

Theology 1.2 - Trinity

Diachronic Theology [as displayed throughout redemptive history] starts in the Garden and ends in the new and improved Garden – the City of God.

A. Discussion on Creation – Gen 1-3

1. **Evangelical Creation Theology Positions** – there are several approaches that have been presented throughout the church era to deal with some of the questions about Creation as presented in Scripture. Here are some of the most relevant:
 - a. **Gap Theory** – is an attempt to balance science with literalism.
 - i. Allows for the acceptance of an ‘old earth’ while not rejecting the literal interpretation of creation.
 - ii. Gen 1:1 – is said to refer to an ancient earth that was pre-existing.
 - iii. Gen 1:2 – it is argued that the use of ‘tohu’ [formless] & ‘bohu’ [void or chaotic] – these terms are used elsewhere in terms of judgment and may indicate that the earth had been under a previous judgment or curse, and was now being remade.
 - iv. Gen 1:3 – creation begins upon an existing earth/universe framework with a 6-24hr creation cycle.
 - v. This is an ‘old school’ approach that explains away evolution – this theology is reflective of the dispensational Scofield Bible.
 - vi. This approach wants to be literal with an added special insight derived from the linguistics of 1:1.
 - vii. This approach however, is not widely held as it places too much emphasis on a contested special understanding of 1 verse.
 - viii. It can be reasoned instead that God would not need or want to be so clandestine in His revelation... His revelation is not attempting to be hidden or deceptive – instead God is often enigmatic but more straightforward... wanting to be known and understood.
 - b. **Literal Theory** – 6-24hr days of creation.
 - i. Gen 1:1 – is an introductory statement.
 - ii. Gen 1:2 – 2:5 = day 1.
 - iii. This is the most literal approach.
 - iv. This approach demands a ‘young earth’ which causes difficulty in explaining about:
 1. The fossil record and dinosaurs.
 2. Evolutionary and geological evidence.
 3. Oil formed from organic compounds over extended period of time.
 4. Astral-physics which demonstrates that light emitted from celestial bodies must travel for millennia before it can be seen on earth.
 - v. As a result, the Creation Research Institute calculates that the earth is somewhere around 10,000 years old.
 - vi. This approach does not allow for the evolutionary process, and is in conflict with the observed scientific record.
 1. It requires that we ignore readily observable facts.

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2. It suggests that faith and science are necessarily in conflict.
- vii. This approach also ignores hermeneutical understanding of Genesis 1 being poetic, and Genesis 2 being narrative – which means the 24hr concept is not necessarily literal.
- c. Day-Age Theory – partially symbolic approach.
- Each day is actually symbolic of an extended period of time or ‘epic.’
 - Gen 1:1 – was the initial ‘big bang’ creation event, and there are billions of years that have passed prior to Gen 1:2.
 - Creation was the result of God’s special creative acts occurring on specific occasions with a long term between them.
 - This approach allows for an old earth.
 - This approach allows for some form of an evolutionary role.
- d. Framework Theory – totally symbolic approach [Meredith Klein]
- The verses are poetry with symbolic representations
- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Realms:</u> | <u>kings of realms:</u> |
| Heaven [sky] | Birds |
| Water | Fish |
| Land | Animals & humanity |
- Allows for either a young or old earth.
 - Allows for some form of evolutionary process.
- e. Whatever position we take, we need to understand what the Bible is communicating...
- Is it redemptive history or scientific history in nature? Many Christian scientists have argued coherently that Scripture is a revelation intended as an introduction to God... not as a manual of science – it tells us how to get to God, not how the world/universe goes.
 - The fact remains it was written for humanity with an earth/man centric frame of view.
 - Don’t expect scripture to be more than God intended it to be... literal, infallible, etc.
 - God gave us a mind and He expects us to use it... we ought to resist dogmatic positions and maintain an open mind.
- f. Dr Louie and I have no inherent conflict or problem with Scripture and science coexisting...
- When you examine Scripture in its original language and realize that in the ancient form of Hebrew used that there are only some 3,500 words in their lexicon and you realize there are some 200,000 words in modern languages – we enjoy specificity in communicating the ancients did not have.
 - Gen 1 is poetry – which is a writing medium that communicates through images and emotions.
 - Gen 2 is narrative which tells the story not necessarily history.
 - All of Scripture is theology – it is God’s revelation of Himself in the context of redemptive history.

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- ii. How much science needed to be included for God's self revelation to be understood? Answer is little to none. This is a theological/relational treatise, not a science journal.
 - iii. What transpired prior to humanity is scarcely relevant in terms of theology.
 - iv. Science when properly considered leads to the notion that there are things we cannot possible know:
 - 1. Each paradigm of knowledge has at its core a belief structure that is taken largely on faith as these principles are unproved and unprovable.
 - 2. Genesis creation is all about an all-powerful personal God who through His own limitless power spoke creation into existence, as opposed to the creation myths of pagan faith where some primeval 'god' is killed and its carcass used to form creation.
 - 3. The order, regularity, symbiotic relationships, etc that science reveals about the "natural order" speaks to a creator who purposefully made it work. It says a lot about Who God is – general revelation.
 - v. The position of "intelligent design" is far more compelling and rings more true in relation both to Scripture and science than either "evolutionary theory" or "creationism" as explaining the reality we exist within.
2. Omnipotence & Free Will – theological positions of God's Sovereignty
- a. Meticulous Sovereignty – God has seen every detail by foreknowledge – and all shall be what it will be.
 - i. Involves foreknowledge and prescience – God knows and prescribes.
 - ii. Potter & clay mentality – it is God's prerogative what He will do.
 - iii. God's perfect sovereignty plays out in one of 2 ways:
 - 1. Hard compatibilist – God's decree is final... 'God said it, I believe it, and that's final.'
 - 2. Soft compatibilist – 'I just don't know how God make it all work out, but I trust Him and that's that.'
 - b. Open Sovereignty – God is working through my free will individually and corporately [with all people everywhere throughout time] simultaneously in real time.
 - i. God is like a Master chess player playing billions of games through people's lives every moment.
 - ii. While the end result is known and assured, there are many areas where I may either surprise God, or things may work out in un-decreed but otherwise suspected/anticipated ways.
 - c. Interactive Sovereignty – God decrees some things, and others He allows us to choose [Dr Louie's and my position].
 - i. There are things that are prescribed, and things that are permitted... both of which God works in and through to accomplish His purpose.
 - ii. There are times in my life when God forcefully enters my life and directs/influences my thinking, decisions, and direction.

- iii. I have free will – which is evidenced in my ability to sin.
 - iv. God enables me to live a life that is pleasing to Him through the auspices of the indwelling Spirit.
 - d. Each of these positions have their strengths and weaknesses... but the interactive approach is much more consistent with the God I know and love as revealed in Scripture, and invites a closer evaluation.
- 3. Decrees – Interactive Sovereignty**
- a. Decrees within time
 - i. This is what is seen in the OT.
 - ii. Prophets and judgments are decreed in real time to real people.
 - iii. When God so acts in time it has to do with His response to specific issues – usually human moral & ethical failures in relation to His expressed will and purposes.
 - iv. God issues these decrees and judgments with the hope that people will respond by changing their ways. If they do, He relents; if they don't the decree is carried out in due course and in due time.
 - v. God issued a decree against Nineveh – Jonah reluctantly carried it out. When Nineveh repented, God relented... exactly what Jonah didn't want – he wanted them destroyed.
 - vi. Amos related decrees about social injustice – these were real failures of the leaders of Israel. The kings that refused suffered, when Hezekiah obeyed he was blessed as were his people.
 - vii. Such decrees/judgments are resultant from human free will in relation to moral & ethical failure.
 - b. Decrees before time
 - i. Scripture quotes a number of decrees that were made by God before time began.
 - ii. Eph 1:4 – Messianic prophecy.
 - iii. Rom 8:29 – foreknown and predestined.
 - iv. Our being in Christ was known before time.
 - v. Humanity lives out our lives in real time – but it was known to God before time.
 - 1. This is fundamental to the Calvinist position on predestination which eclipses free will.
 - 2. Free will and predestination are not necessarily in conflict... even though our reason may not understand how it works out.
 - 3. Calvinism and Arminianism are not necessarily in conflict either, though Arminianism seems to be more logical and Scripturally consistent.
 - vi. God knows all events:
 - 1. Before time – Alpha & Omega.
 - 2. Middle time – decree against eating of the tree of knowledge was given in real time as was the judgment after the action was taken.

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3. **Out of time – CS Lewis appropriately recognizes that God being out of time while humanity is trapped within time logically sets up our inability to grasp eternity and life within it. To God... past, present and future are all the same time. It is unfathomable to a time locked mind.**
- vii. **Ps 139 – David proclaims that God knew all his days before time.**
 1. **God knew David would be king.**
 2. **He knew that David would sin and fall, and repent.**
 3. **God didn't decree the sin, He foreknew it.**
 4. **God's knowing doesn't interfere with David's [or my right] and responsibility to choose.**
 5. **There are some things though that God may providentially intercede to better fulfill His purposes and protect me, His people, and/or creation.**
- viii. **1 Cor 7 – God has placed us where we are for a purpose – we are to bloom where we are planted before we worry about what else we ought to be doing.**
 1. **Differentiate between God working through us [living sacrifices], and me working for God [faithful steward].**
 2. **God ordains the setting – but what we do in that setting... the choices we make, etc... is what we'll be judged for.**
 3. **We are all made for good works – but we make the choices based on our willingness to submit to God and be identified with His purposes.**
 4. **God judges us by our intent, not necessarily the reality of the action.**
- ix. **Esther 4:14 – is typical of how God works.**
 1. **People are providentially placed in times of need or purpose to influence the world for good in terms of the Kingdom of God.**
 2. **Seizing the opportunity is an opportunity to work in alignment with God.**
 3. **Even if I refuse or fail, God's purpose will still be secured.**
- x. **Romans 9:17 – God knew what kind of man Pharaoh was before time, and decreed to use him to fulfill His purpose.**
 1. **Pharaoh was a nasty guy who hated the Hebrews, he deliberately went out of his way to make their lives miserable.**
 2. **God didn't make Pharaoh this way, it was the result of his own choices.**
 3. **Because of his foul nature, God set him up for judgment. God's 'hardening his heart' was encouraging what Pharaoh was already intent on doing.**
 4. **There was no judgment that wasn't deserved throughout Scripture – with the only exception of Grace.**

4. Time and Pre-time

- a. **Jesus was the Pre-existing Word [Logos] before time.**

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3. 'L' – limited atonement – Jesus doesn't die for all humanity, but only for the chosen [elect], which is a fixed number.
4. 'I' – irresistible Grace - The call [election] is at God's initiative and is irresistible... humanity plays no active part in the matter.
5. 'P' – perseverance of the saint
 - a. Only those who are truly elected will be preserved until the end.
 - b. Those who accept but fall away were never really elected.
- b. 7 Point Calvinism – represented by John Piper [aka 'hyper Calvinism'] – this is theology more typical of conservative Presbyterians.
 - i. 6th Point – double determinism – heaven or hell is an active choice, not a default choice. Some are made for heaven, others for hell [Pr 16:4].
 - ii. 7th Point – God chose the best of all options. There were an infinite number of options, but God chose the one best suited for His purpose.
- c. 30 Point Calvinism ['hyper Calvinism on steroids'] – is considered the “pure form” of modern theology more typical in use by Covenant and the 'Reformed High-level Presbyterians' represented by John Stott. 30 points are as follows:
 - i. There are 2 main covenants in scripture [works and grace] that are conditional contracts that set forth conditions for blessing.
 - ii. Covenant of works is an 'if' 'then' arrangement based upon human actions.
 - iii. Full and complete obedience is required to secure blessing.
 - iv. Adam is the representative [or federal] head for all humanity.
 - v. Adam sinned and as our federal head, thus the consequences of God's curse accrued to all of humanity rendering us lost and depraved.
 - vi. Since we were totally depraved, God instituted the covenant of Grace.
 - vii. Blessing in the covenant of grace is the same as the covenant of works, but it is achieved through different means.
 1. Works – obedience – Adam/Moses/Law
 2. Grace – faith – Jesus/Gospel
 - viii. Christ can establish the covenant of grace because He is the Federal Head of the Church.
 - ix. To establish the covenant of grace Jesus had to have lived a perfect life, which as God, He alone could do.
 - x. Jesus' atonement was made for all the elect.
 - xi. Jesus' atonement is a forensic legal impartation of grace – satisfying the requirements of the Law.
 - xii. Because Jesus is the federal head, His atoning work is 100% affective – but only upon the elect which is a fixed number.
 1. Thus, Jesus death does not apply to all of humanity.
 2. Thus, we cannot proclaim in evangelism that Jesus died for your sins – He may or may not have, depending upon if you were elected.
 - xiii. Since election was decided before the beginning of time, both save and unsaved was fixed [double determination].
 - xiv. Jesus died only and exclusively for the elect.

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- xv. Eternal life is solely through grace – which is unmerited and cannot be earned by works or even by faith.
- xvi. Before a human can respond to God’s Call irresistible grace must be applied by God.
 - 1. There is no providential grace.
 - 2. There are 2 types of Call:
 - a. Gospel Call – can only be heard and responded to by those who are so called, and they have no choice but to believe.
 - b. Effective Call – the antithesis to the above.
- xvii. Faith is not a condition of salvation, as there are no means or conditions humanity can apply. Rather, faith is the means of the pathway grace is applied.
- xviii. Salvation is understood as a continuum for believers who persevere.
- xix. Since salvation is understood as a continuum, sanctification is also accomplished by God and is not a condition – all believers grow into Glory.
- xx. All of the OT is a ‘type’ of Christ – immediately after the fall, God worked progressively the covenant of grace.
 - 1. Type = “form or pattern” or “model or prototype” and is the shadow of reality.
 - 2. Anti-type or Archetype = is the real thing... and was used in two directions:
 - a. The correspondence between 2 historical situations – like the flood and baptism, or between 2 figures like Adam and Jesus.
 - b. The correspondence between the heavenly pattern and its earthly counterpart – like the earthly Tabernacle/Temple being representative of God’s heavenly Throne room.
 - 3. It is important to distinguish types from “symbol” and “allegory” –
 - a. Symbol has a meaning apart from its normal semantic field and extends to an abstract concept [cross=life, fire=judgment].
 - b. Allegory is a series of metaphors in which each one adds an element to form a composite picture or message [good shepherd].
 - 4. The OT foreshadows the NT where Jesus is revealed as Messiah.
- xxi. Type example – Noah’s sons are a type of the church; Abraham’s seed are a type of Christ.
- xxii. Law of Moses is a covenant of grace that foreshadows Christ. Rituals foreshadow Christ and have mirrored appearances of Christ.
- xxiii. OT Law has 3 components:
 - 1. Ceremonial – rituals completed in Christ.
 - 2. Civil – are adjustable based on time and culture.
 - 3. Moral – still fully in play – 10 commandments & Sabbath as moral law are still fully intact.

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- xxiv. Calvin's 3rd use of the law is that believers are to use the law as a pattern for their lives.
 - xxv. The continuum of the redemptive use of the law is in effect.
 - xxvi. Since OT teaching/training curriculum is for the young, then baptism is also for the young.
 - 1. Credo baptism – believer needs to be able to explain what they believe for the ritual to have significance.
 - 2. Pado baptism – includes all in the community including the young, it is necessary ritual.
 - xxvii. Israel foreshadows the church – as the full body of Jewish/Gentile believers.
 - xxviii. Any 'land promises' to Israel have been fulfilled as a type of the Heavenly Kingdom. No further restoration is necessary – hence the 1948 restoration of the nation has no significance in Biblical prophecy.
 - xxix. Prophecies of restored glorious Israel should be understood as a type of the Heavenly Kingdom.
 - xxx. John Calvin is the final authority on interpreting scripture.
6. Epistemology = the branch of philosophy that is concerned with the theories of knowledge.
- a. What can we really know about "Truth" and the use of words? What can we know about prophecy? There are some useful parameters of 'knowing' that we can apply:
 - i. Literal or symbolic meaning
 - 1. Swords into plowshares –[Is 2:4; Mic 4:3] – symbolic, not literal.
 - 2. Messiah will be born in Bethlehem [Mic 5:2; Mat 2:6] – this is a literal statement.
 - 3. Some statements are hard to say... could be either or both.
 - ii. Hyperbole
 - 1. Would seem to indicate that one option not both is important.
 - 2. 'Mercy not sacrifice' [Hos 6:6; Mat 9:13; 12:7] – Both are important, but mercy is the more important.
 - iii. Diachronic vs. Synchronic time
 - 1. Prophecy is almost always revealed in one particular time frame.
 - 2. Hence, the coming of Messiah would have been expected as one event, not two.
 - 3. Though primarily revealed in one time frame, it almost always has relevance throughout time.
 - iv. Multiple Fulfillments
 - 1. Children of Abraham – has relevance throughout the ages, as well as literal and symbolic terms.
 - 2. Promise of descendents being greater is not merely numerical, but sets the stage for Moses, the Davidic Monarchy, and of course Jesus the Messiah.
 - v. Culturalism

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1. Truth is portrayed as relevant in the culture in which it was given.
 2. Truth is portrayed in terms of language, symbols available at that time.
- b. 'Chastened Hermeneutical' Approach to Epistemology
- i. Recognize that we see as through an imperfect mirror God's imparted truth [1 Cor 13:12].
 - ii. Some aspects are clearer than others, some are way more obscure.
 - iii. Hold to what is known to be true, don't read more into the scripture than was provided.
 - iv. Resist the temptation to be dogmatic, especially on things that were left obscure – hold on loosely.