁵⁴ If God can be an unembodied soul then why can’t there be created souls in his image?

2. *Free will is impossible without the reality of the soul.* If we are just physical electrochemical machines then there isn’t any room for free agency to come in. Everything that we do is going to be determined by your genetic and physical makeup and then the inputs from your five senses – what the American philosopher Quine called the “irritation of your surfaces” by these various influences impinging upon your nerve endings.⁵⁵ This will determine everything that you think and do. And without free will, we are just machines. We are not moral agents who can do good or evil or who can be held responsible by God or who can respond freely to God’s love. We would just be automata. Free will is essential, I think, to a Christian view of man and yet that is undermined if we are just physical entities. Peter van Inwagen, who is another Christian philosopher who is a materialist, recognizes that he has no understanding of how, on his materialism, we can have libertarian freedom. But van Inwagen says “I know that we do have libertarian freedom and so I simply affirm it even though I don’t know how to reconcile it with my materialism.”⁵⁶ Well, again, I’m glad that he affirms freedom of the will but you would think it would lead him to question his materialism if you can’t make sense of free will on a materialist anthropology. Why not adopt a dualism that would make room for freedom of the will?

3. *The resurrection of the body threatens to reduce to God’s creating a replica of you rather than actually raising you from the dead.* If you are your body and you cease to exist when your body dies and your body, say, is destroyed – burned up in a fire or eaten by animals or something – then when God raises you from the dead on the Judgment Day, why is that you rather than just a duplicate of you? What makes that you rather than a replica of you with all of your memories and other things restored? It’s not really you – you died and ceased to exist when your body died; but then at the resurrection, God produces a duplicate of you. That is certainly not the doctrine of the resurrection. So on the materialistic view, you’ve really got some explaining to do as to why God’s production of this similar person on the resurrection day is really you rather than just a duplicate of you.

4. *The incarnation seems to become impossible on this view.* If human beings are purely physical material entities, how could the second person of the Trinity become a man? The doctrine of the incarnation is not that the second person of the Trinity turned himself into a human being. It is not like the ancient stories of Zeus where he would turn himself into a bull or a swan. If there is an immaterial part of man then we could understand how the incarnation could make sense – if the second person of the Trinity took on a human body,

⁵⁴ 5:04

⁵⁵ “The proper role of experience or surface irritation is as a basis not for truth but for warranted belief.” (W. V. Quine, *Theories and Things*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 39.)

⁵⁶ “I conclude that there is no position one can take concerning free will that does not confront its adherents with mystery. I myself prefer the following mystery: I believe that the outcome of our deliberations about what to do is undetermined and that it is nevertheless—in some way I have no shadow of an understanding of—sometimes up to us what the outcome of these deliberations will be.” Peter van Inwagen, *Metaphysics*, 3rd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009) p. 270.

took on flesh. But how he could become flesh or have a human nature becomes very difficult to understand on a materialistic anthropology.

So it seems to me that not only do we have good biblical grounds for affirming the reality of the soul but also the denial of the soul's reality has very, very serious theological consequences which should make anyone reluctant to embrace a monistic, materialistic anthropology.

DISCUSSION

Question: On your point that the resurrection would be God just creating a clone of us – wouldn't somebody who holds that view basically believe that the entity "you" is really only just the state of your being anyway.⁵⁷ So God resurrecting you would only be that and that would be a satisfactory answer in their perspective wouldn't it?

Answer: Well, I'm not sure that it would be because typically materialists would say that what makes this chair the same chair that was there yesterday is material continuity – that there is material continuity between the chair yesterday and today. But suppose I were to create out of nothing an exactly similar chair – a duplicate of it, not in the future but right now? Just being in the similar state wouldn't make them the same chair, would they? So, say the chair was destroyed and God in the future were to make a chair that looks exactly like it – it's in the same state – why would it be the same chair rather than just a duplicate? I'm not saying that is unanswerable but certainly the theological materialist has got some real explaining to do here, I think.

Question: Of those holding this view – what do they do about the references to Satan, the angels, and the whole realm that is such a paramount part of Christianity? How do they address that?

Answer: That is an interesting question and I have never asked them that. I have always been focused on the reality of the soul but you are right – what about these disembodied spirits like angels and demons? Maybe they would ascribe to them some kind of body.

Followup: Well, they would have to be in another realm of reality – another dimension – because they are clearly bodiless beings as is God and even the Holy Spirit.

Answer: I don't know the answer but that is a very good question.

Question: One of the things that strikes me weird about materialism and Christianity – if they are to be intertwined like that – what about the identification of "you." If you accept Christ at one point and if you are just a brain state or your physical brain is replaced by physical material over the years, how do they identify your salvation or anything like that?

Answer: Well, I would take it that they think that you just are this physical body and that somehow God has redeemed this physical body and has forgiven the sins that this physical body has committed and so in that sense you are reconciled to God and forgiven.

Followup: The problem I see is that it seems like if you are a different person when you

⁵⁷ 10:11

accept Christ like a year later . . .

Answer: Ah! OK, yeah, what you are hitting on is a different problem and that is identity over time. I mentioned the chair being the same chair as the one that was here yesterday because it had material continuity. But what you are suggesting is maybe that is not an adequate theory of identity over time. Maybe there needs to be something more that would ensure identity over time because, after all, the body changes; every seven years almost all the material constituents of our body is reprocessed so that in that sense you are not the same body that you were. This gets into really interesting philosophical questions about endurance and identity over time. You might be suggesting – and I think rightly so – that having a soul which doesn’t get reprocessed over time (the soul doesn’t have parts that get redone) would make it easier to understand personal identity over time. I’ll say something more about that in a moment.

Question: How do the Christian materialists avoid pantheism, unless they see God as distinct or a spirit as distinct from the material realm? But if they are explaining God or even spirits or demons as an extension of the material realm, it almost sounds like that. How do they avoid that?

Answer: This is interesting what you are raising. These folks are Christians so they believe that God is not a material being. Remember Nancy Murphy says, “I make an exception for God.” But there is a certain school of thought called Process Theology or panentheism which thinks of the world as the body of God.⁵⁸ In the same way that I am related as my soul to my body so God is related to the world and so the world is the body of God. Moreover, for many of them, they take that mental pole of God – the soul part – to be really abstract, not to be something real. So for these folks it does seem to reduce God to just being the evolving cosmos. The cosmos just is the body of God evolving over time. If you are not willing to allow there to be a spiritual, immaterial, personal being distinct from the universe, it does seem like you are going to collapse into panentheism or perhaps even pantheism.

Let me at this point say something by way of defense of what I will call dualism-interactionism. That is to say, we human beings are composite entities composed of soul and body and these interact in order for us to function properly in this life. Robert Koons and George Bealer in their book *The Waning of Materialism*⁵⁹ have pointed out that in recent years there has been a waning of materialism among professional philosophers. They are beginning to realize the problems with a materialistic anthropology and to move away from it. Why is that? In his paper “Why Not Physicalism?” Angus Menuge, who is a philosopher of mind, lists several reasons. Let me read you this quote from Menuge before we talk about it. This is what he says in his paper “Why Not Physicalism?” from 2011.⁶⁰ He says,

⁵⁸ 15:01

⁵⁹ Robert C. Koons, George Bealer, *The Waning of Materialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁶⁰ Angus J. L. Menuge, “Why Not Physicalism? The Soul Has Work to Do,” unpublished ms. delivered at the Evangelical Philosophical Society panel for the Society of Biblical Literature, San Francisco, CA, November, 2011.

Reductive and eliminative forms of physicalism

[That is to say, forms of physicalism that say there just is no such thing as the soul; there is just the brain and its states.]

fail to account for our mental lives. But . . . the varieties of non-reductive physicalism also fail to account for mental causation.

Non-reductive physicalism would try to say that the soul or our mental states is not a real thing but it is a sort of property, like a mental property, that supervenes on the brain and on its states. A good analogy of this would be the wetness of water. Water, as you know, is H₂O – hydrogen and oxygen. Neither hydrogen nor oxygen is wet, right? But when you have hydrogen and oxygen combined in this way then the property of wetness supervenes on the hydrogen and the oxygen. So the whole compound has a property that its constituents do not. So the idea here is that all that really exists is the brain and its state but then these mental states sort of supervene on the brain in the way wetness supervenes on H₂O. Any causal properties of water are not due to the supervenient properties; the causal properties of water are due to the properties of oxygen and hydrogen to cause and bring about certain things. So Menuge says,

. . . the varieties of non-reductive physicalism also fail to account for mental causation. If these theories are faithful to physicalism, then supervening or emergent mental properties cannot add anything new that was not going to happen anyway, as a result of their physical base properties. If we want to account for consciousness, mental causation and reasoning, we need some entity over and above the body. This entity must be simple, have thoughts as inseparable parts, persist as a unity over time, and have active power. That sounds like a soul . . .

What we will do next time is unpack a little bit of what Menuge said in this very dense paragraph and see exactly why these non-dualistic views of the soul really can't account for several of the phenomena experience that we have in our mental lives.⁶¹

⁶¹ Total Running Time: 20:25 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 8

Why Not Physicalism?

In our lesson, we looked last time at the importance of the affirmation of the reality of the soul. And we left off with a quotation from the philosopher Angus Menuge in his paper “Why Not Physicalism?” on why a dualistic-interactionistic view of the mind – or the soul – is quite defensible.⁶² I think this quotation would bear reading again. Menuge says,

Reductive and eliminative forms of physicalism fail to account for our mental lives. But . . . the varieties of non-reductive physicalism also fail to account for mental causation. If these theories are faithful to physicalism, then supervening or emergent mental properties cannot add anything new that was not going to happen anyway, as a result of their physical base properties. If we want to account for consciousness, mental causation and reasoning, we need some entity over and above the body. This entity must be simple, have thoughts as inseparable parts, persist as a unity over time, and have active power. That sounds like a soul . . .

Let’s break this down a bit. Menuge distinguishes between two types of physicalism. First was the reductive or eliminative type of physicalism. According to this view, there just is no such entity as the soul. Rather, all that exists would be the brain – a glob of tissue that sits in your skull. There simply is no such thing as a mind or the soul. Or, there are non-reductive varieties of physicalism which says that the brain has mental properties or states that are states of awareness that we would normally ascribe to the soul but in fact there isn’t any such thing as the soul; these are just epiphenomenal states or, as Menuge puts it, supervenient or emergent properties of the brain. All that really exists is the brain but in addition to that there are these epiphenomenal or supervenient properties that are mental in nature.

Reductive or eliminative forms of materialism are increasingly unpopular. They just don’t seem to account, as Menuge says, for our mental lives because the brain, as a physical substance, simply has physical properties: things like a certain volume, a certain mass, a certain density, a location, a shape. But the brain doesn’t have mental properties. The brain isn’t jubilant, the brain isn’t sad, the brain isn’t in pain. When your back hurts and you are in pain it is not the brain that is in pain even if the brain is involved in the circuitry that gives you the experience of pain. So the brain alone as a physical glob of tissue doesn’t have the mental properties that are characteristic of mental states so reductive materialism doesn’t work. This has led many thinkers to affirm some sort of non-reductive physicalism – that the brain gives rise to these epiphenomenal states of awareness like jubilation or sadness or pain. But there isn’t any *thing* – there isn’t any soul or mind – that has these. Rather, these are just states of the brain and the brain is the only thing that really exists.

⁶² Angus J. L. Menuge, “Why Not Physicalism? The Soul Has Work to Do,” unpublished ms. delivered at the Evangelical Philosophical Society panel for the Society of Biblical Literature, San Francisco, CA, November, 2011.

Menuge identifies a number of problems with this view that makes it improbable.⁶³ First of all, he points out that *this is incompatible with self identity over time*. Think about it – if the brain endures from one moment to another, the brain endures through time and so has identity through time but these states of awareness don’t endure from one moment to the next. There is no enduring self – no “I” – that endures from one moment to the next. On this view, the self – the “I” – is rather like the Buddhist view of the self which says that the soul or the self is something like the flame of a candle. The candle and the wick endure from one moment to the next but the flame doesn’t endure. There is a different flame at each moment of the candle’s burning but you have a sort of continuity but there really isn’t any identity over time. I think you can see that in this case with these states of awareness. Every state of the brain at different times has a state of awareness associated with it but there isn’t any enduring self or “I” that endures from one moment to the next. This leads a naturalist philosopher like Alex Rosenberg to boldly affirm that there is no enduring self on atheism or on materialism. That it is an illusion. It is an illusion that you are the same person who walked into this class this morning. In fact, you are not because there is no identity over time. So if you do believe that you are the same person who walked in here this morning, you ought to reject this non-reductive physicalist view of the self.

Also, *intentional states of consciousness don’t seem to make sense on this view*. The property of intentionality is the property of being *about* something or being *of* something. For example, I can think *about* my summer vacation or I can think *of* my wife. Physical objects don’t have these sorts of properties. The brain is not about something any more than a chair or a table is about something or of something. It is only thoughts which are *of* something that have this kind of aboutness or intentionality to it. But on this view there is no self – there is no soul – which has the property of intentionality; instead you just have the brain and intentionality is in effect an illusion. So, again, Rosenberg bites the bullet and says that we never really think about anything. It is just an illusion that we have intentional states. Not only is that contrary to experience – I mean, after all I am thinking about Rosenberg’s argument right? – but it is actually self-refuting. What is an illusion? An illusion is an illusion *of* something. So it is itself an intentional state. An illusion of intentionality is an intentional state – you are having an illusion of something or about something. So the view that intentionality is merely an illusion is literally self-refuting and incoherent. If you think, again, that you ever have thoughts about something or of something you ought to believe in the reality of the soul and reject these physicalist views.

Thirdly, *free will seems impossible to reconcile with either reductive or non-reductive physicalism* because on these views there is no causal connection between the states of awareness. The only causality is on the purely physical level. So that is totally determined by the laws of nature and the initial material conditions. So there just isn’t any room for freedom of the will.⁶⁴ So on this view, again, free will is an illusion – you never really do anything freely. And that flies in the face of our experience of ourselves as free agents. I can freely do certain things or freely choose to think about certain things. I am not simply determined by my brain states. So freedom of the will – if you believe in that – gives you

⁶³ 5:02

⁶⁴ 10:01

reason to believe in the reality of the soul and to reject these reductive and non-reductive physicalist views.

Finally, the last phenomenon that Menuge points to is *mental causation*. Notice that on these non-reductive physicalist views, the only arrow of causation is from the brain to these epiphenomenal states. The epiphenomenal states themselves don't cause anything. They are utterly causally impotent. So there is no return causality from awareness to the brain. Why? Because there is nothing there – there is no soul, there is no mind, that can exert a causal influence on the brain. So on this view, the arrow of causality goes only one way – it is from the brain to these epiphenomenal states and that is incompatible with my, again, introspectively graspability to cause things. I can cause my arm to go up; I can raise my arm by thinking about it. I can do other things through thinking and thereby bring about causal effects.

So, in all of these ways, it seems to me that Menuge is right that we ought to reject these materialistic and physicalist views in favor of some sort of dualism-interactionism. That is to say, we are composites of soul and body and the soul and the body – in particularly the brain – work together to think. And in this way we have a kind of union of the soul and the body in this lifetime.

DISCUSSION

Question: I just wanted to cut off a common internet objection to this sort of thing. The people on the internet generally will say, “Well, if we have these mental states, what we really are talking about are physical states.” Suppose science can so that every time I have the sensation of seeing red, I can connect it with, let's say, a release of potassium in a certain part of my brain. So when we are talking about these mental states, what we are really talking about is a physical thing happening in the brain. And so talking about intentionality, well, that is just all word play based on that. I know Richard Swinburne has addressed this before in his lectures and I think he would say something like there is a difference between correlation and reducibility. Correlation is not the same as reducibility. Reducibility would be something like when I say “here” all I mean by that is where I am right now. The meaning of both is identical. Whereas if two things are connected to each other, that is not the same thing.

Answer: You are exactly right. Take the phenomenon of fear. When you have fear, undoubtedly there is brain activity that is correlated with the experience of fear. That is what a dualist-interactionist would say – it is not as though the soul operates independently of the brain. There is an interaction with the brain in the experience of fear. But, the brain isn't afraid. You can't reduce fear to a physical brain state even if it is correlated with neural activity. So the person who says that is falling back into this old reductive physicalism that I think is just obviously untenable. Brains aren't afraid of things.

Followup: A quick counter example to reducibility would be something called neuroplasticity – the idea that the brain can rewire itself. There is actually a kid I know who is missing maybe a quarter or so of his brain but the brain rewired itself in the womb. If we defined fear as maybe a release of a certain chemical in the upper left

portion, well, what if he is missing the upper left portion? Then by definition it would be impossible for him to experience fear. But if you see his behavior, he is just as capable as anyone else, and therefore reductive physicalism has to be false.⁶⁵

Answer: In the article that I quoted from Menuge, he has a section on this phenomenon on neuroplasticity as you put it where thinking can actually affect the brain. If you think in certain ways it produces brain effects and there is a kind of cognitive therapy that is more useful in some cases than drugs in order to change people's behavior. You alter the way they think about something and this will affect them physiologically. I thought this was highly significant because in his book, *The Atheist's Guide to Reality*, Rosenberg says that if you find all of this depressing – that there is no self, no identity over time, no free will, no intentionality – he says there is always Prozac. What else would a materialist say? He says take drugs. Take brain altering drugs and you'll feel better. How sinister that is, I think, is shown by Menuge's point that we don't need always to resort to drugs. Sometimes there are these cognitive therapies whereby by changing your thinking you can actually alter the brain and you don't need to resort to drugs.

Question: I would just like you to comment on the fact that where the animal kingdom fits in this. Because, in a sense, they have mental causation – fear, intellect, emotion – which are qualities of a soul but yet we are saying it doesn't have a soul per se or because if they don't possess some of the other qualities we say a soul has.

Answer: Yes, now, this is a really good question and I don't feel qualified to answer this. Philosophy of mind is not my area of specialization but I do know that those whom I respect who work in this area will often affirm that animals – certain animals – have souls – souls which are more primitive in their faculties than ours but that they nevertheless have souls. Sir John Eccles, who is a Nobel Prize winning neurologist and co-author with Karl Popper of a book called *The Self and Its Brain*, has said that he thinks that animals higher than frogs have selves – have souls – of a primitive sort. And my colleague J. P. Moreland thinks this as well. He also thinks that animals have souls and he says, and I think quite rightly, that this is the mainstream philosophical position from the ancient Greek philosophers until more recent times, modern times. So it is not out of the question that there could be souls that animals have that are more primitive in their endowments than ours.

Followup: Well, we know all dogs go to heaven so they don't have to make that decision about Christ then. *[laughter]*

Question: While I was doing research for a speech that I was going to do for my intelligence system class – I am a computer scientist – I started looking into arguments and it started dipping a lot into philosophy, especially when it comes to that intentionality thing. So my question is – do you know what time people started shifting mainly from a substance dualist to a physicalist way of thinking because I know that there was a shift in that. Was that because of the rise of computers?

Answer: I think it is much earlier than that. Already in the 19th century you had the advent of modern materialism and the denial of the self and reductive views. So I think already you could find in 19th century philosophy at least expressions of materialism and denial

⁶⁵ 15:07

of the soul. The issue of artificial intelligence also becomes relevant here as you indicated. Menuge said in his quotation that if we want to provide an account of reasoning, we need a soul. If there is no self who reasons from premises to conclusions say, then in a sense we are just like a pocket calculator that when you press the buttons 2 plus 2 and then you hit the equals sign it has 4. But the calculator doesn't reason to arrive at that conclusion. There is no reasoning going on there at all. So, again, if you think that we ever reason to arrive at conclusions you ought to think that you are more than just a moist robot as, I think, Daniel Dennett puts it⁶⁶; that in fact you have a self who does this reasoning.⁶⁷

Followup: While I was doing research mainly on the intentionality thing, when people use the calculator example, people assume that it is even able to understand mathematics and really it is nothing more than a bunch of switches and to say it understands it is like saying that a light switch knows that it is on.

Answer: Good. OK.

Question: Why does Rosenberg think his comments and his point of view are worth trying to convince people of?

Answer: This is really hard to answer. He acknowledges that without intentionality sentences aren't about anything because a sentence is just a bunch of ink marks on paper and therefore it is not about anything – it is meaningless. And he says this is true of every sentence in my book that you are reading – he is saying this. He says, well then what good does this book do? He says, well, if looking at these ink marks causes certain firings to take place in your brain such that your activity is altered then it will have achieved something.⁶⁸ But, of course, it can't be his purpose because you don't have any purposes on his view. Maybe the best he could say is he was determined to do it and you are determined to react to it the way that you do. But it is difficult to see any sort of overarching purpose or significance to it.

Followup: So there is no such thing as education or anything of that directed nature at all?

Answer: Well, not in the sense in which I think you mean the term education. In fact, he really blasts the humanities as being disciplines that are empty and worthless. He thinks that all the truth is to be found in physics. Physics just describes the way the world really is and all of the rest of this stuff like literature and the arts and the rest of the humanities are all really just meaningless exercises.

Followup: But he thinks physics matters – that is the thing that is so bizarre.

Answer: Yes, and he is in the humanities himself being a philosopher. Yeah, what can I

⁶⁶ Daniel Dennett has used the term, but the term “moist robot” was actually coined, interestingly, by Scott Adams, creator of the “Dilbert” comic. “Free will is an illusion. Humans are nothing but moist robots.” See <http://dilbert.com/strips/comic/2012-03-18/> and http://dilbertblog.typepad.com/the_dilbert_blog/2007/10/curious-robot-m.html for examples.

⁶⁷ 20:24

⁶⁸ “This book isn't conveying statements. It's rearranging neural circuits, removing inaccurate disinformation and replacing it with accurate information. Treat it as correcting maps instead of erasing sentences.” Alex Rosenberg, *The Atheist's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life Without Illusions*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2011), p. 193.

say?

Question: For a long time, I thought that animals did not have souls and that is why they can't be saved. But I have come to think that maybe they do have souls but they are lacking something and what that something is is a spirit. Now if you look at 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Paul speaks of a spirit, a soul, and a body. And *pneuma* of course is the spirit, and according to my Greek lexicon, *pneuma* is of the same substance as the soul but it is a different operation, i.e., it is the way by which we communicate with God. Biblical support for that would be 1 Corinthians 2:14 which says that the natural man cannot perceive spiritual things and if you go a little further you say the reason people are unsaved at the fall, their spirits were all damaged and that when we come to Christ, the Holy Spirit regenerates us by reestablishing this spirit and we now can communicate with God. So it doesn't really go against dualism; you can think of it kind of as a smaller portion of the soul perhaps although it is enough different in its operation that it deserves a separate term which Paul uses in several places in his letters.

Answer: I think that what you've expressed is really the classical view of the soul. For someone like Aristotle, for example, animals have souls but they don't have rational souls; that is to say, they lack a certain faculty or operation as you put it that we human beings have that make us rational souls whereas animals are non-rational souls. The part, or the operation, or the faculty – you refer to it as spirit, that is a biblical term – the Greeks would have called it *nous* which is the word for “mind.”⁶⁹ So the mind or the *nous* could be that faculty of the soul that is capable of rational thinking and reflection and would be something that would be found in humans but not in dogs or horses or other animals. As you say, this is a dualistic view but it just says that some souls are more richly endowed with faculties than others.

Followup: You can a little more simplistically look at it as saying the soul interacts with its surroundings in the physical world by way of the body and it interacts with God – the spiritual world – by way of the spirit.

Answer: Yes, I will say something more about this when we get to views of trichotomy and dichotomy but I think you are right in that when the biblical authors use the word “spirit” they are thinking there particularly of our ability to relate to God, not just our rational faculty but our ability to relate to God who is spirit.

Let me say something in conclusion about challenges to this view emanating from the experiments performed by a brain scientist named Benjamin Libet. He conducted experiments in which people were instructed to press a button with one of their fingers while he monitored their brain activity. What Libet discovered was that prior to a person's awareness of his decision to press the button, a brain signal had already occurred which later resulted in his fingers moving. So, the sequence goes like this:

1. There is a brain signal about 550 milliseconds prior to the fingers moving.
2. There is an awareness of the decision in consciousness which occurs about 200 milliseconds prior to the fingers moving.

⁶⁹ 25:02

3. The finger moves and presses the button.

There is no consensus concerning the interpretation or the significance of Libet's experiments. As you can imagine, some people have taken this to be proof of determinism or even materialism because before the awareness to press the button occurs, a brain signal has already taken place to make the finger move. But this inference would be overdrawn. In a second run of experiments, Libet discovered that even after the awareness of the decision to press the button had occurred, people still retained the ability to veto the decision and not to press the button. So they still retained the ability to cancel the earlier decision. Some interpreters therefore take this brain signal to indicate merely a readiness potential which the patient may either go along with or may veto over which he still has control. Libet himself considered his experimental results to be fully compatible with the existence of free will.

The more fundamental point, though, to be made about these experiments is that it struck me very forcefully as I contemplated these experiments that this is exactly what the dualist-interactionist would expect to happen. You see, the soul or the mind doesn't work independently of the brain. Rather, as Sir John Eccles, whom I mentioned earlier, has pointed out, on a dualist-interactionist view the soul uses the brain as an instrument for thought just as a pianist uses a piano as an instrument to produce music. So of course the soul's decisions are not simultaneous with the soul's awareness of those decisions – how could they be? Given the brain's reliance upon finite velocity neurosignals in order to think, the soul could not have a simultaneous awareness with its decisions.⁷⁰ Rather, given the soul's reliance upon the brain and the finite velocity of neurosignals, there would have to be a time lag between the soul's decision and the soul's conscious awareness of that decision. In Libet's experiments, since the neurosignals travel at finite velocities, of course it takes a little time for the soul's decision to come to conscious awareness. This is exactly what we should expect on a dualist-interactionist view. The German philosopher Uwe Meixner, who is a dualist-interactionist, has this to say about Libet's experiments,

For making an informed decision, the self needs to be conscious of the facts relevant to the decision prior to making the decision; but . . . the self certainly does not need to be conscious of making the decision at the very same time it makes it. . . . the consciousness of a state of affairs P being (presently) the case is always somewhat later than the actual fact of P's being the case . . .⁷¹

For example, when you are talking to another person, because of the finite velocity of light signals and the finite velocity of sound and the finite velocity of your nerve signals, what you are experiencing as that present person talking is always a little bit in the past. You never have an actual present awareness of what is happening around you. There is a tiny time lag that is imperceptible to us because of the finite velocity of these signals. So Uwe Meixner goes on to say, "it is hardly surprising that the consciousness of making a decision is no exception to this general rule, which is due to the dependence of

⁷⁰ 30:06

⁷¹ Uwe Meixner, "New Perspectives for a Dualistic Conception of Mental Causation," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 15/1 (2008): p. 25.

consciousness on neurophysiology.”⁷²

So I want to emphasize on this view the soul’s decision is not unconscious – it is conscious – but it just takes a little while for that decision to become conscious because of the finite velocity of neurosignals. Just as we never see anything that is actually presently there because of the finite velocity of light but we only see events that are just slightly past, in the same way we don’t have a consciousness of our own decisions simultaneously with our making them but we have them unnoticeably afterwards. If the soul has the ability to think without being causally determined then, as Meixner says, all it needs in order to make responsible informed decisions is consciousness of the relevant facts prior to its making a decision. But it doesn’t need to be aware or conscious of the decision simultaneous with making that decision in order for them to be responsible and informed decisions.

So it seems to me that in response to Libet’s experiments, they are exactly what we ought to expect if dualism-interactionism is true. The soul uses the brain as an instrument for thinking.

What we will do next time is begin to look at whether we ought to think of man as trichotomous, dichotomous, or whatever.⁷³

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Total Running Time: 34:14 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 9

Origin of the Soul

In our study of the Doctrine of Man, we have been looking at man as created in the image of God. Today we are going to bring that section to a close. I have defended the reality of the soul based upon the biblical testimony to the soul and particularly the intermediate state after death. Last time we looked at some defense of a dualist-interactionist view of the soul and body.

Trichotomy / Dichotomy

I now want to say a brief word about the debate over whether human beings are dichotomous or trichotomous in their composition. That is to say, are we as human beings composites of soul and body or are we composites of some other entity as well, for example, soul, body, and spirit as some verses in the New Testament suggest? Here it seems to me that there isn't any sort of strong and consistent distinction that can be drawn between the soul and the spirit. If you press this kind of language to give you a different ontological reality that there is a thing – a substance – “the spirit” which is different from the soul then I think you are going to proliferate entities unnecessarily because the Scripture also talks about things like “the heart” and “the mind” and “the inner man.” If you press the language about “spirit” then what about these other entities as well? You are going to get man as a composite of all sorts of things. Rather, I think it is best to see the difference between soul and spirit as a functional difference. As we suggested last time, the soul insofar as it functions in relation to God can be called “the spirit” and the soul and its everyday functions as a rational agent in the world can be referred to as “the soul.” So we do have this spiritual dimension to our lives in that we are created in the image of God, we relate to God, we know God in a way that other animals don't, but I don't think that needs to be cashed out in terms of saying there is an additional thing of which we are composed. Rather, this would represent a different function of that immaterial part of our being in relationship to God. That is all I wanted to say about that subject.

DISCUSSION

Question: I would take the position of a trichotomist because I think that when God breathes in the breath of life, if you correspond breathe and spirit you see man becomes a living soul and there is elements of these other things that you mention that are included in one of these categories like under soul you would have cognition, volition, and emotion but this trichotomous structure corresponds to being made in the image of God. I think this reflects on the Trinity, it reflects on who Christ was. I think the spirit would be our God identity; our soul would be our self identity.

Answer: Why wouldn't it be enough just to view that as a functional difference? I mean, the verse you quoted about he breathed into man's nostrils a breath of life and he became a living being. There, that does seem to be imparting soul to an inanimate thing that

wasn't alive apart from God's breathing into him. That would seem to not distinguish the two, don't you think?

Followup: It could be. This has been debated a lot but the spirit breathed in him the breath of life and then there are other verses that say the spirit is taken away man dies and becomes the dust. So I think these are distinct enough that they are separate entities but this is been debated a lot.

Answer: If you appeal to passages like that, I think the difficulty is that if God withdraws "the" spirit and yet the soul remains behind then the thing should still be alive.⁷⁴ It shouldn't die. It would have an animal soul but it would lack the spirit so a person wouldn't be dead. So it seems to me those verses would tend to say that what is being called the spirit in these Old Testament passages just is that immaterial part of us that makes us a living being as opposed to dead or inanimate. I would caution against using the Trinity as a kind of grid to impose on your Doctrine of Man or your anthropology. There is no reason to think that we, in our nature, have to be composed of three things just because there is a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I think that you have to be really cautious about trying to impose theological constructs like that on your anthropology.

Question: Would you comment on two verses? The first is 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." That doesn't necessitate triunity but I just wanted you to comment on it. The other is Hebrews 4:12, "For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit." I don't know whether that is just hyperbole there. I don't know.

Answer: In both of these cases – and these were verses, at least the first of them, we did quote earlier when we talked about trichotomy versus dichotomy – I would see these differences as no more than functional. They represent distinctions that can be drawn in the function of the immaterial part of the human being. But I don't see any reason to think that these are actual things like the soul and the spirit are two distinct things that somehow inhabit my body.

Origin of the Soul

Let me go on to say something now about the origin of the soul. Here, three – or really now four – views present themselves as possibilities. One would be the pre-existence of the soul. This was the view held by the church father Origen and it is essentially a Platonic doctrine; namely, souls exist with God prior to the creation of the physical body or even the physical world. Then God sends these souls into the world – he incarnates them in particular bodies. So with God are all of these unembodied souls and then God sends them, or incarnates them, into bodies in the world. This view brought upon Origen the condemnation of the early church. He was condemned as a heretic because of his views of the pre-existence of the soul among other things.

Another view would be the Creationist view. That would be the view that God creates

⁷⁴ 5:08

each individual soul. A church father who espoused this would be Clement of Alexandria. So, for example, when the sperm and the egg unite to form the body of a human being, at some point in the process God creates a soul and attaches it to the organism that has been conceived. That would be the Creationist view.

The Traducian view was defended by Tertullian and this view holds that just as the body is the causal product of the parents through the sperm and the egg so the child's soul is produced by the souls of the parents. The souls of the parents give birth to, or produce, the soul of the offspring.⁷⁵ It doesn't require an immediate, miraculous creation of God or intervention of God; rather just as the body of the offspring or the child is produced by the parents so their souls produce the soul of the offspring.

Finally, I want to mention another view which is very recently coming on the scene. It is not a classical view but it is what we might call Emergentism. This is a view that is propounded, for example, by the Christian philosopher William Hasker on the contemporary scene. Emergentism is often associated with non-reductive physicalism – that is to say, the mind is an epiphenomenon of the brain. You will remember we saw that some non-reductive materialists will say that the brain is the only thing that there really is but that it has these sorts of mental states or mental properties associated with it. But that is not an actual thing – there isn't a real soul. It is a non-reductive materialism. But Hasker wants to push Emergentism further than that to say that when the biological system attains to a certain sort of complexity, the soul will naturally emerge and there will be then a new thing – a mental substance – that will come into existence at that point. So it is a dualism but it sees this mental substance as something that will emerge from a physical system when that physical system reaches a sort of complexity and configuration that is sufficient to serve as the instrument for the soul to think. It seems to me that that sort of a view would be an option for a dualist as well.

Which of these views is best? Well, that is difficult to say and I don't have any sort of brief to carry on behalf of them.

The first one seems to be excluded because the Scripture never contemplates that human beings somehow preexist as souls before their bodies exist.

Creationism is a view that seems to make sense. If we ask "When does God create the soul?" we cannot be sure of that but it would seem natural to say that this would occur at conception. When the sperm and the egg unite and a new human organism comes into being that God creates the soul. The one thing about Creationism that makes me feel somewhat uncomfortable is this would seem to imply that when biologists or fertility doctors begin splitting cells and producing embryos and so forth they force God's hand, so to speak, to start creating souls and attaching them to all of these frozen embryos. So in a sense God becomes trapped in the medical proliferation of these cells and gets stuck creating all these souls. That just doesn't seem right somehow. Now, perhaps what one might say is, well, God doesn't create souls just because doctors proliferate fertilized eggs; he will only provide a soul to the one that he knows will actually grow up and become an adult or a more mature human being. But that might look a little bit *ad hoc*. I am not sharing here a decisive objection but just a sort of discomfort that one feels about

⁷⁵ 10:03

it.

Traducianism, though, seems even worse to me because it seems inconceivable how all of these millions and millions of sperm could be carrying the soul of the father to the egg where it would somehow, with the soul of the mother, produce the soul of the offspring. The egg and the sperm are not human beings – they don't have souls, right? Those are not complete human beings.⁷⁶ The sperm and the egg don't have souls so how is it that they are the vehicle that would carry the souls of the parents along so that somehow when they unite another soul is produced as a result? Perhaps I am not understanding Traducianism here but it seems a really odd sort of view.

Finally, as to Emergentism, I think the fear here is that one would lapse into some kind of non-reductive physicalism rather than a real dualism. We would have to hear from these thinkers like Hasker exactly how it is that the complexity of a biological system would produce an immaterial entity like the soul.

All of these views, I think, have their difficulties and this is not an area of specialization that I have delved into in any deep sort of way. So I have no strong opinions about any of these. I find Creationism or Emergentism to be the most attractive of the four of them, I suppose. I would hope that the problems of the discomfort that one feels about these could be resolved.

One issue that all of these raise is, when does the soul attach to the body? Because until the soul is present, you don't really have a human being – you just have a body, an organism, but not a full human being. This was the question, you will remember, that Rick Warren put to candidate Barack Obama with respect to abortion – when does the developing fertilized embryo or fetus become a human being? And Obama said, "That is above my theological pay grade." Well, if that is correct, that this is an issue that we don't know for sure, then it seems to me that caution would say you consider this to be human right from the moment of conception. It is at the moment of conception that we should think that the soul is united with the organism so that it would be for safety's sake that one would not allow abortion to take place. Someone once gave an illustration that goes like this. Suppose you were sitting at your desk and your little son came up behind you and said, "Hey Dad, can I kill it?" And you would obviously need to ask what it was that he was talking about – was it the roach on the floor or was it his baby sister? And if you don't know, you would caution "no!" You always would go with the safe answer. So similarly here, even if we don't know on some of these views when the soul attaches to the body, safety and caution would say that in cases of uncertainty you should assume that it is present. We know that already at 43 days after conception there is brain wave activity so even at that point abortion would be killing a human person. So on that basis I would say that one ought to err on the side of caution when it comes to the ethics of aborting fertilized embryos.

DISCUSSION

Question: It seems to me that the pre-existing one – I would like to hear your statement

⁷⁶ 15:02

again because the reason I fall down on the pre-existing one is, I mean, I don't have the mind of God of course and I don't think I can get as deep into it as I need to to be asking this question but – I don't think, as me, a just God would allow abortion. So, consequently, if it is pre-existing and he puts the soul in whenever he chooses to put it in then there would be no such thing as an abortion. I am reading a lot into this. There is a lot of foreknowledge and all of these things that goes into that.⁷⁷

Answer: The Creationist could say the same thing. You don't need to go with pre-existence. To say that God knowing that this organism is going to be aborted prescinds from attaching to it a soul. You wouldn't need to say the soul pre-existed. You could just say God doesn't create it. So on either Creationism or pre-existence you could say what you just said. But, I would say that the idea that God wouldn't permit little children to be aborted is just really naïve. We live in a fallen world in which the innocent suffer all the time and not just infants in the womb but little children are killed and destroyed. The idea that God wouldn't permit this kind of innocent suffering just seems to me to be worse than naïve. It would be downright unbiblical.

Followup: I am saying a lot more than what I'm saying. The thoughts are a lot deeper. I don't have the words to express exactly the way I see this thing but I like the pre-existence for another reason. It all ties together. Since the world is fallen, I think we pre-existed and then I think he sends the souls down to go through this fiery test just like you are refining gold. I think he sends the souls down to be tested.

Answer: All right. Well, I already responded as to what I think about that. But thank you for you voicing your opinion boldly; I think that is great.

Question: Bear with me. I think if you view (this would be dichotomous) when God gives us spirit he gives a self-aware portion – he creates just a portion, this self-aware. That is like your spiritual body which can change. So it will resolve the discrepancy of trichotomy and dichotomy because it is really in one sense functionally there is three because there is spirit and a spirit-body – a subset, self-aware.

Answer: You mean ontologically there are three things, right? On the trichotomous view.

Followup: I am saying really there isn't a conflict if you view it that way. Your soul is really a subset or a portion of God's spirit that he gives to you. This resolves the first thing – pre-existence since the spirit God gives to each of us has always been there because it is him.

Answer: Boy! OK, we really got some sort of aberrant views in the Defenders class. That would suggest that I am divine and you are divine, right? If it is really God's spirit that is in you and not a created spirit, then you are God incarnate.

Followup: Well, yes, if God went through his spirit all flesh were die – man and animal. So if he withdrew his spirit, that's his spirit he is withdrawing. He will not give a life inferior to what he has. He originally created Adam with his own life. He didn't create us inferior. As far as the second one, Creationism, he's not really creating, he's just, it's just, it happens in spirit, and the one where the union, it doesn't happen in the physical world, it is two souls in the spiritual realm are united when the egg and the sperm come together.

⁷⁷ 20:18

That is what the Bible says if you join yourself to a harlot you join yourself. It is more ramifications than just a physical act. Things happen in the spiritual realm mapped onto this. So I am really not saying anything against Scripture.

Answer: Well, I think you are! OK. Again, I am glad that you voiced your view.

Question: One other objection I can think to the Creationist view – and this is by no means definitive – it would seem to imply a near continuous creation by God well beyond the whole resting on the seventh day. Creation is supposed to be finished.⁷⁸

Answer: Yeah, now that is interesting. That is true. If you don't have pre-existence, then God is creating new things, isn't he? That is an interesting point. The question would be then is that really incompatible with what Genesis says?

Followup: Then you get into the question of: is it a difference in degree, is it a difference in nature, is the creation of the first six days a different type of creation than what we are talking about here?

Answer: Yeah, your concern is saying that according to Genesis, God is in his Sabbath rest. The work of creation is done and yet on the Creationist view God is creating new things all the time, namely, these souls. So that is an interesting point. Thank you.

Question: I wanted to ask a little bit more about the objection you had to the Traducian view. As I understood it, is a sperm and egg carriers of the soul? Yes, I understand that soul and body need to be together to be a complete person but what is a little bit more about what is that objection? Does a soul completely embody every cell in your body and does God remove that soul as you are getting your haircut? This is where I am going with this.

Answer: Yes, if you go back to our discussion of omnipresence, under the Doctrine of God, we talked a little bit about "Is God present in the world the way the soul is present in the body?" which would seem the soul is not spread throughout the body like a ghost such that when you cut off a piece of your hair a piece of your soul goes. There seems to be a way in which the soul inhabits the body so that it is wholly present in all parts of the body but you wouldn't lose pieces of your soul when you cut your fingernails. But my question about Traducianism – and it is just a question – is how do the souls of the parents produce the soul of the offspring? Given the soul of the father is in his body and the soul of the mother is in her body, how do those two souls get together to produce a third soul? The only way I could think of is it would be attached to the act of procreation – that somehow the sperm would carry the father's soul and the egg the mother's soul and that when they unite somehow these souls unite. But that would require you, as I say, to think that every one of these millions and millions of sperm in a typical act of coitus has got the father's soul in it which would make them human beings, wouldn't it?

Followup: What I am getting at is – are you claiming that the souls are completely inhabiting the space of the body? That is where I am going with this. Or, could it be possible that, yes, we are united but the soul is completely bound to just that space only. This goes back to the millions of the sperm.

Answer: I think I'm seeing your point. You are saying that in the same way that my soul

⁷⁸ 24:56

is in my fingernail but not a piece of the soul, that somehow my soul is also in the sperm and therefore it is not as though we have a proliferation of souls but the one soul is wholly present in all of these different things. That is the best answer I could think of. That is very good. That is the best answer I could think of to the concern that I expressed here.

Question: If we can use Scripture to understand the distinguishment between soul and spirit there is a big thing about the agreement – the will – and so if we think of soul comprised of emotion, intellect, and the will, then in that . . . when God imparts spirit to each new birth, there is an element of agreement and rejection. So the soul and the spirit whether they agree with one another or they reject each other determines whether this person will continue in spirit and live or they will eventually die.⁷⁹ The soul is almost like – it matures with the physical body although it is immaterial but it has more active function in receiving or rejecting the spirit.

Answer: And by the spirit here, you mean the human spirit or God's spirit?

Followup: God imparts his spirit into humans because we are created in his likeness and in his image. So he not only creates us physically but he imparts his spirit every time a person is born. Whether this spirit stays with the person and grows or is rejected as a person matures . . . the soul takes over.

Answer: I just want to caution here that we be very careful when it comes to thinking of this spirit as something that is God or belongs to God. Because it seems to me that in the verses previously quoted, this is talking about the human spirit, not God's spirit. As I understand Scripture, it is only people who are regenerate Christians that are indwelt with God's spirit. That is something that comes as a result of the new birth – of regeneration – that God's spirit lives within you. But apart from that, human beings are spiritually dead and unregenerate and they are not indwelt with God's spirit though they have this human spirit that functions in a certain way.

Followup: We talk about the age of accountability and that is when a person knows enough to reject God, to reject the spirit. Before they reject the spirit, God's grace has always been imparted until a person rejects that.

Answer: I am inclined to agree with you that God's grace covers those who are not yet to an age of accountability but scripturally I don't see any grounds for connecting that with the spirit. But these are very interesting questions.

Question: I just wanted to mention to anyone who is flirting with pre-existence that this is a thought within Mormonism and it is also accompanied with other sorts of heresies and things like that. So just be hesitant towards embracing such an idea whenever you are considering it.

Answer: Yes, I didn't mention the connection with Mormonism because I didn't want to try to make guilt by association but you are quite right in saying that there are cultic groups that adopt the pre-existence view.

Question: It seems to me that your view of the fallenness of man has to affect this. Because if you see our fallenness as inherited from Adam, you not only need a

⁷⁹ 30:02

mechanism for the soul's creation but you need a mechanism for inheriting fallenness. Pre-existence – you would have to suppose the pre-existing souls are already fallen. Creationism – you have got God creating directly souls that are already fallen. So it would seem to me if you take that view you are really more focused on the last two than you would be the first two.

Answer: That forms a beautiful segue to the next section of the class!

The next time we meet we will move to the second subject of our Doctrine of Man which is man as sinner. So we've talked first now about man in the image of God but of course as you remind us we are now fallen humanity so the next portion of our Doctrine of Man discussion will deal with that subject – man as sinner.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Total Running Time: 34:26 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 10

Doctrine of the Fall

In our lesson we have been talking about the Doctrine of Man, and during the first part of the lecture we looked at man as created in the image of God. Now we've completed a section on the nature of man and I defended a dualist-interactionist view of man as composed of soul and body. Now we want to come to the third subsection which is on man as sinner.

Man as Sinner

Doctrine of the Fall

Biblical Data

We want to look now at some of the biblical data concerning man as sinner. Let's look first at the classic doctrine of the Fall – the Fall of man. We will look at the three passages concerning the Fall. The first is from Genesis 3:1-7:

Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.

Then the remainder of the story goes on to tell of how God then laid certain curses upon man and the woman for their disobedience in the garden.

The principal passage in the New Testament which reflects on the Fall of man is found in Paul's letter to the Romans 5:12-21. Paul writes,

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned— sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the effect of

that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Then, finally, go over to 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.⁸¹ Paul writes, "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

Those are the three critical passages, I think, in the Scriptures that speak to the doctrine of the Fall, both in the Old and New Testaments.

Attempts to Systematize Data

Let's talk now a little bit about some of the attempts to systematize this data.

Traditionally, the doctrine of the Fall is taken to be the doctrine that man was originally created in what is called the *state of integrity*. But following the Fall of man into sin through Adam's fall, man loses the state of integrity and falls into the *state of corruption*. So the original state of integrity and sinlessness was lost through the fall and we now find ourselves in a state of corruption. The state of integrity is what man was created to be like. The state of corruption is man in contradiction to what he was created to be like. So in one sense, the truly natural state is the state of integrity. The state of corruption is an unnatural state contrary to the way we ought to be that is the result of human fall into sin.

In the state of integrity, man possessed a set of perfections – both the so-called *major* perfections which were perfections of the soul, and then also *minor* perfections which are the perfections of the body. Among the major perfections – the perfections of the soul – we find the knowledge of God, sanctity of the will (we will what we should and ought to do), and the purity and harmony of man's desires. In the state of integrity, the body possesses certain perfections as well. These would include immortality, freedom from harm, and being the lord of the earth. All of these were considered to be lost in the Fall; both the major and minor perfections were lost in the Fall and so we now find ourselves in a state of corruption in which we no longer possess these perfections.

Let's say a word about man in the state of perfection with respect to his ability to resist sin compared to the state of corruption. In the state of integrity, man had the ability to not sin. In Latin this is written *posse non peccare* – able not to sin. He was able to not sin; he had the ability to resist temptation, to do righteousness, his passions were in harmony with his will, the will had integrity, and therefore he had the ability to not sin. But, in the state of corruption, man loses the ability not to sin so that he can only commit various

⁸¹ 5:04

kinds of sin. So in the state of corruption, we have a state in which *non posse non peccare* – that is to say, he is *not* able to *not* sin. He has lost the ability to not sin so that man now, in the state of corruption, is still free but he is free only to sin. He can choose various sins to commit but he is fallen and therefore unable to not sin – *non posse non peccare*.

As for the origin of sin, where does this come from? Well, the origin of sin could be thought of as due to creaturely freedom, either through Satan or through human beings.⁸² With respect to Satan, Satan was usually thought to be some sort of an angelic creature who fell into sin, whose will was no longer directed to God as the greatest good, but he sought lesser goods and therefore fell away and became opposed to God. So Satan is essentially a fallen angel. Or we could think of the origin of sin as being through the creaturely free will of human beings – that Adam and Eve had the ability to choose right or wrong and through choosing poorly sin entered into the human race.

On a deeper level, however, it might be thought that in one sense the origin of sin is due to God's own decree. Here, one refers to a doctrine called Supralapsarianism. This is the idea that God's decrees have a certain logical order in them and that God's primary decree was the decree to redeem mankind through the cross. He wanted to provide the cross of Jesus Christ as a redemptive gift for mankind. But in order for that to happen, that presupposes the fall into sin. So, as a result of decreeing the cross, the Fall has to be decreed as well. So, the cross is not so much thought of as a remedy for the Fall into which man has tumbled; rather, quite the reverse. Logically, in order to have the act of the cross, you need to have a state from which man can be rescued and redeemed. So the difference here between Infralapsarianism and Supralapsarianism concerns the order of God's decrees. Infralapsarianism would say that first the Fall occurs and then God decrees the cross in order to reconcile man from the Fall. Supralapsarianism would say, no, God decrees primarily the cross and then decrees the Fall in order to have something to rescue man from. But in either case, the actual agent of sin will not be God; it will be creatures themselves who freely misuse their will – which is a good thing, a God given thing – in order to rebel against God.

DISCUSSION

Question: I was curious about this view of not able not to sin, or perhaps even Supralapsarianism as well. How do they reconcile with the idea that ought implies can? Or, how about this, did the early church fathers believe ought implies can – did they try to harmonize that with *non posse non peccare*?

Answer: It seems to me that one could defend this view by saying that one is responsible for having gotten himself into this situation in the first place. It would be like a heroin addict who is no longer able to resist mainlining drugs. He has lost his freedom to resist because he has become addicted to this. Yet, he is still responsible for these acts that he can no longer resist because he got himself into this situation in the first place by his free will. So there is still an ought there that implies an ability but it would be the initial ability.

⁸² 10:12

Question: So are the people after Adam born able not to sin and then become not able not to sin? That is the question.

Answer: That is the real question and I didn't talk about that yet. The question here is the doctrine of origin sin. Is this inherited? Is it heredity of a tendency to sin? A corruption of the will? Or is it an actual imputed guilt that we bear and are culpable for in light of Adam's sin? We will talk about that later on. But right now we are just talking about the idea that man is no longer in this state of integrity and is now in this corrupted, fallen state. But those are good questions that we will come back to.⁸³

Question: Along the same lines the last questioner was asking, man's inability to not sin, I think, Romans clarifies this is that it is because of the sting of death. In the Fall our desires changed and so to not fulfill your desires, the power of death you feel in the subconscious as well as the conscious level. The Law makes you more aware of that. So in one sense, suicide is an escape from trying to die but you can't really commit true suicide because the sting of death is too great.

Answer: OK, anybody else?

Let me just contrast this very briefly with the more modern view of the Fall. As I say, this is the traditional view but for many modern theologians the idea of the Fall is basically, in a good sense – I don't mean this negatively – a myth. That is to say, it is a sort of symbolic telling of the condition of every man. Every individual falls into sin and therefore finds himself in this state of corruption. Adam is a sort of symbol or representation of all humanity who find themselves guilty before God. So the Fall, on the more modern view, is not so much a historical event in the past as it is a symbol of man's condition in general.

We will want to give, next time, some evaluation of how we ought to understand the Fall – either historically or in this purely symbolic sense or in some combination of the two. That is what we will look at when we meet next time.⁸⁴

⁸³ 15:10

⁸⁴ Total Running Time: 17:15 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 11

Challenges to the Existence of the Historical Adam

In our lesson, we've been talking about the Doctrine of the Fall and we contrasted the traditional view of the Fall as a historical event involving Adam and Eve from a state of innocence into a state of corruption with all of the terrible results that that brought. We contrasted with that the modern view of the Fall which would interpret this story as purely mythological or symbolic; a story told in figurative language to describe the Fall that is universal among mankind. We all, in the course of our lives, fall into sin, and as a symbol of man's fallenness and corruption before God.

Evaluation

Today we want to come to some evaluation of these competing views.

Now, on the one hand, Adam and Eve, as their very names indicate, do have a symbolic significance in the story. *Adam* just is the Hebrew word for "man." So, in essence, Genesis 1 says that in the beginning God created man – *Adam*. This, I think, shows that he is a sort of general symbol of mankind. Similarly, Eve is referred to as "the mother of all living persons." So, again, she has a kind of wider significance than just a historical person. Moreover, the narrative of the Fall is full of all sorts of symbolic or figurative elements like the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the serpent in the garden who deceives the woman, and so forth.

Nevertheless, in spite of this obvious symbolic function of the narrative, it does seem to me that we also have good biblical grounds for thinking that Adam was an actual historical person. Let me mention four such factors.

1. *There is no break in the narrative between Adam and indisputably historical figures.* The story goes right on from Adam through Abraham and Moses and these are indisputably intended to be historical persons. There is no suggestion that the first part of the story is purely symbolic and then the later aspects are historical.
2. *Adam is included in the genealogies that tell of the descent of historical persons.* This is true both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament where the genealogy of Jesus is given in the Gospels. So Adam is included in the genealogies with the other historical figures just like a historical person.
3. *Paul treats Adam as a historical figure in a number of places in the New Testament.* For example, in his address on Mars Hill that is recorded in Acts 17:26 Paul says this, ". . . from one man he made every nation of men to inhabit the face of the whole earth, and he determined the exact times and places that they should live." So here Paul, according to Luke's account at least, says that all of the nations of men that inhabit the earth today are descended from one human ancestor – from one man. Paul refers to this man as Adam in various places in his epistles. For example, 1 Corinthians 15:45, "Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit." So here Paul refers to Adam as the first man and contrasts him with Christ who is the

second Adam.⁸⁵ Also in 1 Timothy 2:13, Paul says, “For Adam was formed first, then Eve;” and then he says “Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor,” referring to the Fall of man. So here again Paul refers to Adam as the first man who then fell into sin. Paul consistently treats Adam as a historical individual; someone who really lived, not simply as a symbolic figure.

4. As we’ve seen, *Paul draws parallels between Adam and Jesus as historical individuals*. Paul certainly believed that Jesus of Nazareth was a historical person. He parallels Christ with Adam as the second Adam. Remember we read last week that as through Adam – the first man – sin came into the world and spread to all men so through Christ life and forgiveness and redemption are made available to all men.⁸⁶ So there is a parallel drawn between Adam and Jesus as historical persons.

So it seems to me that, despite their symbolic function in the narrative, Adam and Eve are regarded by the biblical writers as genuine historical persons.

I think what we can say is that the Fall of man is a historical event that actually happened though it is told in a dramatic literary form involving figurative speech. The story of the Fall has been called, rightly I think, a historical drama. It is a dramatized, or figurative, story telling of an actual historical event, namely the fall of the parents of the human race into sin and separation from God.

Affirming the historicity of the Fall as I’ve done implies that the human race is descended from a single ancestral couple. It commits us to the monogenesis of the human race. Not merely that the human race originated in one place as opposed to multiple places around the globe, but monogenesis in a very peculiar sense, namely that there was an original ancestral human pair from which all of humanity is descended.

This traditional view of Adam and Eve has been vigorously challenged in recent years on the basis of the science of population genetics. Let me be the very first to say that this is a field about which I know little. Like most of you I am simply an interested student in these matters. But I want to lay out in a simple way something of the current controversy that arises from population genetics for the historicity of Adam and Eve. If you are like me you will be interested in reading more about this and trying to follow something of the debate.

In order to understand this controversy, it is important to understand that, according to the theory of evolution and contrary to popular impression perhaps, evolution does not proceed along an isolated individual line. It is not as though some sequence of individual reptiles evolved, for example, into the first bird. Rather, the idea is that whole populations evolve over time. So the ongoing front of evolution is not like a pointed spear, it is rather a broad front as a whole population of organisms evolves together over time. In this case, a whole population of reptiles would be evolving bird like characteristics. Similarly, in the case of human evolution, there is a whole population of hominids – man-like primates – which is gradually evolving characteristics of modern human beings. So, there weren’t originally two human persons – a couple – that were the ancestors of everybody else.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ 5:02

⁸⁶ cf. Romans 5:12-21

⁸⁷ 10:07

Rather, modern human beings evolved through a whole population of these hominids moving gradually toward more recognizable modern human forms.

Recent genetic studies have tried to determine the minimum size that that population of ancestral human beings could have had. How few of these ancestral human beings could there have been? One way to estimate the size of the ancestral population of humanity is by comparing the portion of the human genome, which is more similar to gorilla DNA (which we will symbolize here as G) then to chimpanzee DNA (that will be C). H then will be *Homo sapiens* – or human. [see Figure 1] According to the current evolutionary theory, human beings are more recently separated from a common ancestor to chimps and human beings than did this ancestor of chimps and humans from gorillas. The separation over time as you go vertically up the chart is that gorillas first separated off and then some time later chimps and humans separated off of the common ancestor from the common ancestor to gorillas and chimps and humans.

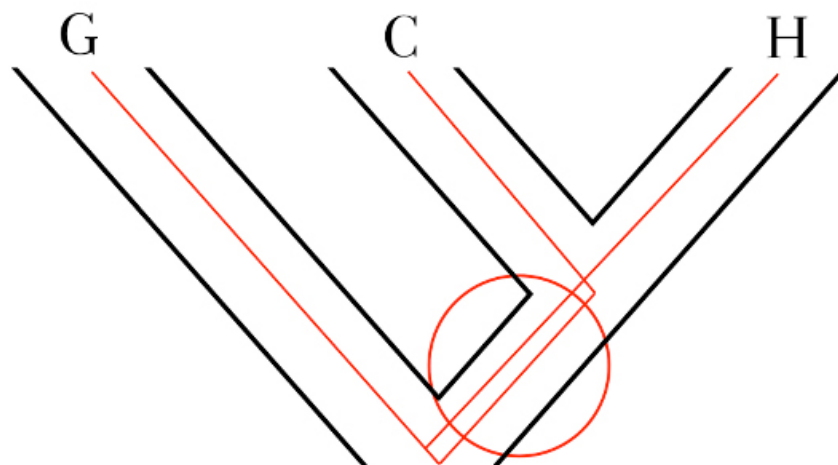


Figure 1 – Current Evolutionary Theory of Common Ancestry

The interesting thing is that a portion of the human genome, or genetic structure, is perhaps, contrary to expectation, actually more similar to gorilla DNA than it is to chimps even though humans and chimps are more recently separated and so you would expect them to be much more similar. In fact, I am told about 15% of the human genome actually resembles gorilla DNA more than it resembles chimp DNA. The idea of population studies is to explain how this could have happened. How is it that human DNA could be more similar in some respects to gorilla DNA than to chimpanzee DNA even though chimpanzees and humans evolved from a more recent common ancestor?

The theory is that the ancestral population for gorillas, chimps, and humans must have been sufficiently large that it could carry a variety of genetic traits. We can represent this by the red line – so the gorilla genome evolved from that common ancestor to all three of these groups. Another genetic line evolving off of that common ancestor then went into chimpanzees. Still yet another line of DNA went into human beings. As a result of this, human DNA structure shares some of the characteristics that went into the gorilla genome but did not go into the chimp genome. This requires a large enough population of this ancestral group in order for different genetic structures to go off on these different

branches. So as a result human beings resemble in their genetic structures gorillas more than they resemble chimps. In order to carry this diversity of this genetic material that population has to be at least several thousand individuals, it is estimated. So on that basis, the claim is that you never get down to just two individuals. There has to be a fairly large population of at least several thousand individuals in order to be carrying this sort of genetic diversity.

Notice that this presupposes the doctrine of common ancestry that we talked about earlier. It presupposes, or assumes, that humans, chimps, and gorillas are all evolved from some common ancestor.⁸⁸ Someone who denies that humans and chimps evolved from a common ancestor actually might take the greater similarity of humans to gorillas than to chimps in some respects to be evidence that they did not evolve from a common ancestor. Rather, they are simply built on similar design plans and that the human design plan selectively reproduces parts of the chimp genome and parts of the gorilla genome and that is why they are alike in some respects even though on the theory chimps and humans are supposed to be more recently evolved from each other. So the special creationist, I think, would take this same evidence not to be evidence of a large ancestral population but rather evidence against common ancestry and say that what we have here are common design plans that incorporate elements of each other but don't necessarily show ancestry.

Moreover, even given the assumption of the doctrine of common ancestry, what this data enables us to estimate, it seems to me, is the population of the organisms that were ancestral to chimps and humans. What it tells us is that this population of non-human, non-chimp ancestors (whatever it was) had to be sufficiently large to carry the genetic diversity to explain how we have chimps and humans today that differ from each other with regard to this gorilla DNA. But even if that population were fairly large, who is to say that the genetic line that goes to human beings wasn't carried forward by just two individuals. I don't see anything in this data that would say even though this population had to have several thousand persons in it that the population that carried forward this red line could not have been just two individuals – two persons. So it doesn't seem to me that this data is compelling for showing that the human ancestral population, as opposed to the pre-human ancestral population, had to be more than two persons.

More important direct evidence for the size of the ancestral human population comes from the genetic diversity of human beings today. Researchers have been able to sample the genetic diversity of present day human beings around the world and have been able to show that it exhibits a considerable degree of genetic diversity. The claim is that the evolution of this much genetic diversity among human beings today requires a minimal initial population of at least a couple thousand individuals and it could not have arisen from two people alone. If you originally just had two people evolving over time to the present day, you would not get the diversity in the human genome that we see in the present. Therefore, even if Adam and Eve were special creations of God – even if you deny common ancestry – still, from two persons you would not be able to generate the amount of observed genetic diversity today. This argument seems to me much more compelling. It doesn't assume common ancestry. Even if Adam and Eve were special creations you still have the same problem. It doesn't talk about the pre-human population.

⁸⁸ 14:59

It is talking about the initial human population. How do you generate this much genetic diversity among living human beings from a single pair? It seems that you have to get down to no less than a couple thousand human persons.

What might one say in response to that? Notice that the argument assumes that the mutation rates among human beings were constant over time. In order to calculate whether this amount of genetic diversity could arise from an initial human pair, you have to assume a certain mutation rate that is constant over time. One might deny this conclusion by postulating accelerated rates of mutation in the early human population. One could see this as a result of divine intervention – that God accelerated the evolution of early humans so as to produce greater genetic diversity.⁸⁹ I don't think that this would need to be an *ad hoc* or contrived move on the part of the defender of the historical Adam just to save the appearances. Rather, you will remember when we talked about the mechanisms that are behind the neo-Darwinian theory of evolution, namely random mutation and natural selection, we saw that those mechanisms operate far too slowly to plausibly explain the amount of biological complexity and diversity in the world today. Therefore, these mechanisms don't seem to be adequate in and of themselves at the rate at which they operate to explain the observed biological complexity today. So the progressive creationist will postulate acts of divine intervention, either to cause mutation rates to accelerate that will drive evolution forward, or perhaps even acts of special creation in order to bring about the biological complexity that we see today to create new life forms. If you already believe that God is involved in producing accelerated rates of mutation in order to drive evolution forward then this really isn't surprising if, in the case of human beings, he would have produced accelerated rates of mutation that would bring about the development of modern human beings. So I don't think that this needs to be seen or criticized as a sort of *ad hoc* or contrived move. Rather, it fits in with what the progressive creationist would expect.

In any case, appeal to divine intervention to produce accelerated mutation rates may not even be necessary. Defenders of the historical Adam today note that these population estimates that we've been talking about are based upon highly idealized mathematical models which may not provide realistic population estimates. Fuz Rana, who is a scientist that works with the organization Reasons to Believe, has pointed out studies involving sheep and horses in which the original population size was known and yet the genetic diversity exhibited by present day populations is much greater than what the mathematical models predicted. He explains one such case involving sheep. I will quote from him here.⁹⁰ He says,

In 2007 a research team reported on the genetic diversity of wild mouflon sheep on one of the islands that are part of the Kerguelen sub-Antarctic archipelago. This group of sheep provided researchers with an unprecedented opportunity to study the effects of population dynamics on genetic diversity in small populations.

In 1957 a male and female yearling were placed onto Haute Island (an island in

⁸⁹ 20:11

⁹⁰ Fazale Rana, "Were They Real? The Scientific Case for Adam and Eve," *Reasons To Believe*, October 1, 2010. See <http://www.reasons.org/articles/were-they-real-the-scientific-case-for-adam-and-eve> (accessed September 15, 2013).

the Kerguelen Archipelago). . . . By the beginning of the 1970s, the number had grown to 100 individuals and peaked at 700 sheep in 1977. Since that time the population has fluctuated in a cyclical manner between 250 and 700 members.

Given that the population began with only two individuals, . . . has experienced cyclical changes in the population size, and was isolated on an island, the researchers expected very low genetic diversity (measured as heterozygosity).

. . .

What the researchers discovered, however, when they measured this quantity directly for the sheep on Haute Island was that it exceeded the predictions made by the models by up to a factor of 4.

So the genetic diversity was four times what the model had predicted.⁹¹ He says,

In other words, the models underestimated the genetic diversity of the actual population.

The researchers explained this discrepancy by speculating that natural selection drives the increase in genetic diversity, since an increase in genetic variability increases the survivability of the population.

So natural selection actually accelerates the rise of genetic diversity because it has survival value in the struggle for survival.

Consequently, if these same models were used to estimate the effective sizes of the ancestral population from the measured genetic diversity at any point in time, they would have overestimated the original population size as much larger than two individuals.

In other words, had they not known that there were originally only two sheep placed on that island, looking at the genetic diversity exhibited by the present sheep using the mathematical models they would have over estimated the minimal size that that population would have had at any time in the past because the models did not take account of the accelerated rates of genetic mutation that were driven by natural selection.

If it is the case that natural selection can drive the increase in genetic diversity then that calls into question the assumption that the mutation rates have been constant over time for humanity, and hence it calls into question the population estimates based on that assumption.

DISCUSSION

Question: I was just wondering how this might apply to Noah and the ark?

Answer: I haven't even thought of that! I am struggling enough with the historical Adam! You are raising the point that there you also had a very tiny bottleneck of human beings as to where you put Noah and would this be evidence, maybe, for a local flood instead of a universal flood. Those issues all arise again. But right now we are trying to deal with

⁹¹ 24:57

Adam. So I'll beg off that.

Question: Do biologists understand what determines genetic diversity? Is it directly correlated to, say, the number of people in a population? How do we even begin to determine this?

Answer: I will say a little bit more about that in a second. But, yes, they look at the amount of variability in the genetic structure and then you calculate how this could have arisen based upon mutation rates and the amount of time available. That will then give you these population estimates. But there are quite a number of assumptions that go into this kind of modeling that the defender of the historical Adam, I think, could challenge.

Question: If I am not mistaken, one of the questions you have always had or one of the problems you always had with the typical neo-Darwinian model is the mechanism for getting the diversity we have now. You always sort of questioned that, right? It sounds like now you are saying that maybe the mechanism is adequate to create the diversity that exists today. Is that right?

Answer: That is a fair point. What we are suggesting here is that some evidence shows that perhaps natural selection can drive an increase in genetic diversity because it has survivability value. But I think that is a long, long way from saying that genetic diversity among, for example, human beings today would be sufficient to explain how a bat and a sponge could evolve from a common ancestor. That is a lot, lot different. Here we are just talking about the sort of genetic diversity that is exhibited by Africans and Asians, for example. That is a far cry from the kind of biological complexity that exists in the world. So I think that the evidence that I shared in the lectures on creation-evolution would not be substantially affected by the claim here that the mutation rates that affect genetic diversity may not have been constant over time. When you think about it, it is really quite remarkable, it seems to me, that with these models they are able to get the minimum human population size down to a couple thousand people.⁹² I mean, that in itself is astonishing. It wouldn't take a great error to go from two thousand to two, I think. So, really, it is quite remarkable, I think, that these estimates do allow you to have such a small original human population.

Question: When I read Fuz Rana's work and what he had said about how the generally accepted population is down to, like you say, a thousand and there were different humanoids that died off and then one branch went up. Then when they did the sheep on the island, does the scientific community embrace that as an indication that perhaps there were a pair rather than a population?

Answer: I don't know the answer to that. As I said, this is an area in which I have only a surface knowledge. So I am sharing with you some of this information to just give you a familiarity with the issue. But you can bet that obviously evolutionary biologists who study population genetics will not be persuaded by the example of the sheep on Haute Island.

Followup: Because they don't want to be.

Answer: What I think we can say is that given this data the traditional view is defensible.

⁹² 30:09

But I am not suggesting that this proves it. It is just that we are looking here as to whether it is defensible in light of the data.

Question: It also assumes that the only change in genetic diversity comes from mutations. Mutations are generally destructive and destroy genetic information. It seems like just the opposite. So the original pair could have more associated genetics that are available perhaps than what they are looking at right now.

Answer: Well, apparently the human genome can only carry so much diversity. In order to get the amount of genetic traits you need more than just two people. I will say something more about that in a minute. Hang on to that. But I doubt that you can say that two persons could have carried the sort of genetic diversity that is being imagined to have existed at that early time. You are going to have to get something that would accelerate the growth of genetic diversity in order to defend the view that the minimum population could have been as small as two.

Question: I have heard Fuz Rana talk about on some of the Reasons to Believe podcasts that there is evidence for human Neanderthal interbreeding. I was wondering what that would do for the genetic diversity.

Answer: I wasn't going to talk about that but that is a very, very unsettling question. When we talk about this human lineage, this includes not just modern human beings but that includes these other – I am hesitant to call them humans – but it includes these other organisms like Neanderthal man, there is this other group called Denisovans, and then of course earlier forms like *Homo erectus* and *Homo habilis*. These are all in the human line as well. So the question is: where do you want to insert Adam and Eve? Were they before Neanderthal? Or were they after the Neanderthals branched off because the Neanderthals seem to be a different species. If they were afterward, then it would seem that Neanderthals really weren't human beings. They were highly evolved primates but they really weren't human if you say the human race is descended from Adam and Eve. But apparently modern human beings interbred with Neanderthals as you say. I remember being taken aback when one of these population geneticists said to me when I was in Canada earlier this year that you, yourself, carry Neanderthal DNA. In my own genetic profile, I carry the DNA of these Neanderthals who interbred with human beings. Now, if they weren't humans that meant that the descendants of Adam were literally committing bestiality, right? They were interbreeding with animals. Well, maybe that is possible. Maybe that is part of the fall of man into sin – that they engaged in behavior like that. On the other hand, maybe you want to say Neanderthals were human but then you are going to face the question of where do you put Adam and Eve in there?⁹³ The bottleneck that seems to exist of the minimal size of about two thousand people is around 150,000 years ago or so which is after Neanderthals separated from modern *Homo sapiens*. So on that view if you put Adam and Eve in there where it seems to fit the best, these Neanderthals were not fully human. They were highly evolved primates but they weren't fully human. That would seem the natural place to put Adam and Eve in there. But again, as I responded to your question, I find this very unsettling and I am not sure exactly what to do about them.

⁹³ 35:10

Question: A few years ago there was a cover story in *National Geographic* and a story about how all of humanity was genetically related to one woman that was designated as mitochondrial Eve. It seems like there is a lot of stuff on the web. That seems to be the case. Is that not the current thinking anymore?

Answer: That is the current thinking. The mitochondrial DNA that we all carry today is ultimately traceable back to a single woman, which is astonishing that there would be this person who is the mother of all mankind who actually lived and we all carry the imprint of her DNA. But among these evolutionary biologists and population geneticists, that doesn't mean that she was the unique person who was the only human female at that time. There were lots of other human females, too, but their descendants died out and everyone who exists today is descended from this one woman. But there were other women, too, whose descendants eventually died off and so they are not in the population today. Although that evidence is consistent with the idea of a historical Eve, it doesn't require it.

Question: Just like the Bible records Abraham and his descendants, we don't know about evolution's situation but if Adam has the Spirit of God which is the eternal Spirit, wouldn't natural selection just kind of work other species out and only the Spirit in people gets passed down as Noah's situation indicated?

Answer: Let me interpret this question in a way to raise another difficult issue that is related to this. That is, suppose there was a minimum population of around two thousand of these creatures, or individuals let's call them. We won't call them humans, we'll just call them individuals and there were around two thousand of them. And God picked out two of them to place his Spirit in and breathe into them a human soul so that they became the true human parents. In that case, there could have been others that looked like them and acted like them but they weren't fully human because God had selected just these two to be Adam and Eve. Well, that is possible and I know some Christians who hold to that view. They would say this answers questions like "Where did Cain find his wife?" "Who was Cain afraid of that was going to kill him?" There were these others around but they are just not mentioned because the text focuses on this special pair that God had picked out. This is going to have impact, though, on your view of original sin because if you think that all of humanity is implicated in Adam's fall then what about all the descendants of these other people that were around that weren't descendants of Adam? They wouldn't be implicated in original sin. So this is going to cause really interesting reverberations in your doctrine of original sin. We are going to talk about that a little bit later, too. I am not closing the door on that by any means but I am just saying that realize that all of these alternatives have really interesting and unsettling theological reverberations that we need to be aware of. So that is an alternative that some people have suggested.⁹⁴ What I am arguing right now is I am not sure we are forced to that alternative because I am not convinced that the evidence is inconsistent with there being an original historical human pair. The bottleneck got so small that it was just two people – Adam and Eve – and if you then imagine accelerated rates of mutation which would be either by divine intervention or just naturally, like the sheep on Haute Island, then that is entirely consistent with the evidence that we have today.

⁹⁴ 40:03

With that we will conclude. Next time I want to talk about some specific DNA studies that have been done that call into question the variability of the genetic lines that were present in this early human population, and it suggests, indeed, they could have been born by only two individuals. That is reserved for next time.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Total Running Time: 41:18 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 12

Defending the Traditional Doctrine of the Fall

In our lesson we have been talking about the doctrine of sin and particularly the doctrine of the Fall of man. Last week we looked at challenges to the existence of the historical Adam. Of course if there was no historical Adam then there was no historical Fall. So the Fall as a doctrine stands or falls with the historicity of Adam and Eve.

We saw that the historicity of Adam and Eve have a significant challenge today from population genetics. The best argument against the historicity of an original human pair is fairly simple to understand. It is that the genetic diversity that is exhibited by the human population on earth today is so broad that it could not have originated from two original people. The diversity in the population of the earth today is such that it would have required a minimum population of a few thousand or so and therefore, given the genetic diversity that we see today on this planet, it is argued that there could not have been an original human pair from whom the human race descended.

Last time I looked at some challenges to this. It is predicated upon mathematical models that assume that the mutation rate is constant over time and that genetic diversity is not subject to natural selection. We saw, at least in one example on the sub-Antarctic archipelago, that these models yielded false predictions with regard to the sheep population on that island. The amount of genetic diversity exhibited by the present day population of sheep would have seemed to require, given these models, a much larger initial population. But in fact we know that it was only two original sheep that were introduced onto that island in 1957. So it seems that the person who believes in the historical Adam can challenge the assumptions that underlie these mathematical models.

Calling into question these estimates of the size of the ancestral population is not without precedence. For example, back in the 1990s the evolutionary biologist Francisco Ayala, a very prominent evolutionary biologist, attempted to estimate the ancestral population size based upon present day genetic diversity in a portion of the human genome involving what are called HLA genes. Assuming a constant mutation rate and a lack of natural selection for genetic change, Ayala arrived at an estimate that there must have been at least 32 separate versions of these HLA genes at the time of our last common ancestor with chimpanzees. Before the tree of primate evolution broke into separate branches for chimpanzees and human beings there must have been enough of a population size to carry these 32 separate versions of these HLA genes. Indeed, Ayala estimated that that population size must have been around 4,000 individuals at a minimum. That would obviously be incompatible with the origin of the human race from an ancestral pair.

It turns out, however, that these assumptions that Ayala made were very likely false for HLA genes. Subsequent estimates which have corrected for those assumptions yield a number of different versions of the HLA gene to be, not 32, but only 5. And of those 5, only 3 were ancestral, primary before chimps and human beings diverged on the tree of

human evolution.⁹⁶

So the last common ancestor may have carried only three different versions of the HLA gene and that could have been easily transmitted by an original human pair to the present day population with the HLA diversity in the human genome that is exhibited today.

So I'm told that Ayala's original estimate of human population size based upon HLA genes is now obsolete. This is no longer offered as part of the evidence for the size of the ancestral human population because it has simply been shown to be predicated on false assumptions. Therefore, no one appeals to it today. It is of historical interest only. But that historical interest, I think, is important because what it shows us is that calling into question some of the assumptions underlying these mathematical models is not without precedent. There is precedent for thinking these assumptions may be false and that therefore these estimates of minimum population size may well be incorrect.

So I think that the person who wants to defend the historicity of an ancestral human pair for the human population is rational in doing so. His view is tenable in light of population genetics and therefore the doctrine of the human fall into sin is not ruled out by such studies.

DISCUSSION

Question: It seems as though when you read the biblical account of Adam and Eve, that God created Adam fully grown as opposed to evolving from some previous primate or animal or being.

Answer: That issue wouldn't be relevant to the question of the challenge of genetic diversity to the original human pair. Why is that? Well, even if Adam and Eve were special creations by God, unrelated to previous hominid forms like *Homo erectus* and *Homo habilis* and so forth, the question would still be: "How could present day genetic diversity arise from that original human pair?" In fact, it occurred to me talking to someone last week after class that this challenge is even worse for the special creationist because the Young Earth Creationist has to say that this genetic diversity has evolved within only about ten to twenty thousand years. Whereas the progressive creationist can say that the creation of human beings took place around 150,000 years ago and therefore that gives some scope for the evolution of genetic diversity. So this challenge is actually worse, I think, for the Young Earther who thinks that Adam and Eve were special creations by God at most 20,000 years ago. He is really going to be hard pressed to explain how this much genetic diversity could be exhibited by present day humans. I don't think that we need to enter into debates over whether or not Adam and Eve were the result of special creation or guided evolution or whatever. The challenge to the historicity of Adam and Eve from population genetics is really quite independent of their origin.

Question: How critical is this issue to the overall Christian worldview? I know you've talked about that web where there are certain critical things in the center and there are other things at the edges. Where does this fit in the whole scheme of things?

⁹⁶ 5:15

Answer: That forms a very nice segue to the next portion of the lesson that I am going to give. But let me highlight what you have said because I do think this is important. I think that our Christian worldview can be thought of as like a web of beliefs. Kind of like a spider's web. Beliefs that are near the center will be more deeply ingrained than beliefs that are at the periphery of the web. If you pull one of the strands that is out at the periphery of the web, that will cause some minor reverberations in the web but it won't cause the web to collapse.⁹⁷ On the other hand if you pull out some of these central beliefs in your web of beliefs, that is going to send reverberations throughout the rest of the structure and will cause significant revisions and maybe even collapse of the web of beliefs. So what are some of these central doctrines that lie near the core of the Christian web of beliefs? Certainly things like the existence of God would be one of these core beliefs. If you pull that out, Christianity is toast! You can't have Christianity that is atheistic. I think the deity of Christ would be one such core belief. His resurrection from the dead. Human sinfulness and hence need of redemption. These would be central doctrines that could not be easily given up without really destroying the Christian doctrine. By contrast, doctrines like the rapture of the church, or the tribulation, modes of baptism – infant baptism versus adult believer's baptism. Even I would say doctrines like predestination would be more at the fringes of the web of beliefs. You could give those up and it would cause you to have to revise your beliefs but they wouldn't be devastating. Indeed, there are many Christians who don't hold to those same beliefs that you might with regard to these more peripheral doctrines. So the question is: where does the doctrine of the Fall stand with respect to this web of beliefs? How deeply ingrained in the web of Christian beliefs is this doctrine? Does it lie somewhere near the center or closer to the periphery? I will say something about that in just a moment.

I've argued that the traditional doctrine of the Fall is defensible in light of modern population genetics. Still, it is worth asking, I think, what would happen in the worst case scenario that belief in a historical Adam is no longer tenable? If we have got to give up belief in the historical Adam and Eve, how significant would that be for the Christian faith? Clearly, as I said, if you give up belief in the historical Adam then the doctrine of the Fall goes out the window. You couldn't have a historical Fall if there wasn't a historical Adam. So the doctrine of the Fall would be lost if the historicity of Adam and Eve were to be abandoned.

That would in no way imply that the historical Fall would be necessary to man's being sinful and in need of God's forgiveness. The fact that there wasn't a historical Fall would not do anything to deny the fact that all people are fallen and sinful and therefore need God's forgiveness and redemption. You don't need to have a historical Fall in order to affirm that all people are lost and in need of salvation. So the doctrine of the Fall isn't essential to the doctrine of the universality of sin and the need of salvation.

On the other hand, it does seem that the doctrine of the historical Fall is essential to the doctrine of original sin. There is no way that all people can be implicated in Adam's sin if in fact Adam never existed. So the doctrine of original sin, I think, could not survive the abandonment of the historicity of Adam and Eve.

⁹⁷ 10:11

That raises then a further question: can Christianity survive without the doctrine of original sin? We know the answer to that question, and the answer is yes! Because although the doctrine of original sin is part of Catholic and for the most part Protestant doctrine, the Eastern Orthodox churches like Russian, Greek, Syrian, Slavic Orthodox Churches do not in fact hold to the doctrine of original sin.⁹⁸

Now these Orthodox confessions believe in the historicity of Adam. They do accept that Adam and Eve existed but they see Adam merely as the portal through which sin entered into the human race. Through the deception of Adam by Satan, sin entered into the human race and then spreads to all people. But Eastern Orthodoxy does not believe that we are implicated for Adam's sin or that we are somehow culpable for what Adam did. Neither, by the way, does Judaism believe this. This is not part of traditional orthodox Judaism – that we are implicated in and culpable for Adam's sin.

So while the abandonment of the doctrine of original sin would have major theological consequences for Catholics and for most Protestants, such a move would not faze Orthodox Christians. Cornelius Plantinga, who is a theologian at Calvin College – obviously, a Reformed institution – has written the following:

Although . . . Christians of various theological orientations differ on central issues in the doctrine of original sin – for example, how a child acquires the fateful disposition to sin, whether this disposition is itself sin, how to describe and assess the accompanying bondage of the will – they agree on the universality, solidarity, stubbornness, and historical momentum of sin.⁹⁹

So that still leaves us with a robust doctrine of sin and human fallenness and universal need of salvation among all mankind.

As I mentioned, Orthodoxy does affirm, along with Catholicism and Protestantism, the historicity of Adam and Eve. Although they don't have the doctrine of original sin, they do preserve the historical Adam. If you give up on the historical Adam, I think that this would serve to destroy the typology of Adam with Christ. Paul calls Jesus Christ "the second Adam" and he draws a parallel between the two. Adam is a type of Christ; a sort of figure or foreshadowing of Christ who is called the second Adam. Just as through Adam all persons fell into sin, so in Christ redemption is made available for all persons. If there is no historical Adam then this typology of Adam and Christ would be destroyed. There would no longer be any historical parallel between Christ and Adam. That, I think, is very troubling.

Notice this would not mean that if Adam is a mythological figure then Jesus of Nazareth was a mythological figure. That would be ridiculous. Saying that Adam didn't exist wouldn't in any way imply that Jesus of Nazareth didn't exist. On the contrary, in fact, it would be precisely the parallelism between Adam and Jesus that would be destroyed by denying the historical Adam. Now what you would have is a figurative or mythological figure on the one hand and an indisputably historical person on the other hand. So the

⁹⁸ 15:19

⁹⁹ Cornelius Plantinga, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), p. 33.

parallelism between the two would be destroyed if we give up on the historical Adam.¹⁰⁰

Even proponents of the modern view of the Fall, who see the Fall as simply symbolic of the fallenness of all mankind, admit that Paul the Apostle at least believed that there was a historical Adam. When you read Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15, it is evident that Paul at least thought that Adam was a historical person who was parallel to Jesus of Nazareth. More than that, however, Paul didn't simply *believe* that Adam was a historical person, he *asserted and taught* that he was a historical person. So you can't say that this was just a kind of incidental belief that Paul held. For example, if Paul thought that the sun goes around the earth, that would be a mistake but it wouldn't be an error in Pauline theology because Paul didn't teach this even if that is what he thought as a first century person. But in this case he not only believed that Adam was a historical person but he actually asserts it and he teaches it. Remember we saw in Acts 17 that Paul says, "From one man God made every nation of men that they should inhabit the face of the whole earth." So to deny the historical Adam would be to say that Paul is in theological error in thinking of Adam as a type of Christ. And that threatens to undo Pauline theology. You pull that thread and the whole fabric, I think, threatens to unravel.

Therefore, it does seem to me that there is a lot at stake here and that therefore we should resist if we can claims that Adam and Eve were purely symbolic or mythological figures and not historical. So, given the defensibility of Adam and Eve in light of contemporary population genetics and estimations of ancestral population size, I am sticking with the historical Adam and Eve on the basis of Paul's teaching as well as the affirmations in the book of Genesis.

DISCUSSION

Question: The sin in contrasting the first Adam and second Adam basically is due to the eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. So that basically means that if we embrace God's standard of good and evil as Jesus does then the sin will be redeemed. But if we do not hold on to God's standard of good and evil, we in turn interpret what is good and basically we interpret what is good for me is good so that changes the nature of good and evil in its standard. That becomes sin. It is from God's standard to man's standard and man's standard differs one from another. So I believe in historical Adam but even if it is symbolic the Fall is basically denying God's standard of good and evil.

Answer: I think that is right and I think for that reason you don't need the historical Fall in order to preserve the doctrine that all people are sinful, they have distorted and warped God's standard of righteousness, they have pursued finite goods like their own goods instead of God himself, the ultimate good, and that is I think the essence of sin. It is to no longer seek God as the ultimate good but to seek lesser goods in the place of God. So that doctrine I don't think is threatened by denying the historicity of Adam. I think you are right about that. I think that was Plantinga's point as well.

Question: I was going to say in regards to original sin we may not have inherited that specific sin, saying we would do the same thing in the same place, but what we inherit is

the effects of the original sin. We don't have the personal one-on-one with God, and so we have a predisposition where we are born into a sinful world with that predisposition and we become accountable we will become sinners in our own right by our own nature and choice.¹⁰¹

Answer: All right. You are offering here a reinterpretation if you will of the doctrine of original sin that is one that I know some people hold today. What he is saying is that it is not that you are culpable for Adam's sin - you can only be guilty and culpable for your own sins, not for somebody else's. But he is saying there is a kind of corruption that is introduced through Adam's Fall into the human race so that we are all born with this inward disposition to sin; we are warped and selfish and therefore no longer naturally pursue God's goodness. That would be closer to the Eastern Orthodox view of sin where we don't inherit the culpability and guilt of Adam but simply this corruption. We will talk about that when we get to the doctrine of original sin. This is a multi-faceted doctrine. So what you have hit on here is just one facet of the doctrine and I suppose the question would be could you give up some of these other facets and retain that part of it?

Question: It is not just the Eastern Orthodox Church that denies the Western view of original sin but also there is Anabaptist traditions as well. If you read Kirk MacGregor's *A Molinist-Anabaptist Systematic Theology* he goes through these doctrines of original sin.

Answer: When was this written?

Followup: I don't know. It was fairly recently.

Answer: I see, OK. But historically, have Anabaptists? I am not familiar with Anabaptist doctrine.

Followup: He believes so. I haven't read enough Anabaptists to say for sure. But it looks like, yeah, Anabaptists generally, historically have denied the sin nature in humanity.

Answer: I see. The Protestant evangelical that I am most familiar with who denied the doctrine of original sin is Finney, the 19th century theologian who is something of a maverick for having denied the doctrine of original sin as a Protestant and evangelical. But that would be interesting if there are parallels in Anabaptist tradition as well.

Followup: If you want to read more about the Eastern Orthodox, probably the best author is John S. Romanides. He wrote an article, "Original Sin according to St. Paul,"¹⁰² where he goes through Romans 5:12 saying, as a native Greek speaker, the best interpretation of Romans 5:12 is through Adam sin came into the world and through sin death and so death spread to all men because of which all sin. Because of death, all sin. Not the other way around. That was Romanides and it's a traditional Eastern Orthodox view.

Answer: OK.

Question: A couple things. I was taught that the original Fall was the angelic fall first. Another point is that humanity could be in a state . . . the fallen angels upon the earth at that time. But God could create Adam in southern Mesopotamia, create him as an adult,

¹⁰¹ 25:10

¹⁰² John S. Romanides, "Original Sin according to St. Paul," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, Vol. IV, Nos. 1 and 2, 1955-6.

and have him walk with him like Enoch and give him this charge to rule over the world. Then Adam could fall and there would be a new awareness of death. When man chose to decide for himself what was right and wrong and be his own god. He would immediately have to darken his mind because of the condemnation. He'd be . . . death wouldn't enter him as far as he would be running from God. He would be all . . . all the attributes God had given him to rule the world he would be using to hide from God to preserve his life. Because we are all made of one blood, one flesh, it would be imparted to all people, a new hiding, a new death, throughout the world. Even though there was physical death before, this would be a spiritual death. It would be impossible to come back to God if we didn't have the sins lifted off.

Answer: Yeah, that is closer to the traditional doctrine of original sin. Remember when we talked about the Fall and its consequences on the original view: falling from the state of integrity and innocence into the state of corruption and separation from God and the major and minor perfections that were lost. The emphasis on the angelic fall that you rightly point to is a characteristic emphasis, again, of Orthodoxy - of Eastern Orthodoxy. They want to say that the origin of sin is through the satanic fall and then it enters into the human race through Adam as the doorway, so to speak.¹⁰³ But the real origin goes back further to this angelic fall. But there is no suggestion anywhere in Scripture that human beings are implicated in the angelic fall. We are not held guilty or corrupted by the angelic fall; it is through Adam that sin enters into the human race. So when we are talking about the doctrine of the Fall that is why we focus on Adam's sin rather than this prior angelic fall.

Followup: What I was trying to point out is it could have been created. There is a lot of Samaritan texts that support Adam being created. They talk about it. That he lived 900 and something years when most people died early. There is a good book, *Historical Genesis*, and it supports everything in the Bible I think, because the guy is a devout Christian who wrote it from my understanding. Another thing - the first Scripture we quoted in Philippians about Christ came to redeem - every knee is going to bow in heaven, on earth, and listen to this, under the earth. So he is going to get to fallen things to, all right?

Answer: Yeah, all right. This is a doctrine . . .

Followup: Wait, listen, listen. Here is how it applies to Adam. Adam was created – humanity existed – and he was to form the family that Christ was going to come from and the creation of Adam and the laws were to preserve the Adamic but then when it's extended to the Christians, we were not part of that. Christ's grace is to cure our problem which is our separation from God. He's lifted off the guilt and now you have access of his spirit again. That is, as Colossians says, in whom we have the redemption and then it says what it is, the lifting off of our sin.

Answer: All right. Let me just respond to this notion that through Christ everything is going to be restored. This is the doctrine that Origen taught called Apocatastasis. He was a Greek church father who believed that the redemption wrought in Christ was so powerful and so universal that not only all human beings would be redeemed but that

¹⁰³ 30:05

Satan himself and his demons would be redeemed. Everything would be restored ultimately through Christ. So, this denies the doctrine of hell, it holds to universalism, not simply with respect to human beings but even with regard to Satan and demons. I think it is very, very difficult to square with orthodoxy. By that I mean orthodoxy with a small “o” – with biblical teaching. Origen was condemned for his views on this. So this is not a doctrine that I think we should embrace. Now, I see you waving your hands, but I do want to move on to someone else.

Question: I don’t know if I can agree with what you said about the doctrine of original sin is not essential. I believe it is. Here’s why. Why would Christ have needed to die? There would be no need for him to die on the cross. He could have just come and could have, through his act of obedience, could have imputed righteousness to us. There would have been no need for the removal of the sin.

Answer: Well, now, I appreciate pushback on this because I think those of us who are Catholic or traditional Protestants should push back and say “Wait a minute! We are not going to easily give up this important doctrine.” But, having said that, if you think that Christ’s death as a sacrificial offering to God is necessary to pay the penalty for sin, why can’t it be the penalty for each person’s own sin that drives Christ to the cross and requires atonement? Why does it have to be original sin that I am guilty of and need redemption from? That is just not clear to me.

Followup: OK, because God had decided before he ever created that Christ was going to come to the earth and redeem mankind from sin. I don’t believe in a plan-B. I don’t believe he said, “Oh I made man and I have to come in and here’s sin so I have got to take care of it. So, OK, Christ you are going to have to do this.” I believe that that was decided before anything was ever created.

Answer: Yes, right. It says “from before the foundation of the world, he was slain” in the sense that this was in the foreordination and plan of God to deal with sin.¹⁰⁴ But I guess my question would be: doesn’t all sin require some sort of sacrificial offering to appease the wrath and justice of God? If that is true, then given the universality of sin and the stubbornness of sin that we are all fallen, isn’t that sufficient to require the cross? It is not clear to me that the need of the cross would be obviated if you give up the idea that I am implicated in Adam’s sin rather than for my own sins. So that would be my response, but I agree with you this is not a doctrine that we should easily abandon. When we get to the doctrine of original sin we will flesh this out some more. We will talk about it some more. But here we are just talking about the importance of the historical Fall for Christian theology.

Question: My question would be do we still have a sinful nature? When we are born, are we born with a sinful nature? If there wasn’t one specific instance, one specific time when sin entered, then were we designed by God to have a sinful nature?

Answer: This is really an excellent question. You heard an earlier questioner’s emphasis where he wanted to say we do have this corrupted, sinful nature even if we are not culpable for Adam’s sin. Remember I said you could hold that there is still a kind of corruption and disposition to sin that comes into humanity without saying you are

¹⁰⁴ 35:03

culpable for what Adam did – that you have got to pay the penalty for what he did. But nevertheless I think that you are raising a good point. In what sense could we say that our very nature as human beings is corrupted and fallen just because there is sin prevalent among human beings? It would seem on this view that human nature would not be fallen in that way; rather, it would simply be that as every individual grows up to adolescence and adulthood in a culture that is permeated by sin that he will naturally fall into sin himself. Rather than having this in his nature, it would be something that is more external to him and which corrupts him by growing up in a fallen society and culture. That might make us feel uncomfortable. Maybe that is giving up too much of the doctrine of original sin to say merely that.

Followup: Would it then follow that, while we as Christians who have accepted Christ still feel the temptation to sin and still feel that disposition to sin, when we are born we are born without sin?

Answer: Right, that would follow. When a little baby is born, he is born without sin, he is innocent.

Followup: And we are not fallen until that first moment that we choose to sin?

Answer: Right, that would seem to be the consequence of this view. Children would be innocent. Now that in one sense might be helpful because it could explain then the salvation of infants who die. They don't bear Adam's guilt and so you don't need to baptize them. If they die in infancy, they go to heaven because they are not sinners. But on the other hand, here's the troubling implication I think that that view has. That would mean that it is theoretically possible that somebody could grow up and never sin and therefore never have any need for redemption by Christ if he lives a sinless life. That would seem to be possible on this view because he doesn't carry this fallen nature. So given that sin isn't necessary (it is always a free act, sin isn't compulsory) it would seem to imply that a person could avoid the need of redemption by Christ and just go to heaven through his own merits. And that seems terribly wrong.

Followup: There are some verses that I can't bring to mind but I seem to remember verses in the New Testament where it talks about our sin nature and our fallen sin nature and how we are helpless to the sin nature.

Answer: Yes, that is certainly right. Paul talks about the old man, the natural man, the unregenerate man.¹⁰⁵ So you are absolutely right. Those would need to be taken into account in trying to craft our doctrine of sin and particularly original sin. Those are all very good points. But I think you can see that this exercise in exploring what is the worst case scenario - what happens if this doctrine of the historical Adam is abandoned? That is at least worth thinking about because then we will have a clear idea of the consequences of the denial of this doctrine and hence of the importance of this doctrine. So that is why we have engaged in this little exercise.

Next time we will turn to the question of the nature of sin. Wherein does sin consist?

¹⁰⁵ 39:55

What is sin? What is it to sin? Those will be the questions we will explore next time.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Total Running Time: 41:04 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 13

Nature of Sin

We are thinking about man insofar as he is a sinner and fallen before God. Last time we looked at the doctrine of the Fall, and attempts to systematize the biblical data about the Fall of man, and to answer the challenge to the historical Adam that is posed by contemporary population genetics. Today we want to turn to a new subsection on the nature of sin – what is sin? How should we understand sin?

Nature of Sin

Biblical Data

So let's take a look first at some of the biblical data concerning the nature of sin. To do this, I am going to need my Bible as you will need yours. I would like to look at four biblical passages with you on the nature of sin.

First, from Genesis 2:15-17. This is the story of the Fall, or leading up to it.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Here God is giving to man a command to keep and it will be through the transgression of this command that man falls into sin.

Let's look at Romans 5:18-19 in the New Testament. Paul, reflecting upon Adam's sin, says,

Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness [that is, Jesus Christ] leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Here Paul speaks of Adam's sin in terms of trespass and in terms of disobedience to God.

Turn over to Romans 7, just two chapters later. Romans 7:7-12 where Paul describes some of the effects of sin in the natural man. He says,

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin. I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, wrought in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.

Finally, the fourth passage is from John's first epistle, 1 John 3:4. Here John gives a very pithy definition of sin: "Every one who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness." So here is John's concept of sin. Sin is lawlessness.

Attempts to Systematize Data

Let's look at attempts to systematize this biblical data.¹⁰⁷

Traditional

First, let's talk about the traditional view of the nature of sin. Traditionally, sin has been understood to be a transgression of God's moral law. We saw that the Scripture speaks of sin as lawlessness and that Paul speaks of a trespass on the part of Adam. So sin is a transgression of God's moral law.

There are three characteristics of sin that have been traditionally identified by Christian theologians. The first would be *pride*. For example, Genesis 3:5 speaks of this. This is the serpent's temptation of Eve and he says to her, "For God knows that when you eat of it [that is, of the tree] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Here you see the pride of man appealed to; that he wants to arrogate to himself the place of God. He wants to be like God. So one of the characteristics of sin is this pride – arrogating to one's self a status that one ought not to have.

The second one is *concupiscence*. Not a word that we often use today, but concupiscence basically means a grasping, a coveting, a kind of craving that sin produces in one. Paul speaks of this as we saw in Romans 7:7. Let's look at that verse again. ". . . if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin. I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'" But sin produces in us this sort of selfish grasping and desire for self gratification. The desires of one's own self as opposed to seeking what God wants. So concupiscence, lust if you will – not just sexual lust, but this sort of craving or coveting –, is a traditional characteristic of sin.

Finally, the third traditional characteristic of sin identified by theologians is *unbelief*. Sin is unbelief. Romans 14:23, Paul says in the last part of that verse, "for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." So, one of the characteristics of sin is unbelief. Indeed, for Martin Luther, the great Protestant reformer, this is the chief characteristic of sin – unbelief – because it is out of unbelief that all of the other aspects of sin flow. It is fundamentally unbelief in God that is the root of all the other evils that are produced. So unbelief, far from being trivial, is really the chief principal sin that we commit.

Luther also characterized sin, interestingly enough, as a kind of curvature of the soul in upon one's self. One is no longer oriented toward God as a supreme good but there is a kind of bentness, a kind of self-curvature, where we are curved in upon our selves seeking our own gratification and desires.

Those would be some of the traditional ways in which sin is characterized.

Modern

Now, in contrast to that, modern theologians have tried to, shall we say, domesticate or

¹⁰⁷ 5:02

reinterpret sin. For example, the father of modern theology was the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, an early 19th century theologian.¹⁰⁸ For Schleiermacher, sin is a weakness of our God consciousness. He thought that the essence of religion was having a consciousness of God and one's dependence of God moment by moment through life, a sort of absolute dependence upon God. Sin is weakness in this God consciousness. It is being oblivious to God – not being aware of one's dependence on God, a sort of forgetfulness of God. So man is not really fatally flawed. He is not morally guilty and condemned before God. Rather, he is just inhibited. He needs to come to a kind of full realization of his dependence upon God to expand his consciousness as it were and to experience his absolute dependence upon God moment by moment. I think you can see that for Schleiermacher, although there are things there of value in terms of being dependent upon God and the importance of being conscious of God moment by moment, he really robs the traditional doctrine of sin of any of its moral quality.

Similarly in the 20th century, a very prominent 20th century theologian was Paul Tillich. Tillich really could not even be called a theist, I don't think. He didn't really believe there is a personal mind or being distinct from the world who has created the world. Tillich referred to God as "the ground of being." He is the sort of ultimate reality that is the foundation or the ground of everything else, and everything else is simply a manifestation of this fundamental reality which is difficult to characterize called "the ground of all being." So for Tillich sin is alienation from the ground of being. Rather than recognizing your unity with the world and with the ground of being you are estranged from it. You don't recognize that and so you are alienated from the ground of being. So Tillich reinterpreted the traditional characteristics of sin in line with this philosophy. For example, what was unbelief for Tillich? Unbelief is the failure to recognize your unity with God. You really are one with God. God is the ground of your being and you are one with God but unbelief is a failure to recognize that oneness with God. So you need to get rid of that alienation and estrangement by recognizing your fundamental unity with God. What is pride? Pride is self-exaltation. Rather than being oriented toward God, you are oriented toward yourself and exalt yourself. It is a refusal to recognize yourself as finite. You are just a finite creature that is ultimately doomed to perish and pass away and pride is thinking of yourself as somehow more significant than you really are; failing to recognize your finitude in face of the ground of being. Concupiscence he interprets to be, again, just self-seeking – seeking your own goods and interests. Again, for Tillich I think you can see, as with Schleiermacher, you have this same tendency to obscure the moral aspects of sin. We don't hear anything here about guilt or punishment or the need for redemption. It is just a sort of failure of human consciousness to realize its oneness with God or dependency upon God.

I don't mean to imply by any means that all modern theologians hold to views like this, but I think this is illustrative of the movement away from the traditional concept of sin that has characterized some modernist thinkers.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ 10:05

¹⁰⁹ 15:00

DISCUSSION

Question: It seems as though the modern position here is nothing more than a repackaged form of Pelagianism. Is that correct?

Answer: I think it is worse than that because – we’ll talk about Pelagianism when we get to original sin – but Pelagius did think that we need redemption, we need forgiveness, even if he thought that we have the ability to come to God and the ability to live a sinless life on our own in virtue of God’s gifts that he has given us. But it still is a moral failing on Pelagius’ view. So I think this is much worse than that. To me this is more like pantheism really. It is more like Buddhism, I think, in a sense. If you think of the ground of being as just being Brahman or The All or The Absolute, it seems to me that this is very alien to a monotheistic conception of God and sin.

Question: I think this way of expressing the prerequisite of our moral or standard of good and evil since God defines good and only by this relationship with him we understand what his standard is and when we fall short and then we need to repent and get redeemed so the way that they explain that can be a prerequisite of the moral standard?

Answer: I think you are absolutely right when you draw attention to the fact that your doctrine of sin is going to depend upon your doctrine of God, isn’t it? If God is a personal being who is, as you say, the standard of goodness – he *is* what Plato called The Good – and it is through his commandments that we have moral duties, obligations, and prohibitions, then your doctrine of sin is going to flow out of that. But if you think of God as an impersonal absolute then it is difficult to see how you can have a robust doctrine of sin and guilt before God. So I do think you are quite right in reminding us that the traditional doctrine of sin presupposes the classical doctrine of God that we’ve talked about these many months ago.

Question: Most of the time I think of sin as some sort of willful disobedience to God but it sounds like you are saying there can be sort of a passive nature to sin where we just don’t recognize it – like unfaithfulness. Or we don’t recognize our own bent or something like that. Can you speak to that passive versus active nature, if that is what you call it?

Answer: I will say something more about what I think sin is when we get to the evaluation, but I do think you are drawing our attention to something that is important. There can be sins of omission as well as sins of commission; not just active rebellion against God but a passive indifference to God. In that sense, maybe Tillich and Schleiermacher do have something to remind us about in that when we fail to be conscious of our obligations to God, to live for him everyday, and we are just indifferent to him, we are failing to fulfill our moral duties before God and therefore are sinning even though it may be very passive. So we shouldn’t just think of sin as willful rebellion. I think you are absolutely right that it can involve a passive indifference to God as well.

Question: Could you think of sin as having your will different from God’s and that would be kind of a basis for where pride and stuff comes from?

Answer: Yes.

Followup: The modern theologians, I don’t know anything about them, but it seems to me

that if they were insightful they would know that if you had a different will and came into touch with God you would have self-condemnation. Do they approach that you need a covering?

Answer: Again, if you don't have a concept of God as a person, then he doesn't have a will. So these thinkers, I think, lack this robust concept of God as a person to whom we relate. But I like what you are saying. When our will is oriented contrary to God's will then we are in effect sinning.¹¹⁰ Sin doesn't need to be the choice of something that is, in itself, positively evil. It can be just something different than what God wills. If he wills for you to do something and you choose to do something else, that other thing might be good in itself – maybe it would be what God wills someone else to do in fact – so that that needn't be an evil act, but for you it is evil because it involves disobedience to God. You have opposed your will to his will. So I do think that that is an important insight.

Followup: And that would be with a context of anything done without faith. That is only in the concept of you know that there is a God. So anything, once you know there is God, done without faith is going to be sin so you must be in accordance; that is Lordship.

Answer: Yes. That is what Paul does say – that anything that doesn't proceed from faith is sin.

Followup: It seems like the natural theologians, if they had the concept that, OK we are cut off, we are in a finite perspective, that there would be conflict when they enter into an all-knowing . . . unless you change it from being all-knowing to being a numbness like the Hindu.

Answer: It does seem to be more akin to Eastern religions, I think, which also think of the finite self as somehow estranged from The Absolute and you need to deny yourself and realize your unity with The Whole or The All and ultimately the goal is reabsorption into The All. I think this sounds very Eastern in its tone.

Question: How would the modern view look at the Fall in itself. Would they try to say that Eve prior to taking a bite from the apple just lost her ability to understand her connection to God rather than choosing consciously to transgress the law?

Answer: I am not sure if you were here when we talked about the Fall, the traditional view of the Fall versus modern views of the Fall. On these modern views of the Fall, the Fall is just a mythological event; it is not something that really happened. It simply is a symbol of all of our fallenness and estrangement from God. It is not something that actually happened historically. So the sort of question that you are asking wouldn't even be posed by someone like a Tillich. He would simply think of this as a myth that does express a deep truth, namely our alienation from the ground of being, but he would see this as something that is in every man and not something that happened to the ancestors of the human race.

Evaluation

Let's say something by way of evaluation about the nature of sin. I think already you've

¹¹⁰ 20:06

seen that I think that sin is primarily a transgression of God's moral law. Because God is The Good and has constituted certain moral duties for us by issuing commandments to us, disobedience to those commandments or the breaking or transgression of his moral law is sin.

But sin is much more than just law-breaking, it seems to me. For sin involves a personal dimension that we mustn't miss or overlook. Sin is a personal affront to God. It is not simply transgression of some natural moral law, it is disobedience. It is like the child flinging epithets in the face of his parents and choosing to do what he wants to do rather than what his parents have told him to do. It is a rebellion and disobedience against God himself. Therefore, there is much more of a personal dimension to sin than simply breaking the law. It is an affront to God. It is in a sense an assault upon God's person and authority which creatures commit.

So we shouldn't think of sin as just a weakness in man, as these modern theologians do. Rather, I think we need to affirm that man is objectively morally guilty before God and therefore finds himself in a state of condemnation. It is not just guilt feelings which are our problem. Rather, we are objectively morally guilty before God and therefore under his just condemnation deserving his punishment and wrath.¹¹¹

It is because of that objective moral guilt that we bear that we find ourselves in a state of condemnation before God. I think that this understanding is so important because it helps to answer non-believers who characterize God as saying, "What kind of God is this? Believe in me or be damned!" Is that an all-loving God? A God who would say believe or be damned? Is that the kind of God that we worship? No, not at all. It is not that God says, "Believe or be damned." Rather, we are already condemned before God. We have already raised our fist against him and find ourselves in a state of condemnation and guilt before him. So God says to us, "Believe and be saved." That is his offer to us. Believe and be saved. So when we understand the nature of sin and our condemnation before God I think we have a clearer understanding of the predicament in which we find ourselves and why God's offer of salvation in Christ is truly a rescue operation. It is an offer of salvation to save us from this state of condemnation in which we already exist. Failing to understand that, as many non-believers do, will make God appear to be this arbitrary and tyrannical person who says, "Believe in me or else I will damn you." That is not the proper concept of God.

This also underscores why unbelief is, as Luther says, the most fundamental sin. Because it is unbelief that truly separates us from God's saving grace. We are already condemned before God in virtue of our disobedience and our transgression, but if we refuse to believe in God's provision, if God says to us "Believe and be saved" and we say, "I will not believe" then we are self-condemned. We are literally self-condemned. We thrust God and his salvation from us and hold him at arm's length.

So I think that this understanding of sin is really critical if we are to understand the offer of salvation and God's grace extended to us in Christ and made available to us.

¹¹¹ 25:14

DISCUSSION

Question: How do you address a person who believes that they have no sin and therefore need no God?

Answer: In one sense, that person is right that if that person has no sin then they are not going to need God to forgive and save them. But I suppose what one would need to explain is what we talked about a moment ago is that sin isn't just active rebellion against God. It is also this passive indifference to God; not having your will oriented toward him as the supreme good but toward these other lesser goods. So a person like that is, in fact, guilty of sin even if that person doesn't realize it.

Followup: But it is hard to convince them of that.

Answer: I know, I know. You are right. I think sometimes people will put up a smokescreen where they claim that they haven't done anything wrong but deep in their heart they must surely know that they have sometimes acted selfishly or cruelly or in other ways that would be wrong. If that person is married, you might say, "If I asked your spouse if you are sinless, would he agree with you?" I kind of think that that other person would have a more objective opinion. *[laughter]*

Question: It just seems difficult to see how one could come up with a coherent definition of sin on pantheism. We normally think of God as some sort of perfect being or some sort of standard by which people judge "oughts" – morality and the like. So if God is everything, how do you create some sort of division between "the ought" that is in the perfect being and "what is" which is exactly the same thing?

Answer: I couldn't agree more. I remember when I started my doctoral studies under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, there was a young faculty member in the department and I asked him what his area of specialization was and he said it was Buddhist ethics. And I said, "Buddhist ethics? I can't understand how you can have any sort of objective ethics on Buddhism." And he said, "Yeah, that's a real problem." *[laughter]* I mean, the whole discipline seems incoherent.¹¹² And, in fact, when you look at some of these pantheistic religions, like Hinduism, the distinction between good and evil is part of the realm of illusion. *Maya*, it's not real. In The Absolute this dichotomy between good and evil is dissolved so that the difference between good and evil is really just illusory on Hinduism. So I quite agree with you. I think that one of the great strengths of monotheism is its foundation for the ethical life.

Question: Unless it jumps too far ahead, could you give a comment on how one's view of sin dictates one's view of the atonement – the atonement being God's provision for correcting or fixing man's sin or problem? For example, Schleiermacher I think said that what happens in the atonement is not that objective guilt is being resolved but instead God is correcting our misunderstanding. In other words, he is not really mad with us; he is showing us he's not mad.

Answer: Very nice, that is correct. You will find among some of these more post-

¹¹² 30:13

Enlightenment theologians a view of the atonement which is a moral influence view where we see Christ's self-giving love on the cross and this moves us then to depend upon and follow God and live good, ethical lives. His death doesn't really do anything at that moment but it exerts a kind of moral influence by example upon us. Also, you will remember when we did the work of Christ (in that section of this class) we talked about Anselm's satisfaction theory of the atonement. On that theory of the atonement, again you have this idea of the personal affront to God very front and center. We have maligned God's dignity and honor by our disobedience. I think that is a strength of the satisfaction view in that it incorporates this notion of a personal affront that we've committed to God. But it tends to minimize the moral aspects. And for that you seem to need something more like a penal theory of the atonement – that Christ has actually borne the penalty for our sins. So in Augustine you get a strong emphasis on the moral aspects of sin – how we have transgressed God's moral law. And that leads Augustine away from the ransom theory of the atonement where Christ is simply rescuing these hostages by a sort of power grab away from Satan to emphasizing the more moral aspects of the atonement – payment for sin by Christ's death, making God's grace and forgiveness available to us. So you are right, one of the wonderful things about Christian theology that I hope will emerge in your thinking as we go through this class is the way it all hangs together so beautifully to make a worldview that makes sense. So your doctrine of sin, as someone said earlier, is going to depend upon your doctrine of God; but in turn as you point out it is going to impact then your theory of atonement as well. So you are seeing very nicely here the interconnections among these Christian doctrines that I think is part of the beauty of the Christian worldview.

Question: Are there levels of sin?

Answer: Well, I am inclined to think that there are, yes. It seems to me that there are sins which are more serious than others. I think it would be bizarre to say that torturing and murdering another person for fun is just as bad as, say, stealing a hymn book from the church and using it at home. I do think that there are different degrees of sin.

Followup: So for the non-believer, if they go, "Well, wait a minute. I've never murdered anybody and, yes, I go faster than the speed limit but that doesn't mean I'm a criminal."

Answer: I would agree that it means he is not as bad as someone who does those things but that isn't to say that therefore he doesn't need forgiveness and a savior. He still needs forgiveness and a savior; he still finds himself in this state of condemnation.¹¹³ Remember, if Luther is right – and I think he is – unbelief is the most serious sin. Unbelief is more serious than murder because it is unbelief that repudiates God and is the principal sin that we commit. So to say there are degrees of sin isn't to say that sin isn't serious. In support of the view that there are degrees of sin, think of the parable of Jesus where he describes how some of the servants receive a light beating but others receive a heavy beating from the master for the various things that they've done. It does seem that there are degrees of sin but that isn't to say that sin isn't therefore serious. Unbelief is the principal sin that we need to deal with.

Question: I think sin involves conscience – when Adam and Eve ate that fruit, their

¹¹³ 35:06

conscience is distorted. The conscience of accepting the standard from God changed to they accept the standard from Satan in a deceptive way that I can tell what is good and evil but actually Satan is the authority behind it. So redemption is our redeemed conscience going back to being realigned to God's standard.

Answer: Yes, think of what we talked about on the traditional view of the Fall. The perfections that man enjoyed in the state of innocence that were lost in the Fall, and that would include having a conscience that was right before God and now is corrupted and fallen. When we get to the doctrine of original sin, which we will start next time, we will look at this in more detail to see the sort of corruption that man bears as a result of our fallenness, and this will be a jaded conscience that sometimes we may be objectively guilty before God and our conscience is so dull that we don't even realize it. As I said, our problem isn't guilt feelings, it is objective guilt. Even the person who doesn't have guilt feelings still is guilty before God and may in fact have a sort of jaded conscience as a result of the dulling effects of sin on his life.

That completes what I wanted to say about the nature of sin. Next time we will take up the question of original sin – whether or not we are somehow included in Adam's sin and culpable for the sin that he committed.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Total Running Time: 38:19 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 14

Original Sin

In our lesson we have been talking about the doctrine of sin and last time we looked at the nature of sin. Today we want to move on to the question of *original sin*.

Normally, I don't like to retrace steps that we've already taken. But last week after class someone gave me an article from *Science News* that was so interesting that I want to go back a step to our discussion of the historicity of Adam and Eve and share this information with you because I think it really is very significant.

In our discussion of the biological or genetic plausibility of an original human pair from which the entire human race is descended, I said nothing (you may have noticed) about the so-called Mitochondrial Eve or the Y-Chromosomal Adam. It has been shown by geneticists that all living human beings on the face of the earth today, based on their mitochondria in our cells, are descended from the same woman. There is literally a mother somewhere in the distant past of the entire human race. Scientists have called her the Mitochondrial Eve. They don't think that this is the Eve of the Old Testament because they would say this woman was just one of probably thousands of women who existed at that time but remarkably if there were all these other thousands of women their descendants have all died off somehow in the course of history and everybody that exists today is a descendant of this woman who actually lived at some time in the prehistoric past. Moreover, an examination of the Y-chromosome that we men bear also indicates that there is a single man from whom everyone on the face of the earth is descended and he is called, again facetiously, the Y-Chromosomal Adam. Not because they think that this was the original Adam. There were probably, again they think, thousands of men, but at least everybody on the earth is descended from this same man.

The reason I did not mention this (because it would seem to be evidence for a historical Adam and Eve) is because it is thought that these two persons lived tens of thousands of years apart. They weren't contemporaries. The traditional estimates say that the Y-Chromosomal Adam was only a half or a third as old as the Mitochondrial Eve. The Y-Chromosomal Adam was supposed to have lived between 50,000 and 115,000 years ago but this Mitochondrial Eve was supposed to have lived between 150,000 and 240,000 years ago. So even though everybody on earth is descended from a single man and a single woman nevertheless this man and woman were not thought to be contemporaries and so they couldn't have been the historical Adam and Eve. So I just passed over that in silence.

In this article, however, it has been now discovered by geneticists that these two persons were apparently roughly contemporaneous according to the evidence. Let me read you from the article from *Science News*:

The largest analyses to date of the human Y chromosome suggest that modern men can trace their family tree further back in time than previously thought. One of the studies, an analysis of 69 men from nine populations worldwide published in the Aug. 2 *Science*, finds that their most recent common ancestor lived 120,000

to 156,000 years ago. That's roughly the same time that the last common ancestor of women is estimated to have lived, researchers report.

The Y chromosome, passed down from father to son, and mitochondrial DNA, passed down from mother to child, are useful in retracing ancestry because they don't undergo genetic reshuffling as the rest of the genetic instruction book does.¹¹⁵ Researchers analyze mutations in these parts of the genome to assess when groups split apart. The hypothetical common ancestors of these genetic lineages are sometimes called Y Chromosome Adam and Mitochondrial Eve.

"We're not saying they're exact contemporaries or they actually met or all men and women descended from the same couple," says study coauthor Carlos Bustamante of Stanford University. Y Chromosome Adam and Mitochondrial Eve aren't the first man and woman either, but they are real people whose Y chromosome and mitochondrial DNA have been passed down with modifications to every living male and female.¹¹⁶

So remarkably now the evidence seems to be perfectly consistent with the idea that all human beings are descended from an original human pair. These are real people that actually lived in the past and now roughly they are seen to be contemporaneous, which would be consistent with their actually being the historical mother and father of the entire human race.

That puts quite a different perspective on things, I think, and goes to make the doctrine of the ancestry of the human race in an original historical Adam and Eve I think even more plausible.

So I did want to re-capture that element of what we had talked about before to share this most recent news with you.

DISCUSSION

Question: I don't believe it is in this article that you mentioned in *Science News* but other articles have mentioned that the geographic location has been narrowed down. I don't know if anyone else has more information on that but other articles I have read have narrowed it down to somewhere in that Middle Eastern region. They do that through lineage and they finally get down to that area. They can only narrow it so much.

Answer: Obviously we are talking here rough estimates of age and region but nevertheless it is very provocative, I think, and welcome news.

Question: What is the name of the article and how would you get it?

¹¹⁵ 5:05

¹¹⁶ Erin Wayman, "Y chromosome Adam gets older: male and female ancestors were roughly contemporary," *Science News*, September 7, 2013. Dr. Craig is referencing an older version of this article which can be found at <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Y+chromosome+Adam+gets+older%3a+male+and+female+ancestors+were+roughly...-a0342677018> (accessed September 30, 2013). For the latest version of this article, see http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/352058/description/Y_chromosome_analysis_moves_Adam_closer_to_Eve (accessed September 30, 2013).

Answer: The title of the article is “Y chromosome Adam gets older”, subheading “male and female ancestors were roughly contemporary” by Erin Wayman. This is found in *Science News*, September 7, 2013. It says “for more stories, visit www.sciencenews.org” for more reading on this subject.

Question: While they say that they think that both this Adam and Eve were one of thousands, is that a theory or is there any evidence to that end? In other words, that is just a theory to, I guess, not say that there was a single Adam and Eve, but there could have been but they are saying, no, we don’t believe there was. But is there evidence to justify their position that there were many men and many women?

Answer: Yes, this would be the evidence that we talked about a couple of weeks ago in class concerning the genetic diversity that human beings exhibit in the world today. The question is: on the basis of the genetic diversity that human beings today exhibit, could that have come from a single human pair or did the population have to be larger? And the prevailing opinion is it had to be larger. It could have gotten down to a bottleneck of around two thousand people but not down to just two people. But what we saw in our lectures on this subject was that that assumes, for example, that the mutation rates are constant. If there were accelerated mutation rates then those mathematical models would be off. These are based upon predictions of mathematical models that might be based on assumptions that are unrealistic or false.¹¹⁷ We also saw that genetic diversity itself could have a selective advantage which would cause genetic diversity to advance more rapidly than otherwise thought. So the evidence, it seems to me, doesn’t require us to say that the population couldn’t have been smaller than two thousand. This new information doesn’t address that issue as you quite rightly point out. It obviously doesn’t tell us that there weren’t others along with this man and woman. That is a different issue and I’d refer you again back to the lectures that we had on that subject.

Followup: But if we had an original man and an original woman from whom all mankind came from and looking at the diversity of mankind today, why couldn’t it have come from them?

Answer: Well, the models would say that in order to have this much diversity, you’d have to have more people in the original population. Think of the example I gave of the sheep on that island where they sampled the genetic diversity of the sheep and they figured that, if you extrapolate backwards, in order to get that kind of genetic diversity there had to be at least (I think it was) eight sheep that were originally put on the island. Well, it turns out that the models were wrong and they know that there were originally only two sheep that were put on the island and the genetic diversity expanded more rapidly. These are all based upon models and evidence that, as you can see from the article I read, could be overturned with new discoveries relating to mutation rates or the selective advantage of genetic diversity and so on.

¹¹⁷ 10:01

Original Sin

Biblical Data

We come now to the subject of original sin which we have alluded to many times already in previous lessons. We want to start by looking at some of the biblical data pertinent to the doctrine of original sin. You will not find the doctrine of original sin in the story of the Fall in the book of Genesis. The doctrine of original sin rather is based upon New Testament evidence, particularly Romans 5:12-21. Paul says,

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned— sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here we see this typology of Adam and Christ.¹¹⁸ As sin came into the world through Adam and lead to condemnation for many, so Christ's single act of righteousness – his death on the cross – brings acquittal and life to many.

The other relevant passage is 1 Corinthians 15:21-22. Paul says, "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." There you see again that parallel between Adam and Christ: as all die in Adam so in Christ shall all be made alive.

DISCUSSION

Question: I just wanted to say that . . . are you sure that this is not taught in the Old Testament? Because Psalm 51:5 says, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Answer: Yes. In Psalm 51, David says "I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my

¹¹⁸ 15:07

mother conceive me.” I think sometimes those overzealous to find proof texts for the doctrine of origin sin appeal to this. But I think that that is a mistake hermeneutically. The psalms are poetry. They will often use hyperbolic language, and a way of saying how sinful David is to say “I was born in sin, conceived in iniquity.” I don’t think that is meant to be a theological reflection upon how the sin of Adam is imputed to David and that this is the full blown doctrine of original sin here. I think it is just a poetic and hyperbolic way of affirming his intense sinfulness or feeling of sinfulness before the Lord. But you are quite right in drawing our attention to that verse as one of the proof texts that is often used.

Question: Romans 5:12. Generally the arguments I have seen from the commentaries is they have rejected the “Because all sinned” interpretation. Even Anchor and Word have gone into different interpretations. Stanley Porter has argued:

According to the resultant sense, [the *eph ho* (ἐφ' ᾧ) which you say “because all sinned”] clearly endorsed by most commentators, sin entered into the world and with it death, and death spread to all people “on the basis of which” all sinned, emphasizing the chiasmic structure of verse 12 . . . According to the effective sense, the understanding is that sin entered into the world through one man, and with it death which spread to all people, “on which basis” all sinned.¹¹⁹

Answer: So how does it translate the *eph ho* conjunction?

Followup: “On which basis” or “because of which”

Answer: OK.

Followup: In fact, John Romanides has also argued from church history as well. He said,

It is noteworthy that during this period [the 2nd Century A.D.], the interpretation of the phrase “because of which all have sinned” never appears to be the problem that it became later. This silence is powerful proof that doubt did not exist about the meaning of this passage. If there had been a problem with this passage, the Gnostics would have exploited it easily to support their belief in the fall of souls in a previous existence. The two later interpretations, “in Adam all have sinned” and “because all have sinned,” would have been tantamount to a powerful argument in support of such heretical teachings about the fall.¹²⁰

Answer: All right. So what you are drawing attention to is this conjunction in Romans 5:12 where it says death spread to all men “*eph ho*” – because all men sinned. The question is how do you translate that? We will say something more about this when we get to Augustine but my translation, the RSV, says it spread to all men “because all men sinned.” That interpretation would not say that all men have sinned in Adam. It would say that because all men sin that is why death spreads to all people. So that wouldn’t be a

¹¹⁹ The questioner is quoting from Stanley E. Porter, “The Pauline concept of original sin, in light of rabbinic background,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 41, no. 1, page 24. See http://tyndalehouse.com/tynbul/library/TynBull_1990_41_1_01_Porter_OriginalSin.pdf (accessed September 30, 2013).

¹²⁰ This is a quote from John Romanides’ book *The Ancestral Sin*; this quotation can also be found on John Romanides’ online blog post at <http://thoughtsintrusive.wordpress.com/2013/07/29/because-of-which-all-have-sinned/> (accessed September 30, 2013).

translation that would favor Augustine's doctrine of original sin. But you are suggesting even a different translation saying that death spread to all men as a result of which – right? – all men sinned.¹²¹

Followup: Yeah, “because of which.” Because of death we all have sinned.

Answer: OK. “Because of which” or “as a result of which” all men sinned. Let me just take a little survey here in the class of translations that you are using. Mine is the RSV and it renders this “because” – “it spread to all men because all men sinned.” Does anybody else have a translation here that would say something like this other suggested translation – “as a result of which” all men sinned or “because of which?” What else do we have? So the New American Standard says “because all men sinned.” That tends to be a very literalistic translation. “In so much as all have sinned” – that's even yet a different one. I think you can see how controverted sometimes or difficult it can be to translate a certain phrase. I think as a result of this, I would say that it would be very ill advised to try and base a doctrine of original sin on this single verse alone. Indeed, as I said, the translation that the RSV gives, the NASB gives, wouldn't seem to support the traditional doctrine of original sin. If that doctrine is to be adopted, I think it would be found in the passage as a whole and in other verses in the passage rather than in verse 12 alone. I don't think taking verse 12 alone it would be prudent to balance a pyramid on its point and base your doctrine of original sin on this alone.

Followup: All right. I would say the rest of the passage does support the idea that because of death – that Adam brought original death into the world – and as a result all sinned. As we've seen in 1 Corinthians, it is about physical death and it was brought by Adam to humanity. I mean, that is the parallel to the resurrection of the dead. It is not any sort of spiritual death; in 1 Corinthians at least it is not.

Answer: Yeah, well, now in 1 Corinthians I can see why you would say that but don't you think that Paul is talking here not merely of physical death but of spiritual death?

Followup: I am not seeing that in the passage. It seems like . . .

Answer: I mean we know that Paul thinks that we are all dead in sins and trespasses, right? And need to be regenerated.

Followup: Yes, death has more than one sense in the book of Romans. But in this passage it seems to be that Adam spread death, like the death of the body – physical death, mortality – to all of humanity.

Answer: All right! OK. Well, that is a good discussion. We will say much more about this as we begin to evaluate it.

Question: It seems like . . . I prefer the Eastern view that death is what is . . . separation is the effect of sin and that is what we inherit and then we become sinners by choice, by action, and fulfill that destiny because we are born into a sinful world. It seems like support for that is also from Ezekiel. We haven't mentioned the Ezekiel passages that talk about the proverb that God hated and that they were saying that the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the sons' teeth are set on edge.

¹²¹ 20:12

Answer: Do you have a reference? I know the passage you mean but I don't know the reference. . . . Chapter 18 of Ezekiel? Let's just turn to that because that is relevant, I think. Verse 1:

The word of the Lord came to me again: "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins shall die.

So children are not to be punished for the sins of their parents. The soul that sins shall die; each person is held accountable for his own sin and God forbids saying that the children are being punished for the sins of their parents. Some would say: isn't that inconsistent with the traditional doctrine of original sin that we are culpable and punished for the sin that Adam committed?

Followup: I would say so, yes.

Answer: All right. Well, that is, as you say, the view held by Eastern Orthodoxy and certain other segments of Protestantism – a tiny minority of Protestants. That is good to bring that passage up.¹²²

Question: I don't think the original sin is referred to behavior sin. I think it is a conscience sin. As if a court judge does not judge righteously then the people in the whole land has no chance to be righteous. So when Adam and Eve sin, they replace Satan's command as God's command. So that is the separation that they no longer listen to God in their conscience according to what is good and evil. Instead they listen to Satan or in turn themselves. So that original sin passed down – it's the sealed conscience to all generations because we lost that fellowship and understand what God intended and how he designed how he purposed and instead we listen to our own understanding of what is good for me or what Satan attempted us to . . .

Answer: If I understand you correct, are you saying that as a result of Adam and Eve's sin, there is a kind of corruption that has entered into human nature so that people follow their own conscience rather than God, they are fallen. But! Are you denying that we have condemnation as a result of what Adam did and guilt for the sin that he committed?

Followup: Well, if you don't know God's standard, there is no way you can fellowship with him.

Answer: I understand, but do you think though that Adam's sin – the guilt of his sin – is imputed to you and me?

Followup: Yes, because the sealed conscience passed down. Here, what Ezekiel is prophesying saying the father's sin won't pass down to the children, is that because a new standard will come in – Jesus will come in – so the children will have that chance to restore their sealed conscience. So everybody's souls belong to God because everybody will have that chance.

Answer: So I think what you are saying is you would interpret Ezekiel to be saying that

¹²² 25:15

the sins of the fathers are not inevitably visited upon the children. The children have the opportunity to return to God, to repent, and therefore they are not fated to destruction and condemnation just because their fathers have sinned.

Followup: When the salvation arrives, when redemption comes then everybody has a chance to know what God intended so they don't have to inherit that sealed conscience. But before the salvation comes basically everybody's conscience are sealed because they don't have that fellowship. They are separated from God.

Answer: All right.

Question: It seems the only application of this is the age of accountability. It seems like all adults passed that age will sin. It is just they will sin and once they sin we go, "OK, now you are accountable for the sin that you made." If there is a baby that does not understand and possibly doesn't sin, does that baby go to heaven? Is there an age of accountability? I think that is the big issue here on original sin.

Answer: It would have very important implication for what happens to infants. You know the Catholic Church invented Limbo to deal with these children. They couldn't go to heaven because they hadn't received Christ's grace and forgiveness but they hadn't really actualized Adam's sin so they shouldn't go to hell. So they put them in Limbo, a doctrine which I think just recently the Catholic Church has now moved away from. You are right to drawing attention to this. This will have implications for baptism as well. What is the purpose of baptism and what does it accomplish?¹²³

Question: If the wages of sin is death, then every child when born, upon birth, is not immortal in the sense they are paying the penalty at conception. But at conception they are paying the penalty for sin and the wages of sin is death therefore wouldn't every child . . . accountability might not enter into it. They are going to pay the penalty.

Answer: You mean in the sense that every human being that is born is mortal and therefore carries this death penalty.

Followup: They call it a generational penalty or death sentence basically.

Answer: OK, these are all very good comments and questions.

What we will do next time is look at a history of various attempts to make sense of this Scriptural data. As you can see the doctrine of original sin is based upon precious few biblical texts. These texts are open to differing interpretations. What we will do next time is look at some of these various interpretations before trying to give some sort of evaluation.¹²⁴

¹²³ 30:06

¹²⁴ Total Running Time: 31:31 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 15

Attempts to Systematize Data on Original Sin

Attempts to Systematize Data

We have been talking about original sin and we've looked at the scriptural passages related to this subject. Now, today, we want to turn to various attempts to systematize this biblical data.

Augustine

The first figure that we want to look at is perhaps the greatest and most influential of the church fathers, namely, Augustine, who was a North African bishop of the church in Hippo. Augustine's dates are 354 to 430. Augustine is the church father who is most significant in formulating the doctrine of original sin. He founded the classical doctrine of original sin. In this analysis of sin Augustine stressed that all men – all human beings - sinned in Adam. In Adam's sin, we all fell, and so we share the guilt of Adam's sin as well as a corrupted human nature inherited from Adam. So all persons are comprised in the sin of Adam. When Adam fell, you and I fell. We bear the guilt and the responsibility for Adam's sin as well as the proclivity to sin that we have inherited from Adam.

Augustine stressed both the universality and totality of sin. Sin is truly universal because it is endemic to human nature as a result of our fall in Adam. Every human being fell in Adam and therefore sin is truly universal. Also, sin affects every part of the human personality. We are not simply fallen in one aspect of our character or person but all parts of human personality are affected by sin. So there is a kind of universality and totality to sin as a result of Adam's fall.

As we saw before, Augustine stressed the *non-posse-non-peccare* in our state of fallenness before God. We are not able to not sin. So sin is inevitable because we carry it in our very being. Therefore, in this state of fallenness, it is impossible for anyone to live a sinless life. We already carry in us the stain and the guilt of Adam's sin and therefore we are not able to not sin; or to refrain from sin. Sin is inevitable among fallen humanity.

He, therefore, stressed man's inability to earn God's grace or approval. That God should extend forgiveness and reconciliation is something that can come only from God's side. We are fallen and guilty before him and therefore incapable of doing anything that would merit or earn God's approval.

Finally, he also emphasized that the redemption that was wrought by Christ consisted mainly in laying aside the guilt of sin. There is a strong moral element to his view of Christ's atonement. Christ lays aside the guilt of original sin that we inherit from Adam as well as the guilt of the individual sins that each of us commits in our lives.

These are part and parcel of the classic doctrine of original sin.

In addition to these points, it must be admitted that there are other things that Augustine said about original sin that are probably less helpful. For example, Augustine made sin a

matter of genetics or biology. He thought that it was literally something that you passed on physically from parents to child. So theoretically, at least, you would think that you, through genetic engineering, could perhaps engineer sinless people. If this is really a physical characteristic then science ought to be able to get rid of it.¹²⁵ He did think of sin as being something that was a matter of biological transmission. In fact, he connected sin very closely with sexual desire, and he made sexual intercourse the ground for everyone's being born in sin. It is through the act of sexual intercourse that original sin is passed on. You can imagine the negative attitude then that this would occasion toward human sexuality even in the context of marriage, and how this might promote monasticism and celibacy as a way of trying to avoid passing on original sin.

His concept of sin thus tended to dim the understanding of sin as disobedience to God. It seemed to be more like a disease in a sense – a sexually transmitted disease that we have all inherited. It plays down, as it were, the degree to which we are individually responsible for rebelling and disobeying God.

Finally, he connected the doctrine of original sin to the doctrine of infant baptism. The baptism of infants was justified as the way by which the guilt of Adam's sin was removed from these infants so that children who die in infancy before they can reach the age of accountability can be saved if they've been baptized because then they are no longer culpable for Adam's sin. So the rite of baptism was interpreted not simply sacramentally to be a means of grace by which God bestows redeeming grace upon a person, but it was extended to infants in view of original sin and the need to deal with original sin. This, of course, tends to eclipse the need for personal conversion and repentance. It is all too easy to say, "I was baptized as an infant and therefore I am a Christian. I received God's redeeming grace as an infant." This tends to play down, again, your own personal need for repentance and conversion as an adult who has come to believe.

Those would be some of the characteristics of Augustine's doctrine of original sin as well as some of the less helpful aspects of it.

Pelagius

Let's turn secondly to another church father who Augustine opposed. This is Pelagius. Pelagius held that man is free to do good or evil. We are not prisoners condemned inevitably to sin. When we sin, we do so of our own free will and we are free to do what is right, to do good, and therefore we are responsible when we sin. He admitted the universality of sin. He said, yes, sin is indeed everywhere; it is throughout the world. The world is suffused with sin and we all fall into it eventually. But this corruption of sin comes through imitation not through inheritance. It is not as though we inherit original sin from Adam and therefore this works itself out as sinning. It is rather that we are born into a corrupted, fallen world and we then, by imitation, take on the pattern of sinning as well. So sin is not a matter of inheritance. We aren't born sinners, but rather sin is a matter of imitation through the corrupted world into which we are born.

Pelagius recognized that man can only do good through the grace of God. He is not saying that without God's grace you can avoid sin. Of course you need God's grace in order to resist sin. But he would say that, in creating man, God has already given to man

¹²⁵ 5:05

all of the grace that he needs in order to resist sin. There is a sort of natural gifting that God gives to man when he creates him.¹²⁶ And if man would draw upon those resources then he can resist sin. The fact that he doesn't and that he falls into sin is therefore his own fault. He can't blame Adam, he can't blame God; it is his own fault. He has, as a human being, the inherent gifts of God's grace that are sufficient for leading a sinless life. But people don't do so. They eventually all do fall into sin, and therefore we need now God's forgiveness and redemption.

Semi-Pelagianism

Another view that arises later is Semi-Pelagianism.

[Someone off-mic asks for the dates of Pelagius. Dr. Craig tells him he does not have that information in his notes. Pelagius lived in the mid-fourth to the early fifth century AD.]

Semi-Pelagianism wants to come closer to the classic doctrine of original sin than Pelagius did. Remember Pelagius thought that we already have, as created human beings, all the grace we need in order to live sinless lives before God. This seemed wrong. It seems like surely we need to call upon God to assist us to give us more grace and more strength in order to live a sinless life. So Semi-Pelagians attempted to accommodate themselves to the original sin doctrine by saying that man's will is indeed weakened by the Fall. As a result of Adam's sin there is a kind of weakness of will that we are heir to. But they said that the basic tendency to good still lies within man; it is still there. So grace is necessary – that is, additional grace, not just the grace given you as a created being – but additional grace is available and needed in order to deal with this weakness of will. But this grace is only given in response to your free will. You go to God and say, “God, I can't live this sinless life without you. I need your help. I come to you poor, naked, destitute. Give me more grace to live a life pleasing to you.” So grace then will be given by God in response to your free choice. By your own free decision, therefore, you receive salvation or damnation. It is not as though God has predestined you to this end. It is not as though God is the one who takes the initiative in bestowing grace upon those whom he wills and he passes over others; rather, we come to God and ask for his grace. On the basis of that God will give us the grace for salvation, or we will not receive his grace because we don't seek it. We neglect it. Therefore, we condemn ourselves.

By the time of the late Middle Ages, Semi-Pelagianism had become pretty wide spread in the church. The doctrine of original sin had come to mean simply an inherited or inborn inclination to sin. But the idea of Augustine that we actually bear the culpability of Adam's sin and we are condemned in virtue of Adam's sin had been largely eclipsed, and original sin was simply re-interpreted as this weakness of will and an inclination to sin that we are all born with as a result of the corruption that Adam introduced into human nature.

Reformation

With the Reformation came a reclamation of Augustine's doctrine of original sin. The principal reformers such as Luther and Calvin took over the elements of Augustine's doctrine of original sin. Indeed, they stressed even more strongly the guilt aspect of our

¹²⁶ 10:04

inheritance from Adam – that we are guilty because of Adam’s sin and therefore are under the condemnation and wrath of God by nature. They still held to, then, the doctrine of infant baptism even though the Reformers had a strong emphasis upon God’s grace and personal faith in Christ as the means by which we receive God’s grace.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, they still held to Augustine’s doctrine of infant baptism in order to deal with the guilt of origin sin that we inherited from Adam.

Enlightenment

Finally, let me say something about post-Enlightenment views or the modern period. As you can imagine, in the Enlightenment and with the modernist period the doctrine of original sin fell into disfavor. The Enlightenment thinkers – people like Voltaire and other rationalists – argued that it is impossible that you could be punished or be guilty for another person’s sin. If that other person committed sin then he is the one that is guilty and bears the responsibility. But it would be manifestly unjust of God to hold you responsible – to punish you – for a sin that somebody else committed. Indeed, how could you be guilty of that sin? You didn’t do it! So how in the world could you be guilty for something that you didn’t do that some other person did? Therefore, the doctrine of original sin was thought to be simply an incoherence, a moral impossibility.

Schleiermacher

The father of modern theology, Friedrich Schleiermacher (whom we’ve mentioned before), also reinterpreted the classic doctrine of original sin in line with his theology. You will remember that for Schleiermacher the essence of the Christian religion is this sense of absolute dependence upon God, a strong God consciousness. As you live day by day aware of at every moment your dependence on God, your absolute dependence upon him. So original sin is reinterpreted to simply mean that we have a weakening of this God consciousness. It is the overpowering of the spiritual by the material elements of life. The things of the world seem so much more real, so much more present and demanding, and therefore our awareness of spiritual things tends to be eclipsed and our consciousness of God is accordingly weakened. Original sin is simply our inability to do good. We find ourselves incapable of really doing the good that we should, and therefore original sin is reinterpreted in this way.

Ritschl

In the classical liberal theology represented by someone like Albrecht Ritschl – this is late 19th century, classical liberal theology – sin is now connected with social problems. It is not so much an individual affair anymore. Rather, the emphasis is that the institutions of society are infected with sin. Government. We might say today the entertainment industry, the economic and business world. All of these societal structures are infected with sin and this has an affect upon everything we do. Ritschl called this the Kingdom of Evil. He thought that this is much worse than your own individual sin. The individual sins that you commit cannot compare to this Kingdom of Evil that infects all of society and therefore affects all of us. Obviously, this would then lead into the program of classical liberal theology which would see Christianity as a movement of social reform.

¹²⁷ 15:04

You namely need to reform the institutions of society to bring about the Kingdom of God through social action. So you can see, I think, how this reinterpretation of sin works itself out in classical liberal theology and social reform as an expression of Christianity.

That is just a bird's eye view of some of the history of thinking about the doctrine of original sin.¹²⁸

DISCUSSION

Question: Regarding Ritschl's view of the classical liberal philosophy, does that go hand-in-hand, or did that usher in the idea in modern times anyway, of the post-millennialism or amillennialism thinking and it's really dominionism and the world can get better and better and we can make it better?

Answer: Those are several different thoughts that you've raised. I don't think we can attach this to amillennialism because that, I think, was characteristic of the Reformed tradition, for example, long before liberal theology came on the scene. So millennial literalism is just one tradition historically within the church. But many would have taken the millennium to be symbolic or to be the church age or something of that sort. But, and I don't know about dominionism, that is a very interesting question because that is a philosophy of society which says that we should try to establish a Christian government and a Christian sort of structure in, for example, the United States. That would seem to be rather similar to Ritschl's call for a reform of society's social structures over just the individual. So obviously this liberal theology – and that is not used in a negative way, that is what it is called, this late 19th century development in theology – would obviously promote political action, political involvement, much more, I think, than the traditional view because it sees the Kingdom of God as being established through this sort of political and social reform.

Question: Where do the various branches of Christianity today fall? Are we all over the board as far as say Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant?

Answer: Catholics would still hold to the classic doctrine such as you find in Augustine. Orthodox, as we saw last time, don't have the doctrine of original sin in terms of Augustine's doctrine. Augustine was a Latin-speaking Western theologian, and the Greek-speaking Eastern theologians don't look to Augustine as their pilot so to speak. So for them the result of Adam's sin would be a kind of corruption introduced into human nature, but it would not be something for which we bear guilt. We don't have culpability for Adam's sin. The Protestant Reformers, and I think those who are their heir today, would tend to hold to the doctrine of original sin. This was denied within Protestantism by someone like Charles Finney but that tends to be, I think, a small group. So most evangelicals today, I would say, would have a strong Augustinian or quasi-Augustinian doctrine of original sin that would see us as both corrupted in nature and also guilty in virtue of having sinned in Adam.

Question: Infant baptism. If I understood what you said correctly, the church's position was that because of original sin then the infant was baptized to sort of cleanse the baby of

that inherited state of sin. Did that sort of serve him until the age of accountability when man was then susceptible to sin on his own accord? Because at some point it seems there has to be that point of accountability. Was there actually an age, like age 12, where now you can no longer utilize an infant baptism as your cleansing possibility?

Answer: Yes, that is the purpose of the sacrament of confirmation in the Church. The Church – the Catholic Church – sees itself as the means of grace. We will talk about this more when we get to the section on the doctrine of the church. It is very different from what evangelicals believe in terms of what things like the Lord's Supper and baptism represent.¹²⁹ For the Catholic, these are almost like pipelines through which God's grace flows like water. This is how God's grace comes to you – through these various sacraments that are administered by the church. Indeed, the church itself is a kind of means of grace which is why it is so important to be connected with the true church because that is how one normally receives God's grace. So, you receive the grace of regeneration through infant baptism and removes Adam's sin. But as you say, as you grow older you start sinning on your own. Therefore, you need to begin to take the means of grace like the Eucharist and you attend Mass. That will be the means by which God's grace then is mediated to you to forgive those sins. Now the little child can't take the Eucharist until he reaches a certain age where his baptism that his parents made is confirmed by him. He goes through the sacrament of confirmation, and thereby now begins to appropriate these other means of grace because he has made an individual decision to begin to receive them.

Followup: So things like confession and so forth would be a cleansing of sin given by the church?

Answer: Right, yes. Because you are to go to confession, confess your sins, and then you will be absolved from those sins by the priest, and then sometimes traditionally some sort of penance will be prescribed for you to do – a certain number of prayers to say, or to go on a pilgrimage, or visit a holy site, or something of that sort. This penance doesn't win forgiveness but what it does is that it shows the genuineness of your contrition. It shows that you really mean it – you are not just going to the priest and blithely confessing your sins, but you are really contrite. This penance is an expression to God of that contrition that you have and the more serious the sin the greater the penance that you need to show to show that you mean business with God. So it is quite a different system of salvation and grace than I think most of us in evangelicalism are accustomed to.

Question: Was Ritschl influenced by Marx? Did he admit to any influence from Karl Marx?

Answer: I do not know. That is a very intriguing question. I can't answer it. Ritschl himself was a great influence upon American liberal theologians of the late 19th century, but I couldn't say whether there was a connection with Marx. One could see how there would be a natural affinity, can't you?

¹²⁹ 25:01

Evaluation

All right, let's go on to some evaluation of this issue.

The degree to which we are persuaded to adopt an Augustinian doctrine of original sin is going to depend upon our exegesis of Romans 5. So we might want to turn to that passage and look at it. Augustine's doctrine was based upon a mistranslation of verse 12 where Paul says, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men" and then Augustine's read, "in whom all men sinned." That is to say, he thought that it meant that death spread to all men because all men sinned in Adam and hence the doctrine of original sin. Well, that is not what the original Greek reads. In the original Greek, it means something like "because all men sinned." I imagine if you have a modern translation, your translation will read something like that – "death spread to all men because all men sinned." And that's why they bear the curse of death and condemnation.

However, it seems to me that Augustine's doctrine is not dependent upon verse 12 alone. When you read the remainder of the passage, I think that it would be very easy to interpret this in terms of a kind of solidarity with Adam in virtue of which we fall in Adam and share his sin.¹³⁰ For example, in verse 15 it says, ". . . if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many." And there the parallelism is between Adam's sin and Christ's atoning death. The idea seems very natural to say that it is through the one man's trespass that we all died just as it is through Christ's atoning death that we are all made alive.

Again, the second half of verse 16, ". . . the judgment following one trespass" – *one* trespass: Adam's. ". . . the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification." Again, it would be very natural to read that, I think, as saying that there is a judgment upon mankind that is the result of that one trespass that Adam committed, not just because of all of our individual trespasses.

Similarly, in verse 19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous." Again, the contrast there between Christ's act of obedience which makes us righteous is Adam's act of disobedience which you could say makes us unrighteous.

So it seems to me that the viability of Augustine's doctrine is not at all dependent upon this mistranslation of verse 12, but that the rest of the passage also could be very naturally read in terms of a kind of solidarity with Adam by which we fall in Adam and are counted guilty and sinful as a result of his fall.

How might we understand such a doctrine if we do want to go that route in opposition to the Enlightenment critique which, you'll remember, says no person can be justly punished for another man's sin? Well, traditionally Reformation theologians have understood Adam to be the federal head of the human race. He represents us before God just as in, say, the U. S. Congress your federal representative represents you. He votes for you. We don't have a democracy in which all of us can go and vote. Rather, we have a

¹³⁰ 30:00

representative system whereby our representative votes in our place. Or think of, to borrow a different analogy from the financial world, a stock brokers' meeting. We will often receive in the mail a proxy form where we are asked to sign a statement which assigns someone else to be our proxy at the meeting. Since we don't attend the stockholders' meeting, this proxy does, and through this paper he votes in our place. It is my vote that he is casting because he is my proxy. Therefore, if we think of Adam as our proxy before God, or as the federal head of the human race, it seems to me that we could make sense of the idea that all persons are culpable for what Adam does. He votes on our behalf, and we are held responsible for it. Therefore, all persons are born sinners, and therefore they will inevitably sin. Sin is not just a sort of accident that befalls us. We are sinful by nature and therefore inevitably will sin.

The natural response to this, I think, is to say, "Well, who asked Adam to be my representative? I didn't vote for him to be my proxy? Who gives him the right to stand before God on my behalf and make this decision for which I am then blamed?" Well, it seems to me that what the defender of Augustine's doctrine could say is that Adam, as our representative, sinned before God and that had we been there instead we would have done exactly the same thing. So that he affirms the truth of a counterfactual of freedom about each one of us; namely, if we had been in that situation we would have sinned and done the same thing.¹³¹ Therefore, we cannot complain that we have been misrepresented by Adam before God. Adam has faithfully represented us before God; he has done exactly what we would have done freely in that situation, and therefore we cannot complain about what Adam did.

That would then explain the universality of sin. It would be something that is inevitable for us because we are fallen and corrupted as a result of Adam's sin. I think we would also want to agree that sin is total in the sense that it affects every aspect of the human personality. When classical Reformed theologians talk about total depravity, they do not mean that people are as bad as they could possibly be. Obviously, some people are lots worse than others. Hitler was a lot worse than Mother Teresa, say. So what total depravity means is that there isn't any aspect of human nature which is untainted by sin or is pristine. Rather, every aspect of the human personality is tainted by sin. So it is rather like a drop of ink in a glass of water. The drop of ink diffuses itself throughout the entire glass and affects all of the water – the water is totally affected by the drop of ink. But obviously, the water isn't as black as it could possibly be. It could be a lot worse, but nevertheless there is totality in the sense that the whole is affected.

So this would explain why people are, by nature, lost before God. They are lost because they are born in original sin. On the non-Augustinian view, it would be possible for a human being to grow up and never need Christ. He would never need to be redeemed because sin isn't inevitable. He could live a sinless life, either through the grace that is infused in him by nature as Pelagius thought, or in response to his request for grace as the Semi-Pelagian thought. But on the Augustinian view that is impossible. No one could ever live a sinless life given the affect of original sin upon us.

How should we then regard children? Well, I think Jesus' attitude toward children shows that God's graciousness is extended to children. Jesus said let the little children come to

¹³¹ 35:05

me for such is the Kingdom of Heaven.¹³² I think this gives good grounds for thinking that God's grace is extended to children, particularly those who die in infancy. But it seems to me that infant baptism is a terrible mistake, especially when it is conjoined with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, that is to say that in baptism you actually are baptized in the Holy Spirit, or by the Holy Spirit, and are regenerated. What this leads to is a church filled with unregenerate people who have been trusting in infant baptism as the basis upon which they are supposedly Christians but who haven't actually made a personal decision to receive Christ and so be regenerate. If infant baptism is regarded as a purely symbolic act that isn't actually simultaneous with spirit baptism then that problem would be alleviated somewhat because you wouldn't regard a person as regenerate as a result of being baptized as an infant. But when you conjoin infant baptism with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, it seems to me that this just has disastrous consequences for the church, and therefore Augustine was quite wrong in denying believers' baptism and thinking that baptism should not be restricted totally or wholly to believers.

So I don't think we need infant baptism in order to remove the stain of original sin. There is nothing in Scripture that would suggest that baptism is the means of grace by which original sin would be expunged. Rather, we can simply trust God to be gracious to those who die in infancy.¹³³

Further, it seems to me that we should not think of original sin as something that is sexual in nature or is passed on through sexual intercourse. That would be to turn sin into a sexually transmitted disease – something that is physical and surely it is not. Rather, what the doctrine of original sin would hold is that man's moral nature is now somehow flawed. In virtue of Adam's sin the soul is somehow incapacitated in its moral abilities to resist sin and do good. So man in the state of nature – in the natural state – doesn't seek God. I think this is where Pelagius erred in thinking that in the natural state human beings will seek for God, ask for his grace, and so forth. Rather, the testimony of Scripture is that the natural man does not seek the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him. He doesn't understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Therefore, no one would come freely to God unless God took the initiative. God must seek out the erring sinner. It is not that we come to God of our free will and ask for his grace; rather, God's grace is expressed in his taking the initiative and in drawing us to him.

Now, the question of whether or not we have freedom to resist that drawing or whether that is irresistible grace – that is a further question that we can take up when we get to the doctrine of salvation. But I do want to defend the view that we don't take the initiative in salvation; we are sinful, fallen, estranged from God, alienated from him, and therefore would not come to him apart from the work of the Holy Spirit and God taking the initiative.

Finally, I think we should agree that sin does permeate social institutions. The liberal theologians are quite right in seeing sin as something that gets institutionalized in commerce, in entertainment, in government, in political systems. That is very true. We live in a society that is inherently corrupted by sin. But this is because individuals are

¹³² cf. Matthew 19:14

¹³³ 40:00

sinful. Individuals are not sinful because they are born into a corrupt society; society is corrupted because it is made up of corrupted and fallen individuals who then try to [live] together in some sort of harmony as best they can.

So it seems to me that this classical Augustinian doctrine is defensible, I think, in certain respects if we modify it, and that it does make good sense out of Romans 5. However, these views that I've expressed are not held with great dogmatic certainty or tenacity. I think we have to recognize that the basis for this doctrine is this one passage basically in Scripture and that this passage might be differently interpreted by others. But nevertheless given the commitment of the historic Christian church – both Catholic and Reformation – to this doctrine, I think it is one that we would give up very reluctantly. It would only be if there were really compelling reasons to abandon the doctrine of original sin that we would read Romans 5 otherwise. Otherwise, I want to stay within the mainstream of Christian thinking, at least in the West on this issue, and affirm an Augustinian view of original sin.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Total Running Time: 44:21 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 16

Freedom of the Will

Last time I gave a defense of the traditional doctrine of original sin, and promised before we moved on in our outline to the next section we would give opportunity for discussion of what was said.

You will remember I argued that the key passage in Romans 5 could indeed be reasonably interpreted in terms of all men's culpability and solidarity with Adam in his fall and that we can understand this in terms of Adam serving as our representative or proxy before God. And that no one could complain about being misrepresented by Adam before God because it's possible that God knew that if any of us were in the same position as Adam we would have done exactly the same thing.

Then I went on to argue that we should not think that infant baptism is something that removes the guilt and stain of original sin. This has negative consequences for the church when people take infant baptism to be coincidental with spirit baptism and regeneration because I think that leads to a church which is filled with people who, rather than making a personal decision to trust in Christ as believers, are trusting in a decision that was made for them by their parents in baptizing them as infants.

DISCUSSION

Question: I think you pointed out that there is several parallels between Adam and our infection with sin because of Adam's fall and with Christ, through the one man, being forgiven. Right? There are parallels between those two things. It seems like we are infected by Adam's fall without any choice of our own, without really having to do anything to be infected. It seems like, if it were purely parallel, we ought to be forgiven without having to do anything. Maybe it is not perfectly parallel? How would you say that?

Answer: That would be my response – it isn't perfectly parallel. With regard to Christ's redemption, although his substitutionary atonement is sufficient for the redemption of all mankind (in other words, I disagree with those who say Christ died only for the elect and that the non-elect do not have their sins covered by Christ's blood), it seems to me that nevertheless that redemption needs to be applied. So while Christ has accomplished a death that is sufficient for the salvation of all persons, nevertheless persons do need to respond to that and appropriate it personally. In that sense it would be different from Adam's sin. It seems to me that in regard to Adam's sin we are born into that situation. Although we do ratify it by our choices as we choose individually to sin, still we carry that sin nature already from birth. So I do think that it isn't perfectly parallel.

Question: When you were presenting all of the different views, I think Pelagius did bring out a very reasonable perspective where he pretty much put the major responsibility in man's free will. As 2 Peter stated, his divine power has given us everything we needed

and it's just for us to add upon faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, and perseverance, and all that we need to add to it. So I thought that was reasonable. Can you expand on that?

Answer: Yes. OK, you are referring to 2 Peter 1:3: "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence." I think the difference between Pelagius and what I think 2 Peter is affirming is that Pelagius would say that that power that is sufficient for living the godly life is given to us apart from Christ.¹³⁵ It is given to us in nature; it is in virtue of being created by God as human beings that we have this power to live a godly life. Whereas I feel confident that what Peter is saying is spoken to Christians. He says that God has given us this power through the knowledge of him who has called us – that is, I think, through Christ. So he is writing to people who are redeemed here and says as believers you have the power in Christ to resist sin and live a virtuous life. However, with regard to your point about freedom of the will, that is the subject for this morning's lesson and there I am going to be inclined to agree with you that we do want to affirm with Pelagius and others that human beings have freedom with respect to sin and salvation. So we'll hold off on that until we get to the lesson.

Question: I did a little research on this – about Pelagianism – because I always took it for granted that it was condemned at some council. Well, actually, I found out that it was condemned as a heresy at something called a Second Council of Orange in 529 AD. Interestingly, that was not an ecumenical council. It was more like a regional council that was later affirmed by the Pope, but this was never adopted by the Eastern church as you had mentioned a few weeks ago. There are 25 canons here, I'm not going to read the whole thing but I'll just read the intro. From Canon 1,

If anyone denies that it is the whole man, that is, both body and soul, that was "changed for the worse" through the offense of Adam's sin, but believes that the freedom of the soul remains unimpaired and that only the body is subject to corruption, he is deceived by the error of Pelagius and contradicts the scripture which says, "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:20); and, "Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are the slaves of the one whom you obey?" (Rom. 6:126); and, "For whatever overcomes a man, to that he is enslaved" (2 Pet. 2:19).

So it has Scripture proofs. But it is very clear that they are condemning Pelagianism and affirming Augustine's view.

Answer: Yes, that is really interesting in that they are affirming what we talked about with respect to the total depravity of man. It is not just the body or the physical that is corrupted but the soul is also corrupted according to the Council of Orange. So that is a good reminder. Thank you for doing that research.

Question: It seems like Augustine's, or to the modern Reformed, interpretation of Romans hinges really on two verses in this passage. There is 5:12 and, of course, 5:18. It sort of summarizes the latter portion of this. On 5:12, I just wanted to make a quick comment. As Fitzmyer says,

¹³⁵ 5:14

The vb. *hemarton* should not be understood as “have sinned collectively” or as “have sinned in Adam,” because they would be additions to Paul’s text. The vb. refers to personal, actual sins of individual human beings, as Pauline usage elsewhere suggests (2:12; 3:23; 5:14,16; 1 Cor. 6:18; 7:28, 36; 8:12; 15:34), as the context demands (vv 16, 20), and as Greek Fathers understood it.¹³⁶

He gives a huge list of references there. It means “have actually, individually, sinned.” There is no imputation or reckoning or anything of that in the direct meaning of that verse.

Answer: Yes. Right. Last week I suggested that the traditional doctrine doesn’t in fact hinge upon verse 12 even though this was the verse to which Augustine appealed. I think you are right about that. But rather the later verses seem to me to be reasonably interpreted in terms of a condemnation that follows one man’s trespass.

Followup: The later verses are summarized in 18 which says, “so just as through one trespass, condemnation came upon all and through one act of uprightness, justification and life came to all human beings.” Notice that the two are parallel.¹³⁷ They are parallel in the same way as Romans 5:12, Adam and Christ. You cannot separate the two – have a mythical Adam and a real Christ. In the same way, however the condemnation came, the justification came, there cannot be any breaking of the parallel. So, if it says that everyone is reckoned sinful, therefore everyone is universally saved. I don’t see how you can possibly interpret 5:18 in terms of original sin without also interpreting it in terms of universal salvation. And this is not lost on universalists.

Answer: Right. This is the same point that someone was asking about, really. Is it perfectly parallel? And I think taken in isolation, if you read them as perfectly parallel, it would sound like universalism. But we know Paul didn’t, in fact, think that all persons are saved. The redemption that is universally wrought by Christ needs to be applied and appropriated, and therefore not all are saved. And so I would just say that Paul himself, by thinking that certain persons are not saved, doesn’t think that they are perfectly parallel in that sense.

Followup: So wouldn’t it also follow therefore that not all are condemned either in that sense; or at least through Adam’s sin.

Answer: Well, that is a reasonable interpretation. As I said, I don’t think we can be dogmatic here on this. But, it seems to me also reasonable to take it in the traditional way and one might think that that would lead logically to a sort of universalism, but then we know later from what Paul says that that is not true – he regards certain persons as lost just by what Christ has done for dying for the sins of the whole world.

Followup: Alright, and Robert Jewett’s comment that “The primary goal of the passage is not to set forth a doctrine of Adam’s sin, but to demonstrate . . . the overflowing dominion of grace in the ‘life’ of all believers.”¹³⁸ Is that . . . ?

Answer: Yes, that is a sort of comment that I don’t think is helpful to the debate. It is very

¹³⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible, Vol. 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), p. 417.

¹³⁷ 10:08

¹³⁸ Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), p. 370.

easy to say that the main point is something else but that doesn't mean that there aren't subsidiary points or implications. I think the better one is the first one that you made – that is, if you press this for really tight parallelism, it would seem to imply universalism. That might lead you then to say, wait a minute, when he says the condemnation following one trespass, that doesn't mean that everybody is fallen and culpable for Adam's sin. It would mean something looser than that – that maybe sin came into the world through Adam, and all men eventually sinned, and therefore in that sense they are condemned. I think it's not an unreasonable view. I think this is one of those areas of Christian doctrine where we need to be charitable and recognize the viability of a multiplicity of interpretations. But given the commitment of the historic Protestant Reformation and Catholic confessions to the doctrine of original sin, I am interested in seeing what sort of a defense of that can be mounted.

Followup: Out of this, could you also interpret it in such a way as to say through one man came the opportunity or ability to be condemned because we are mortalized, we are put in this awful world, we have this ability that maybe Adam in that state didn't have or through Christ the ability to be saved also came to all men. We keep the parallel that maybe we can both equally.

Answer: Yes, that would be an option.

Freedom of the Will

Let's press on to today's subject which is freedom of the will. Let's look at some of the biblical data pertinent to the question of freedom of the will. The question we are asking here is: do we have the freedom, given our fallenness and sinfulness, to respond to God's grace? Or are we simply passive and all of the initiative and efficaciousness of salvation comes from the divine side and human beings do not have freedom.

Biblical Data

Let's look at some passages in the New Testament that speak to this subject.

Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God — not because of works, lest any man should boast."

Romans 9:6-25 is a very key passage.¹³⁹ Romans 9:6-25 says,

But it is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his descendants; but "Through Isaac shall your descendants be named." This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants. For this is what the promise said, "About this time I will return and Sarah shall have a son." And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call, she was told, "The elder will serve the younger." As it is written,

¹³⁹ 15:16

“Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So it depends not upon man’s will or exertion, but upon God’s mercy. For the scripture says to Pharaoh, “I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.” So then he has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills.

You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me thus?” Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? As indeed he says in Hosea,

“Those who were not my people
I will call ‘my people,’
and her who was not beloved
I will call ‘my beloved.’”

Then in chapter 10:6-13,

But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?” (that is, to bring Christ down) or “Who will descend into the abyss?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved. The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. For, “every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Finally, Galatians 3:6-9 says¹⁴⁰,

Thus Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” So you see that it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are men of faith are blessed with Abraham who had faith.

That is the scriptural data that we’ll want to look at with respect to this question of freedom of the will and the appropriation of God’s grace.

¹⁴⁰ 20:00

Attempts to Systematize the Data

Reformation: Bondage of the Will

This is Reformation Sunday, so it's very appropriate that we should look at what the Reformers had to say about this question of the freedom of the will. What the Reformers held to was the bondage of the will. Infected with original sin, fallen man is incapable of freely choosing for God and appropriating his grace. So Luther, for example, held that human beings are, as he put it, free in things below but bound in things above. That is to say, Luther was willing to grant that human beings have freedom of the will with respect to earthly affairs, for example, the decision to go buy cottage cheese at Publix rather than Trader Joe's. You have that freedom to make such a decision. But, when it comes to things above (that is to say, spiritual matters), there man's sinfulness has bound his will so that man is not free to choose for God and to appropriate his grace. Rather, this must come entirely from God's side. It is God who elects and chooses and saves whom he will.

Calvin was even more stringent in his view of the bondage of the will. Calvin would not even allow freedom in things below. For Calvin, in virtue of God's sovereignty and providence, everything is determined by God. So Calvin emphasized the doctrines of total depravity – that every aspect of the human person is fallen and infected with sin. Remember that doesn't mean that each person is as bad as he could possibly be, but it does mean that every aspect of the human person is fallen and corrupted by sin; totally depraved in that sense. From which it follows that unconditional election must obtain. That is to say, God does not choose based upon how he sees you believe or he sees how you would respond to the offer of the Gospel. You have no ability, being totally depraved, to respond to the offer of the Gospel. Preaching the Gospel to you is like preaching to a dead man because you are dead in your sins. So God must unconditionally elect to save those whom he wills, and he simply passes over those whom he does not elect or choose to save, and they are damned as a result. Following on total depravity and unconditional election will be God's irresistible grace. Given that the grace is coming from God alone and that God is omnipotent, God's grace is irresistible by human beings. You do not have the freedom to respond to God's grace, but neither do you have the freedom to resist it either because it is God who unconditionally has elected to save you. Therefore, if that is his sovereign decree, you will be saved, and his grace will ineluctably, inevitably achieve its effect in you. So it is totally from the side of God that salvation occurs.

So it was in that sense that the Reformers interpreted the doctrine of *sola gratia*. It is not simply that we are saved through no merit of our own but by God's undeserved favor.¹⁴¹ But it is even more than that. It is an irresistible grace that you have no power to harden yourself against. There is nothing about you that would cause God to elect you or choose you, but he simply sovereignly chooses to save whom he wills, and he gives his irresistible grace to those persons, and as a result they are saved. So there is no freedom of the will with respect to salvation.

Catholic (Council of Trent): Freedom of the Will

In contrast to this is the Roman Catholic view that was enunciated at the Council of Trent

¹⁴¹ 25:09

following the Protestant Reformation. The Council of Trent was held between the years 1545 and 1563 – over a long period of time and many sessions. It was, as it were, the Catholic response to the Reformation. It epitomized the doctrines and teaching of the Catholic Counter-Reformation in response to the Reformers' doctrine. The doctrine promulgated at Trent affirms freedom of the will in contrast to the Reformers. According to Trent, the process of salvation has several steps, or stages as it were, in which God and human beings each plays his part.

1. *God's prevenient grace.* This first step is from God's side. Against Pelagius the Council of Trent held that you do not approach God saying "Oh, God, I am searching for you. I want you. I feel this vacuum in my heart, a God-shaped vacuum. I am seeking you." And God responds. No, no. God's grace comes first – it is prevenient. God's grace first seeks you out, the sinful, fallen, corrupted, natural man who does not seek the things of the spirit of God. So the first step comes entirely from the divine side. It is God's initiative in salvation to seek out sinful persons.

2. *Preparation of the heart for the receiving of God's grace.* This comes from the human side. This now is the human response to God's prevenient grace which is drawing you to himself. So this is where freedom of the will enters in. It is not as though the bestowal of God's grace is a totally unilateral process. It does require some sort of human response.

3. Back to God – and this is *justification*. Here, in response to the human preparation, God infuses his grace into the individual believer. So first God, then human response, and now God again with his justifying grace.

4. Then we go back to the human response: filled with God's grace – in the power of God's grace – *human beings are then enabled to perform good works* which God's grace works in you.

5. *The merit of these good works that you perform then win your salvation.* So the final step is eternal life in which through the merit of the good works that God's grace has enabled you to perform you now go into eternal life and find heaven.

So you can see that the Catholic doctrine is a blend of both divine and human factors in salvation.¹⁴² God's prevenient grace, his justifying you, his giving eternal life, but the human factor is involved in the response of the heart to God's grace and then in performing good works through God's grace in you, the power of God's grace working out these good works that then merit the eternal life that God gives you.

DISCUSSION

Question: Where does Arminianism fit in with this? Because he kind of has this same concept.

Answer: Where does Arminianism fit into this? Jacob Arminius was a Dutch theologian who disagreed with the Reformers about the bondage of the will and God's irresistible grace. In fact, according to the church historian Richard Muller, it was through Jacob

¹⁴² 30:05

Arminius that Molinism entered into Protestant theology.¹⁴³ What is Molinism? Molinism is the theological alternative developed by a Jesuit theologian named Louis Molina in the late 1500s in which he wanted to affirm a doctrine of grace that would affirm God's sovereignty and authority and ultimacy but without denial of the human will. He thought that the Protestant Reformers erred in making man a puppet, and therefore we want to affirm along with divine sovereignty a strong robust doctrine of libertarian free will. Arminius is basically a Protestant Molinist.

What did Molina think? Molina's doctrine was that God's grace is (here I am going to use some technical terminology) not *intrinsically* efficacious, it is *extrinsically* efficacious. What did he mean by that? What he means by that is that grace, when God gives it, does not inevitably achieve its result. It is not irresistible in the way that Calvin thought. Rather, grace is extrinsically efficacious, that is to say, it will achieve its intended result when it meets with an appropriate response of the human will. So God's grace is sufficient for salvation but it is extrinsically efficacious – it requires a human response in order to bring about its effect. Molina believed that God in his knowledge knew exactly which gifts of grace would be most effective in winning a free human response. So he knew, for example, that if you were, say, born into a non-Christian family with an alcoholic father and that you were to hear the Gospel from a high school student during this time of great despair and you were to read the New Testament that was given to you by the Gideons then you would respond freely to his grace and become a Christian. So God puts you in exactly those situations and gives you those gifts of grace.

So Molina's doctrine is that you have a combination of God's sovereignty with genuine human freedom through his knowledge of how any human being would respond to God's grace if it were given. That is basically Arminius' view as well. So this is a view that is quite different from these two polar opposites that I've outlined here. I sketched the extremes rather than some mediating position.

Is that clear? I hope it is. Go back and look at what we said about Molinism when we talked about divine providence and God's omniscience because for Molina predestination and election are simply the doctrine of divine providence applied to matters of salvation. Just as God providentially rules the world through his knowledge of how people would freely react in different circumstances, so he predestines and elects people by knowing how they would freely respond to various gifts of his grace that he might give them.¹⁴⁴ So he can win the free response of creatures by according them gifts of grace and circumstances to which he knew they would freely respond. So they are free, it is not deterministic in contrast to the Calvinists and Lutherans, but on the other hand it isn't necessarily saying that there is any kind of merit in what you do to win salvation. It gives you a very strong doctrine of sovereignty but also human freedom.

Question: I don't want to take us off into the doctrine of election too much but suffice it to say I believe that some people choose Christ on their own and some have it chosen for them. I think God zaps some people, as you put it one time, and other people choose on

¹⁴³ See Richard A. Muller, *God, Creation, and Providence in the Thought of Jacob Arminius: Sources and Directions of Scholastic Protestantism in the Era of Early Orthodoxy* (Baker Pub Group, 1991).

¹⁴⁴ 35:13

their own. I think there are two groups and two ways you can get to heaven. We won't argue that at this point but if you believe that, as I do, then you have to ask yourself the question: what about those who, of their own volition, accept God? God has nothing to do with it, he doesn't override them. They accept it. Why do they? Are they more noble than other people? Are they better than other people? Well, it turns out, apparently, they are. I would direct you to the Luke account of the Parable of the Sower, especially to verse 15. What it is is 8:15. Over the years since I've been wrestling with election, this just went off like a hand grenade one day when I saw this. There are three accounts of this – the other two synoptic Gospels don't have it, so maybe that is one reason I overlooked it. These are the words of Christ and he describes the seed that fell on the "good soil." I have an NIV: "But the seed on the good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." I would like to point out that the word "noble" is the word "*kalos*", strong 2570, which means "inherently good." The word here translated "good" in the NIV is "*agathy*," strong 18, which means "benevolent, able to externalize its qualities." First of all, this shoots down the idea that all men are 100% bad, which you've already said that's not true. According to Christ that is not true. Now the question arises – now we are getting about as deep into theology as you can get – the question now arises, why are these people's hearts good and noble? Is this just a genetic property? Circumstance? A spiritual circumstance? Did God have anything to do with it? I must say I don't know exactly why but I want to throw these out. Anybody considering these, I think you might want to look at these passages.

Answer: Thank you for bringing that up. This is a parable that sits very uncomfortably with the Reformed doctrine, doesn't it? Because here, as you say, Christ regards those who respond and persevere as being those who correspond to the good soil. This is the good soil on which the Word of God falls, and then they respond in an appropriate way. We will talk some more about this when we get to an evaluation of this but I think you are quite right to at least bring this passage up for our thinking because it will need to be factored in.

Question: Mine is simpler – my comment. I would say when the question came up on where Arminianism fits in, the Arminian wouldn't hold to the merit of good works. I would think that would be the lynch pin there.

Answer: Certainly not, but neither would the Reformed. The Arminian doesn't differ from the Reformed or Lutheran in rejecting number 4. So the question, I think, that was being asked is where does the Arminian differ from the Lutheran and the Reformed view, and it would be with respect to the bondage of the will.

Question: It seems to me that Calvin's view about unconditional election, irresistible grace, limited atonement, and double predestination is very difficult to square with two sets of teachings among others in the New Testament.¹⁴⁵ One, that God is not partial to people. I understand that to mean God treats all people equally. And secondly, Jesus says in John 12 if he is raised up he will draw all men to himself. How did Calvin square his beliefs with those teachings?

Answer: I don't know what he would say about those passages in particular. You'd have

¹⁴⁵ 40:03

to look at his commentaries to see if he addresses those verses in particular, and I don't know. But the Reformed theologian would affirm that God freely is partial to the elect. He chooses to elect some out of the mass of condemned people to save, and then he passes over the rest leaving them to be condemned. So there just definitely is a sovereign partiality that cannot be explained. It is simply God's freedom to save whom he wants.

Followup: A final comment. Acts 10, Galatians 2, Ephesians 6 all say God is not partial. He is impartial. He treats people equally. It is hard to reconcile that.

Answer: Yeah. Well, at least I'm thinking of passages like in James where I think it is talking about not showing partiality based upon a person's social standing or his riches as opposed to being poor. Maybe in that sense God isn't partial in preferring to choose say the rich and the well-regarded to be his children. But on the Reformed view it is just undeniable that there would be partiality in the sense that God freely elects to save some out of the mass of condemned people and passes over the others to receive their just desserts. So I guess the question is going to be does that really square well with these scriptures that you've raised.

Our concern here is not so much with the doctrine of salvation. We will talk about that later. So we will get back to some of these questions that are mentioned but we do want to evaluate the question of at least man's freedom in this process. So that is the issue we will address when we meet together next time.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Total Running Time: 42:41 (Copyright © 2013 William Lane Craig)

§ VII. DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 17

Evaluating Views of Appropriating God's Grace and Salvation

In our lesson we have been talking about the relationship between sin – this fallen world in which we live – and the freedom of the will, in particular the freedom to appropriate God's grace and salvation. You will remember last time we contrasted the view of the Protestant Reformers with the view of the Roman Catholic Church as enunciated at the Council of Trent. And we saw that for the Reformers like Luther and Calvin there is no freedom of the will with respect to the reception of God's grace or finding salvation. The initiative comes entirely from God's side and his grace is irresistible. It selects certain persons to be recipients of that grace and then it irresistibly wins the effect of the consent of the creaturely will and a person's salvation. So there is no freedom of the will. We are dead in sin, we are slaves to sin, bound to sin and darkness, and it is only by God's grace that anyone can be saved.

By contrast, we saw that in the Roman Catholic view as enunciated at the Council of Trent following the Reformation that both God and human beings play a role in the process of salvation. You will remember (1) first is God's role in providing prevenient grace. No sinner comes to God on his own initiative. That is the error of Pelagius. Rather, God must take the initiative by seeking out sinful people by his prevenient grace. Then (2) there is the preparation of the human heart as we respond to that prevenient grace of God. So this is the human element in step two as we respond or not to God's grace. For those who respond affirmatively to God's grace then (3) God infuses into them the grace of justification so that they are now justified before God by his grace. Through the inner grace of God empowering us and filling us (4) we are then enabled by that grace to perform good works which then merit salvation. So God's grace works itself out in our lives through meritorious works, the result of which is finally, number (5), eternal salvation. On the view enunciated at Trent God plays a role but human beings also have their role to play in the process of salvation.

Evaluation

How might we evaluate these competing views?

I want to suggest that man is indeed free to respond to God's grace. He is not simply a passive participant in the process of salvation but does participate actively and has the freedom to respond to God's grace. So God does take the initiative. I think the Catholic view and the Reformed view is correct here. The natural man left to himself does not seek God. So apart from the prevenient grace of God, no one would ever be saved. God must take the initiative in convicting of sin and drawing persons to himself. But then at some point along the line human beings have the freedom either to accede to that drawing of God's grace and to go with it or to resist it and push back and refuse to receive God's grace of salvation.

Someone might say, but doesn't Romans 9 (which we read together) teach that human

beings are completely passive in this process? That it is entirely of God's will who is elect and who is reprobate or passed over and left unsaved. Doesn't Romans 9 teach a strong doctrine of predestination and election that excludes any sort of human role in terms of a free response such as I have suggested?¹⁴⁷ Well, I would like to suggest for your consideration a very different reading of Romans 9 today than the one that you usually hear. Usually, people think of Romans 9 as God's narrowing down the scope of election to just those few people that he wants to save. And he passes over the broad mass of humanity to selectively save those few that he has picked out. I want to suggest that Paul's burden in Romans 9 is exactly the opposite. What Paul wants to do here is to broaden the scope of salvation, not to narrow it down to a select few. He wants to broaden it as wide as possible.

The problematic that Paul is dealing with in Romans 9 concerns Jewish persons who think that because of their Jewish ethnicity they have a sort of leg up on salvation on approval by God. Those who are ethnically Jewish would find it unthinkable that God would reject his chosen people Israel and instead allow these execrable Gentiles to go into the Kingdom of God rather than his own people. How God could prefer these Gentile dogs over his own people and save the Gentiles and pass over the Jews was just unthinkable to these Jewish persons. So what Paul wants to emphasize in Romans 9 is God's sovereignty in electing and saving whomever he wants regardless of their ethnic background. Whether Jew or Gentile, it is God's choice as to who will be saved.

So you notice at the beginning of chapter 9 Paul expresses his anguish at those Israelites to whom all of the promises of the old covenant belong but who are not believers in Christ. He says in verse 6 that it is not as though God's Word has failed. Rather what he says in verse 6 is not everyone who is descended from Israel belongs to Israel. Not everybody is a real child of Abraham just because they are his physical descendent. Just because you are ethnically Jewish doesn't mean that you have some sort of favored status with God. Rather, as he illustrates with the story of Jacob and Esau, God has the freedom to choose whom he wills to be saved. Just being descended from Abraham physically is no guarantee.

So in the verses 6 until 24, Paul says God is free to save whomever he wants and no one can call into question God's choice. No one has the right to talk back to God; no one has the right to say that God has to prefer his own people Israel over these Gentiles. If God wants to broaden the scope of salvation to include Gentiles in addition to or even instead of those who are ethnically Jewish, no one can talk back to God. It is God who has mercy upon whom he has mercy and has compassion on whom he has compassion.

So who is it then, according to Romans 9, that God has chosen to elect if it is not just those who are ethnically Jewish? The answer is all of those who have faith in Christ. Those are the ones that he has chosen to elect and save. So in verse 30 he says,

What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith; but that Israel who pursued the righteousness which is based on law did not succeed in fulfilling that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it through faith, but as if it were based on works.

¹⁴⁷ 5:07

So what God has done is that he has decided to save and elect all those who have faith in Christ Jesus – whether Jew or Gentile it doesn't matter. It is those who have faith in Christ Jesus. Therefore, given God's sovereign choice, ethnically Jewish people cannot complain if God has preferred to save Gentiles over certain Jewish persons.¹⁴⁸

This is all based upon the principle of faith that Paul explains back in Romans 3 and 4 with respect to Abraham himself. Turn back to Romans 3 and look at verse 21 and following:

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

In verse 27 he says,

Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith. For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law.

Then he asks specifically,

Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of their faith and the uncircumcised through their faith.

So it is through faith that one becomes a true child of Abraham, a member of that elect body that will inherit the Kingdom of God. If you look over at the book of Galatians, which is almost like a précis of the argument of the book of Romans, you see this very nicely summarized in Galatians 3:6-9. He says,

Thus Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” So you see that it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are men of faith are blessed with Abraham who had faith.

So who are the true sons of Abraham? Not simply those who are descended physically from Abraham, it is those who have faith in Christ.

That is why Paul can go on then in Romans 10 to say in verses 8-13,

The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved. The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. For, “every one who

¹⁴⁸ 10:06

calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Now, you can't make sense of Romans 10 on the interpretation of Romans 9 that interprets this as God's electing some minority of people irrespective of their will, entirely dependent upon God's choice. The only way I think you can make sense of Romans 10 is by interpreting it in the way that I have done. God has chosen to elect not just ethnically Jewish people; he has chosen to elect everyone who has faith in Christ regardless of their ethnic background. That is why everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

If I am understanding Romans 9 correctly, this is not meant to be teaching a kind of predestinarianism that takes no cognizance of the human free response to God's grace. Quite the contrary, it seems to me it is broadening out the scope of God's election to say that it is going to include everybody who meets the condition of having faith in Christ. That is the human response to God's grace. God's grace comes preveniently, that is to say it seeks out sinful, alienated, spiritually estranged people, and draws them to himself to that point where one can respond or not by faith.¹⁴⁹

You might say, but didn't we read in Ephesians 2:8-9 that faith is a gift of God, not something that we can produce. Look at Ephesians 2:8-9 again. Paul says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast." Doesn't this show that faith is simply God's gift to you and not something that you do on your own? I think that is incorrect and I think demonstrably so. Let me ask those of you who are our vigilant Logos software users to tell us what is the gender of the word for "faith" that is used in verse 8? I should mention here that in Greek, as in modern day German, every noun has a gender. There are three genders – masculine, feminine, and neuter. It is the same in Greek. Now, what is the gender of the word *pistis* or faith? Feminine. So it is feminine gender for *pistis* or faith. What is the gender of the pronoun in verse 8 "this." Neuter! *Touto* is the word. It is neuter. So the antecedent of "this" is not the word "faith." You would have to have a feminine pronoun in order to refer to "faith." Rather, what the word "this" refers to is the whole preceding clause, namely, salvation by grace through faith. That is not your own doing. This is the gift of God. This is the way God has elected to set it up; he is going to save by his grace everyone who has faith in Christ. That is not your own doing. But it does not teach that saving faith is the gift of God. That is grammatically prohibited.

In fact, I want to say here something about the way our Reformed brethren treat the idea of faith. For many of them they think that if I exercise faith in Christ, if I respond to God's grace by receiving it through faith, that this is somehow my meriting or winning salvation. It is something I do; I have faith and so I have somehow done some meritorious work which is excluded of course by Paul because salvation is by grace not by meritorious works. But in so saying I think they have completely misunderstood Paul. When you read Paul, he always opposes faith to works. For Paul, faith is the antithesis of works. He does not think that placing your faith in Christ is a work much less a meritorious work. Paul always contrasts faith and works. So, in receiving Christ by faith in acceding to God's grace, you are not doing anything meritorious to save yourself. You are simply yielding, as it were, to the grace of God and allowing it to do its saving work

¹⁴⁹ 15:12

and justifying work in your life. That is not in any sense a meritorious work.

I think this connects with the point someone was making last time about the parable of the soils where you remember the Word of God falls upon the rocky soil and it also falls upon the good soil. One soil produces fruit for the Kingdom; the other one doesn't persevere and falls away. It is not as though one of the soils is more meritorious in terms of winning salvation. The analogy would be that some people have faith in Christ whereas others don't. This isn't a meritorious work. It simply is a human response to the grace of God that is not something that merits salvation.

So I want to agree with the Roman Catholic view that there is prevenient grace of God that seeks out sinners and that we have the ability to respond to that.¹⁵⁰ So I would substitute for the second step ("the free response of the creaturely will to the grace of God") simply acceding to the grace of God in your life rather than resisting it. Not a meritorious work that you do but simply a grateful and humble reception of God's grace.

So it would follow from this that God's grace is not irresistible – it can be resisted. Those who do not resist do not do anything to merit it; they just allow it to do its work in their lives. So there is no credit that accrues to you for responding to God's grace. It is not a meritorious work that you do. Faith is in fact the antithesis of works.

What God has done is he has chosen to elect and save all of those who have faith in Christ Jesus. The result of that will be justification. To think then that we by God's grace merit good works seems to me utterly unacceptable. As we've already read, it is not of works. It is entirely of God's grace. The only way you could possibly defend this idea that we perform good works that merit salvation would be to turn us into robots, into puppets, so that the works that we do are wrought in a kind of robotic fashion by God and we don't do anything. But then that excludes human freedom. The whole point of this rubric was to include an element where human beings freely participate. So it seems to me that instead of the merit of good works, what we ought to substitute here is perseverance. If one doesn't persevere to the end then one will not experience eternal salvation. Perseverance is necessary in order for eternal life. This will be, again, the working out of God's grace in your life and sanctifying you, filling you with the Holy Spirit, conforming you to the image of Christ as you walk in the spirit. He will help you to persevere to the end and so finally be saved. There is nothing of your doing that is meritorious, that earns salvation, but nevertheless there is an element of human freedom in the process of salvation that makes us more than passive puppets in this process.

That is the perspective I wanted to share on freedom with respect to salvation.

DISCUSSION

Question: I don't think the Reformers would disagree about "the who," which you have been talking about – the who. I'm still stuck on "the how." I don't believe you've discussed that as well as I would like. It seems like to me you are very close to the Reformers in saying some of the things about what they – you've changed their idea of how a person does it. My question is if a person is dead in his sins – Ephesians 2:5 – and

¹⁵⁰ 20:01

God draws him, that idea of drawing is like you are taking something from a well. God does it all. We are dead. We are not sticking our hand up saying please help me. We are dead. We can't do anything if you believe in total depravity. So the whole thing to me goes back to total depravity. We are not able to do any of this. So God must change our will. And where you say he draws us, I think the Reformers would say he does draw us in that the Holy Spirit changes our "want to." We never do want to, we are all sinful, all of us, everyone is sinful. So we can't do it all ourselves. He must change us in some ways so we are able to do that work, and that is through the Holy Spirit not of our own self.

Answer: Well, I think the difference between what I am saying and the Reformers would come out most clearly with regard to whether grace is irresistible. On the view that I am suggesting, it is not irresistible.

Followup: I would say we are always resisting. We are constantly resisting until he changes our "want to" to resist.

Answer: Yeah, and I am disagreeing with that. I am saying that a person can freely respond to God's grace and the drawing on his heart and that it is not irresistible.¹⁵¹ Now this gets into other issues but it is related to whether or not God really wants all persons to be saved. I take very seriously these passages in the New Testament that says God is not willing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance.¹⁵² God's desire is that all persons be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. If you take those passages literally and at face value, that must mean that God does not choose to give saving grace to some persons. He doesn't change their "want to" as you put it. On my view, I would say that God does offer saving grace to every person but some obstinately push it from them. They resist it and so they fail to be saved. So I may be wrong but I think that it is clear that this is a different view than Luther and Calvin's at least. I think you've got to give me that – this is a different view. This is a view that does allow for significant human freedom where theirs doesn't.

Let me say something about this analogy that is often used by persons in the Reformers camp of a dead person. Paul says we are dead in our trespasses and sin.¹⁵³ This is interpreted by Reformed people to mean that we are utterly comatose, that we have no will or ability to respond whatsoever. I think that that is reading things into the text that isn't there. The idea of being dead in trespasses and sins means that there is no spiritual life in us; we are under the condemnation and wrath of God. We are destined for hell. We are not saved. But, it doesn't mean that we are like cadavers. We are still persons who have mental cognitive faculties that are functioning and can choose to respond or resist God's grace.

Followup: Doesn't the Bible say that no one seeks the Lord, no not one?

Answer: Yes, and that is the necessity of prevenient grace. Remember I said the natural man doesn't seek the things of the spirit of God. Apart from the prevenient grace of God, no one would come to him. So you've got to have, as your first step, God taking the initiative – convicting and drawing people to himself. But the fact that people are dead in

¹⁵¹ 25:03

¹⁵² cf. 2 Peter 3:9

¹⁵³ cf. Ephesians 2:5

trespasses and sins doesn't mean that they are no longer rational individuals endowed with libertarian freedom who can respond to God's grace. That is reading things into the text that just isn't there. It seems to me that what Paul is saying, as we've seen, is that you have the ability to have a response of faith to the preaching of the Word and that it is up to you then whether or not you will respond.

Followup: Last thing I would say is that R. C. Sproul says man has free will but God's is freer.

Answer: Yeah, I don't know what that means. That's a sort of catchy slogan.

Followup: Well, it means we can't trump God, God always trumps us. So his will – the high view of the sovereignty of God should always be in our view.

Answer: If by saying God's will is freer that means that God negates man's free will, that he obliterates it in the process of salvation, that is exactly what I'm disagreeing with. He doesn't treat us as though we were puppets and he pulls the strings and that is what makes us then respond. As I say, I don't think that can make sense of the passages about God's will that everyone be saved, which I take seriously. So, that does get into other issues but at least I think you can see the difference that I am suggesting here which is a view that defends freedom.

Question: It sounds like you are saying that God doesn't know who is going to choose him?

Answer: Oh, on the contrary! On the contrary! Were you in the Defenders class when we talked about the attributes of God? No? OK. You've got to go back and look at the section of doctrine of God, particularly the doctrine of divine omniscience where I gave a robust defense of God's knowledge of future contingents and in particular defended the doctrine of divine middle knowledge which says that God not only knows everything that will happen but that he even knows everything that *would* happen under different circumstances.¹⁵⁴ So he knows how you would respond to the preaching of the Gospel if you had been born in North Vietnam during the 1960s. He knows how you would have responded to the Gospel if you had been one of Billy Graham's children. He knows how you would have responded to the Gospel if you had been born in the dumps of Manila in the Philippines in the 1980s. So on this view, God most certainly does know everything that not only will happen but everything that would happen under different circumstances. This can be a means by which he accords to you those gifts of grace, of prevenient grace, to which he knew you would freely respond. It is not irresistible – you could resist. But he knew you wouldn't. He knew that if you were born in those circumstances, you would freely respond to these gifts of prevenient grace. So although I haven't defended that view here, this fits in beautifully with this rubric that I've laid out. I definitely want to affirm that God knows this.

Followup: It just sounded like you were giving too much credence to free will.

Answer: All right. Well, I don't mean to do that, as you've seen what I just said.

Followup: God chooses everyone who has faith in Christ. Well, that faith came from where? It came from God. It didn't come on their own, they didn't one day say . . .

¹⁵⁴ 30:17

Answer: Well, that is why we dealt with Ephesians 2:8-9. There isn't any passage in the New Testament that says saving faith is a gift from God. Saving faith is something that we exercise in response to God's grace. It is not as though you are a puppet and God pulls the strings and makes you have faith in him.

Followup: Well, he knows who is going to choose him, right?

Answer: Right. Right. I have this very strong view of divine sovereignty that is being expressed here. We shouldn't let that distract us.

Question: Could you elaborate on what you were meaning by perseverance? I don't think that you were saying that we can't be assured of our salvation until the very end depending on if we hang in there as it were.

Answer: No, it is not a matter of assurance. What it is a matter of is what Paul says; he who endures to the end will be saved. So we must constantly, as Paul says, exercise vigilance. He says test yourselves, examine yourselves, to see if you are holding to the faith. So perseverance is required in the Christian life. This is a reminder to those who went forward at the altar when they were eight years old and had an emotional experience but lived like the devil since then. They have no basis for assurance because just because you had some emotional experience in the past is no guarantee that you are in fact walking in the grace of God now. So perseverance is necessary but that is not at all to say that you don't have assurance of salvation. I think for the person who is walking in the Holy Spirit, who has the witness of the Spirit, certainly has assurance of salvation. Paul says the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. If children then heirs – heirs of Christ and joint heirs with Christ, Romans 8. Certainly, assurance will belong to this. When we get to the subject of salvation – we are on the doctrine of sin now – but when we get to salvation we will talk more about perseverance and whether or not it is possible to fall away from God's grace. There again there is a difference between some of the Reformers like Calvin and others like, say, Luther or Catholics with respect to whether or not a person can fall from grace and fail to persevere.

Question: Someone like a D. A. Carson is going to object and say, hey you strawman'ed my position here. You said this is irrespective of our will, but hey, we believe in a type of compatibilism and this isn't just the compatibilism where we say divine sovereignty is compatible with free will. All Christians believe in that kind of compatibilism. This is a stronger kind of compatibilism. This is like we believe that theistic determinism is compatible with free will, as the Westminster Confession says. Even though God determines our salvation and our faith, man comes most freely. Now the question is – how do you respond?¹⁵⁵

Answer: You are drawing our attention to a very important point. Really, in one sense, everybody believes that we come to Christ freely. But, they define the word in different ways. The question here is: is freedom compatible with being causally determined to do something, or is freedom incompatible with causal determinism. So that is really the issue that needs to be decided here. What kind of freedom are we talking about? Obviously, what I am talking about is this view of freedom as incompatibilism. If you are causally

¹⁵⁵ 35:13

determined to do something by factors outside yourself, you don't really do it freely. In order for it to be free, it can't be causally determined by other things. So if God determines you, like the puppet by pulling the strings so the puppet lifts its arms (the puppet doesn't really lift its arms freely), you could say it lifts them voluntarily, but it is not free. I think that what the compatibilist shows is a kind of compatibility between doing something voluntarily and doing it determinately but it is not really compatible with doing it freely. It is not up to you on compatibilism. On compatibilism, it isn't up to you what you do. It is up to these causally determining factors. So that is a good point.

Question: Could you elaborate on the two vessels and chapter 9 of Romans where he is talking about the vessels made for destruction and one made for glory?

Answer: I take it that the passage in Romans 9 where he talks about the potter having right over the clay to make one vessel of wrath fit for destruction and the other vessels of mercy prepared before hand for glory is simply part of the whole argument to say that God is the one who determines who is going to be saved and who is going to be damned. Who is going to be a vessel of wrath and who is going to be a vessel of mercy? And I agree with that. It is up to God whom to save and whom not to save. But then the point I want to go on to say, well, what has he decided to do then? What is God's sovereign decision? The rest of the chapter says his sovereign decision is to choose or to elect all those who have faith in Christ Jesus. Those are the vessel of mercy. So on this view, election – and this may help – election is primarily corporate, not individual. He chooses to elect a body, a group; namely, those who have faith in Christ Jesus. But it is up to you whether or not you want to be part of that group by how you respond to his prevenient grace.

Next time we will move on to our next locus and begin to talk about the Doctrine of Salvation.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Total Running Time: 39:06 (Copyright © 2014 William Lane Craig)