

Lesson 16 – Biblical Anthropology

What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all *things* under his feet, All sheep and oxen— Even the beasts of the field, The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.

—Psalm 8:4-8

Man was created a little lower than the angels, and has been getting a little lower ever since.

—Josh Billings

I am more and more convinced that man is a dangerous creature . . .

—Abigail Adams, in a letter to John Adams, Nov. 27, 1775

Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps; for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are and what they ought to be.

—William Hazlitt

We all know that *Anthropology* is the study of Man. *Biblical Anthropology* is one of the sections of Theology. It is what the Bible says about Man.

1. The position of man in the Universe
 - a. A little lower than angels – Psalm 8:4-8
 - b. Higher than the animals – Gen. 1:26-28
 - c. Have dominion over the earth – Gen 1:26-28
2. The Dichotomous (Two-Part) and Trichotomous (three-part) nature of man – 1 Thess. 5:23
 - a. Some good theologians teach that man is Dichotomous. Although we have reasons to disagree with them, this is not a major doctrinal issue.
 - i. The Material Part: Body
 - ii. The Immaterial Part: Soul/Spirit
 - b. We understand, along with many other good theologians, that man is Trichotomous – The Immaterial Part itself has two parts
 - i. Why we believe this to be the correct view
 1. *Soul* and *Spirit* are two separate words in Scripture, each with their own distinct definition
 2. Animals are said to have souls but are never said to have spirits in Scripture. –
 - a. Gen 1:24 – “Creature” is the Hebrew word for “soul”
 - b. Rev. 8:9 – The word translated *life* in some versions is the Greek word for soul.
 3. Heb. 4:12 says that the Word of God can divide between the *soul* and the (human) *spirit*.
 4. The soul and the human spirit are treated as two separate entities in 1 Thess. 5:23

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- ii. The three parts of man
 - 1. Body – the material part of man
We won't go into that here. I think we all know what the body is.
 - 2. Soul – ψυχή *psuché*
 - a. The Soul is basically the life of the body, involving intellect, emotion and will.
 - b. We get the English words, *psyche*, *psychology*, and *psychiatry* from this word. Notice that these words all have something to do with the mind.
 - c. The natural life in the body – Acts 20:10 – (his life (soul) is in him”
 - d. The immaterial, invisible part of man – Matt 10:28;
 - e. The seat of emotional feelings – Luke 2:35; Acts 14:2
 - f. The seat of will and purpose – Eph. 6:6
 - g. Other ways the word *soul* can be used...
 - i. Sometimes it means the complete person (body, soul and spirit) – 1 Cor. 15:45; Rom. 13:1
 - 1. The old Morse Code distress signal SOS = “Save Our Souls”
 - 2. Sometimes we say, “80 souls perished in the crash.”
 - ii. Sometimes it is used to describe the complete immaterial part of a person. 1 Pet 2:11; 3 John 2.
 - 3. Spirit – πνεῦμα *pneúma*
 - a. The immaterial part of humans that gives us the ability to commune with God, Who is Spirit – John 4:24
 - b. We get the English word *pneumatic* from this word. The idea here is invisibility and power.
 - c. Animals do not have spirits.
- 3. Universal sinfulness: the result of the Fall – Rom. 5:12
 - a. Innocence of the first couple –
 - i. Adam and Eve were neither created righteous nor unrighteous. They were created innocent. They had done neither good nor evil. – Gen. 3:9-11, 22
 - ii. Bible scholars call this time period – before the Fall – The Dispensation of Innocence.
 - b. We were never guilty of Adam's sin. Each person is only responsible for his or her own sins – Rom. 14:12
 - c. We inherited a sin nature from Adam and Eve, which made us sinners from birth.
 - i. An important distinction – it is our *nature* and not our *actions* that makes us sinners.
 - 1. We are not sinners because we sin
 - 2. We sin because we are sinners
 - ii. Because of our inherited sin nature, sin came as natural as eating, sleeping and breathing.
 - 1. Nobody had to teach you to sin. You knew automatically.
 - 2. It was natural for you to sin.
 - 3. You and I – and everybody else – were born that way.
- 4. Dead in sin
 - a. What it means to be “dead in sin?”
 - i. We are sinners by nature – Rom 5:12

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1. Nobody had to teach you how to sin.
2. Sin came as natural as eating, sleeping and breathing
- ii. We are slaves to sin – John 8:34
- iii. We are sinners by choice – John 3:19
- iv. We are lost in sin – Rom. 6:23
- v. We are condemned by our sins – John 3:18
- vi. We do not have the power to save ourselves
 1. It does not matter how good we are – Isa 64:6
 2. It does not matter what religion we belong to
 3. It does not matter how religious we are – John 3:3-7
- vii. Being dead in sin is this... Just as a corpse does not have the power to do anything, we do not have the power to save our selves.
 1. Some churches teach that this means we do not have the ability to desire to know God or the power to respond to the Gospel unless we are His elect. That is not what the Bible teaches. (This is the teaching of Reformed churches, many Presbyterians, and a small minority of Baptists who have been influenced by the Reformed churches).
 2. Do we have the power to do anything?
 - a. We have the power to sin
 - b. We have the power to live
 - c. We have the power to make decisions
 - d. We have the power to listen to the Gospel
 - e. We have the power to desire to know God in a self-centered way
 - i. We have the power to want to be saved from Hell
 - ii. We have the power to want a good life from God
 - iii. We have the power to want to be freed from guilt
 - iv. God can use that self-centered desire to lead us to Himself. Even though our natural flesh motives are not God-centered motives, He can still use them to bring sinners to Himself, along with the preaching of the Word of God and the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
- b. What it does not mean to be “dead in sin.”
 - i. It does not mean unsaved people cannot want to know God or seek Him
 1. Naaman
 - a. Naaman wanted God only because he saw some benefit in coming to God – 2 Kings 5:1-4
 - b. Nevertheless, that perceived benefit caused him to seek God – 2 Kings 5:9
 2. Cornelius
 - a. Cornelius was an unsaved Gentile who worshipped God – Acts 10:2
 - b. God recognized Cornelius’ desire and gave him the opportunity to get saved – Acts 10:3-4ff.
 - c. God even recognized some goodness in Cornelius – Acts 10:3-4

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- i. That goodness was powerless to save Cornelius from his sins.
 - ii. God responded to that goodness and seeking by giving Cornelius an opportunity to hear the Gospel and get saved.
 - ii. It does not mean that some people will never have the ability to get saved, and it is totally out of their control.
 - 1. God loves everybody – not just a certain group of people – John 3:16
 - 2. Jesus did for everybody – not just a select group – 1 John 2:2
 - 3. God wants everybody to come to repentance – not just a chosen group – 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9
 - 4. God commands everybody everywhere to repent – Acts 17:30
- 5. A practical lesson concerning Body, Soul and Spirit – what is your priority?**

1. Body 2. Soul 3. Spirit	1. Spirit 2. Soul 3. Body
<p>Our society today puts the body and temporal pleasures first. That which has to do with spirit is almost totally neglected and ignored. It's only natural for the natural man to live that way. It is unnatural for believers who love God to live that way.</p> <p>The tragedy is that believers today are following the lead of the world. We are living for the temporal – for the things that pertain to this life, and not for the things that pertain to eternity.</p> <p>Remember, this life is but a speck of dust in the infinite universe, and that the years we spend here are nothing compared to the eons we will spend in Heaven with Jesus.</p> <p>If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Col 3:1-2)</p>	<p>God's norm for the believer is to put Him first in all areas of our lives (Luke 10:27).</p> <p>Is He first in your affections, in your family, your friendships, your plans, your aspirations and your career? Does He really occupy that position, or are you just paying Him lip service?</p> <p>Remember the words of Jim Elliot, the martyred missionary to the Auca Indians of Peru:</p> <p>"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."</p>