

# God's Sovereignty and Your Salvation, Part 1

Jack Hughes

April 22, 2007

If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Luke 10, where we're going to begin looking at verses 21–24.

Have you ever been reading your Bible, and you come across one of those common texts, especially at the beginning of Paul's letters, or maybe Peter's letters, where it talks about God predestinating us to election, or adoption as sons before the foundation of the world? You read that, and you think, "How does that work? How does God predestine who is going to be saved before the foundation of the world, and how does that work with man's responsibility to believe?" Or, maybe you were reading Romans 3:11, where Paul says: "THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD," and yet you're thinking to yourself, "I did. I don't know what that means, but I did. I sought God. I found God." You thought about that, and you [wondered], "How could that be true?"

Maybe you've pondered God's absolute sovereignty. You know God is absolutely sovereign, that His decree encompasses whatsoever comes to pass, He declares the end from the beginning [see Isaiah 46:10], [and] His will is unthwartable [see Job 42:2]. You know that's true, you see it in the Bible, and yet you wonder, "Huh. Why pray for the lost? If God has already chosen whom He is going to save, then why pray for the lost? Why witness,

for that matter? If His will can't be thwarted, and He's going to save who He's going to save, then why bother? What about man's will to choose or not choose? I mean, do we have freedom of will or not? Are we told to believe or not? Do we believe or not? I mean, God doesn't believe for us."

Maybe you've tried to solve these dilemmas in your mind, and you're thinking, "How do these fit together? Maybe it's because God knows all things, and before the earth was created, He looked way into the future, and He saw who was going to seek Him, and then He chose them in response." But then when you think that, you think, "But no one seeks God. But I did." You're wondering, "Am I misinterpreting something here? What is wrong?" You know that the gospel is to be preached to everyone [and] that God commands all men everywhere to repent [see Acts 17:30]. You know [that] the Scriptures say, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" [John 1:12], "and that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" [John 3:16].

To make things worse, you come to texts like 1 Timothy 2:1–6, where Paul, speaking to Timothy, says:

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

You read that, and you say, "Well, it says that we are to be making prayers and petitions on behalf of all men—surely that's all, every, each—for kings and all who are in authority—that means everybody in authority

—so that we can lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness. Of course, that's not just some—God wants *all* godliness. God desires *all* men to be saved. Christ gave Himself a ransom for *all*. You can't take the first four "alls" as all-inclusive and those other ones [as meaning] only some. It just doesn't work." But then, in your mind, you're saying, "OK. All right. Well, if that's true, and God doesn't desire anyone to perish [see Matthew 18:14], and He desires all men to be saved [see 1 Timothy 2:4], then why is it, if He's all-sovereign and His grace is irresistible, and no one can thwart it, if He desires all men to be saved, [that] all men [are not] saved? Why are only a few saved? And, out of those who are saved, why are those who are saved saved? Why not other unworthy sinners?" Oh! It's a torture.

At the Synod of Dort, a series of meetings from 1618–1619, an attempt was made to define, refine, and defend the teachings of a man named John Calvin. They ended up affirming what are often referred to as the "doctrines of grace." They are these (if you don't know what they are, you will eventually): total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. These are sometimes referred to as the "five points of Calvinism," or by the little mnemonic word "TULIP," [in] which each letter represents one of the doctrines I just mentioned.

During Calvin's lifetime, he had a theological sparring partner named Jacobus Arminius, [who] developed what is often referred to as Arminian theology, not to be confused with our brothers and sisters in the area [who are] of *Armenian* descent, but Arminian after Jacobus Arminius. Calvin and Arminius dialogued, they sharpened one another as iron sharpens iron [see Proverbs 27:17], and that's what they did. They had theological disputes, trying to define more precisely what exactly the Scriptures taught about God's sovereignty in relationship to men's salvation. Was God more sovereign and men didn't do anything, or were men partially in charge and they did something, or somewhere in between? Where is that line? Most people ended up following John Calvin, and a few, through history—mostly through the work of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism—have fol-

lowed what is called the Arminian view of God's salvation of men. This, when it came to America, then spread to many Baptist denominations.

As is often the case when people start dialoguing, and they do it in a very gracious way, often their followers do not become very gracious. Many think that Calvin and Arminius were at each other's throats, but that was not the case. In fact, Jacobus Arminius wrote this: "Next to the study of the Scriptures which I earnestly inculcate, I exhort my pupils to peruse Calvin's commentaries, which I extol in loftier terms than Helmich himself." Helmich, at that time, was a great Dutch theologian.

For I affirm that he excels beyond comparison in the interpretation of Scripture, and that his commentaries ought to be more highly valued than all that is handed down to us by the library of the fathers; so that I acknowledge him to have possessed above most others, or rather above all other men, what may be called an eminent spirit of prophecy.

His *Institutes* ought to be studied after the [Heidelberg] Catechism, as containing a fuller explanation, but with discrimination... like the writings of all men.<sup>1</sup>

That's pretty incredible. Jacobus says, "Listen, out of all the writings of men, out of all the writings of the early Church fathers, if you want to read something that's good, read Calvin because this guy can interpret Scripture like no one else." Ever since the Reformation there has been this following of Calvin or Arminius or something in between.

When studying any particular doctrine, what often happens is [that] people tend to get lazy. This is what happens. A young man gets saved, he gets excited about Christianity, and so he's going to find out what he believes about theology. So he buys and then reads a bunch of books written by men who studied the Bible. He reads their conclusions and concludes

---

<sup>1</sup>Taken from Schaff's, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 8, ch. 8, section 68.

that that's what the Bible teaches. That is dangerous. It's dangerous because the Holy Spirit does not illumine the works of men, or reveal truth in the works of men, but in the Word of God *alone*. So, if you want to know the truth, you've got to study the Bible. The works of men are OK, but the Bible is *always* the best.

The hard part is [that] you have to look up all the different verses, and all the different contexts, interpret them all individually, then once you get all [of] that done, then you need to synthesize them into one cohesive whole, where no verse contradicts another because we know [that] since God is perfect, His Word is perfect and it cannot contradict itself. This is hard work, but the value of doing it that way is [that] once you've done [it], once you've looked up all the verses, you've looked at them in their context, you've asked yourself, "How would the original audience understand this text by what was written?" you come to those conclusions, put them all together, and you arrive at a coherent system, then you *own* it. Then you know what the Bible teaches. You may agree with Calvin, and you may not agree with Calvin, but the important thing is that you look into the Book, not into somebody who merely studied the Book, digested it, and gave you what they discovered.

Those not familiar with God's sovereignty in salvation [may be] thinking, "Man, is this some scary doctrine?" Oh, man, it is a theological labyrinth. It is a maze that only has one entrance and one exit, and trying to find your way through that maze from this side to that side is *hard*. You will end up going down different corridors, and all of a sudden, [you hit a] dead end. Then you go back, and you're [at another] dead end, and you can't even find your way to the entrance again because there are so many truths—God's sovereignty, and God saying, "No one can come to Me," and then, "Come to Me," and, "No one seeks God," and, "If you seek Me, you will find Me." It's enough to make you bipolar to try and figure out how all this stuff fits together.

This morning, we return to Luke 10. We have learned that Jesus has chosen these seventy disciples, sent them out to do pre-evangelism, [having

given] them the power to do all kinds of miracles and [to] cast out demons, and then [they were] to return. They did return, and they rejoiced because, man, the demons had to do what they said. They're kind of gloating, and [saying], "Man, you should have seen them. They didn't like us. They did not like us telling them what to do, but they had to obey. We like that."

Jesus says, "Listen, don't rejoice in that, rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven. Rejoice in that!" [see Luke 10:20]. That is the near context of our passage this morning. Follow along as I read Luke 10:21–24: "At that very time He," that is, Jesus:

rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." Turning to the disciples, He said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them."

I've been waiting to get to this passage. Whenever I'm going through a book [of the Bible], I keep reading ahead several chapters, so by the time I get there, I can't wait [to preach on it]. I especially can't wait because this is a sovereignty of God passage. This passage just plunges you into one of the most complex doctrines in all [of] the Bible, but one of the doctrines that, if you understand it, and you understand it thoroughly, it [will] just bless your socks off. It will be so encouraging to you. You will understand your salvation like never before. I'm going to go very slow[ly]. I don't know how slow[ly], but it's going to take a while. We're going to take our

time, and we're going to begin by merely surveying the passage. I'm going to highlight some basic, quick interpretations and observations, and then we're going to begin at the beginning. We're going to chip our way through the sovereignty of God and the salvation of men, and we're going to try and answer all of those hard questions in a clear and understandable way so [that] you can understand this great doctrine and how it relates to your life.

Look at [Luke 10:]21. [Just before this], Jesus has told His disciples not to rejoice in their power over demons but that their names were recorded in heaven. Then the text says, "At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, 'I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.'" Jesus [says], "Listen, don't rejoice over that, rejoice [that] your names are recorded in heaven," [and then] by example, [He is going to] show them what He means [by] rejoicing in God's plan of salvation for men.

Look at the middle of verse 21, where we see Jesus praising the Father: "That You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent." What is that? Well, "these things" are the truths of the gospel. Don't miss it. Jesus is saying, "Father, I praise You that You have hidden the gospel truth from wise and intelligent people so they can be damned." Is that what He's saying? [He says], "You have hidden it from the wise and intelligent." The "wise and intelligent" are those who are wise and intelligent in the eyes of the world, who think they know the truth, who think they have things figured out, who don't need God, who trust in themselves. Look toward the end of verse 21: "and have revealed them to infants." "You've hidden it from the wise and intelligent and now You're revealing it to infants." Jesus is not talking about babies, here, He's talking about those with childlike faith, who see their need, who desire to trust Christ alone for salvation, who admit they cannot save themselves, and [who] need God to save them. [They are] completely trusting, like a child.

Look at the end of verse 21: "Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight." Think about that. Whoa! Look at verse 22: "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father." Stop there. What we see here is that God bequeaths to the Son everything, gives Him everything. The context

[of this verse] is talking about salvation, so obviously, Jesus, I think, said this to include what He's talking about: that the Father has given to the Son those souls He desires to save.

Look again at verse 22: "And no one knows who the Son is except the Father." Stop there. The word "know" here describes an intimate relationship—to know somebody intimately, closely, not just mentally. [It's] not like [how] you know George Washington, but [it is] like if you knew George Washington personally, as a close friend. [Jesus] says, "Listen, no one knows the Son except the Father." The only person who knows the Son intimately is the Father. Look at the text again, in verse 22: "And who the Father is," or knows who the Father is, "except the Son." Again, there is exclusivity here. Jesus *alone* can know the Father, and the Father *alone* can know the Son. It makes you want to ask, "Well, then, how can anyone get to know God?" Jesus tells us. Look at the end of verse 22: "And anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." That, people, is divine sovereignty. [It is] not anyone who *wants* to know, anyone who *tries* to know, anyone who *seeks* to know, but anyone [about whom] Jesus says, "I'll let this person know."

Look at verse 23:

Turning to the disciples, He said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them."

Remember, Jesus started off by saying, "Yeah, don't rejoice over the demon thing, but rejoice in this: your names are recorded in heaven." All He's doing is telling the seventy, "Guys, you know *God!* You know *Me.*" He says, "The prophets and the kings of old, oh, they wanted to know God like you know Him, and know Me like you know Me." It is the knowledge of God the Father, according to the will of Jesus Christ, which happens by the



aid of the Holy Spirit, that allows somebody to have a personal relationship with Christ and God the Father.

That's our quick tour. We're going to come back to this text many times. Notice that the context of the passage is about the seventy men who are sent out to preach the gospel to other men in different cities. They return from those cities rejoicing and praising God because He gave them power over demons in the process of evangelizing men. Jesus, then, praises the Father for hiding the truth from some men, revealing it to other men, so that men can be saved. So, where do you think we're going to begin? [We're going to begin] with men. That's where you need to start. A lot of people go awry when they go to all these salvation texts and they don't stop, and say, "I need to study mankind first," because if you don't understand man, and you don't understand the Fall, and how sin has affected man, you will never be able to understand the depth, the gravity, and the greatness of salvation.

I know some of you may be out there, thinking to yourselves, "Oh, Jack, this sounds kind of boring. Can't we get into the juicier doctrines, like predestination?" This doctrine is plenty juicy, and yes, we're going to get to [those] other ones [as well].

When you study mankind in Scripture, it is [known as] the "doctrine of anthropology," [which] comes from two Greek words: one is "anthropos." (Maybe you took anthropology in college. This is biblical anthropology.) "Anthropos" means "man," [and] "ology" means "the study of"—"the study of man." If you don't clearly understand man and his sin problem, you're never going to understand why God saves men and why God saves men the way He does, and man's responsibility, and how men seek God when they can't seek God, and how they believe when they can't.

In seminary, I took a lot of classes, and out of all the classes I took, the greatest, most wonderful, most [impactful] class in all of seminary, to my utter surprise, was the doctrine of man and sin. When you go to seminary, you think you know everything. You show up, and you're [thinking], "Yeah, what can I teach you?" You just show up thinking that you're God's gift to the seminary and you're going to help people get through, and then you'll

graduate, having been a blessing to them. [But] when you get to seminary and you're studying all these things, you begin to get a clue. I [initially] thought, "OK, God created man; mankind fell; 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' [Romans 3:23]—no brainer—let's get on with it." I mean, that was it, you know? [I thought], "OK, yeah, God created us and we're sinners. What else is there? You want to talk about it for three weeks? No. Let's get on with it." Well, that was because I was ignorant. I didn't know. I didn't understand. And so, I'm going to try and get you to understand what I didn't understand so you can understand what I understand now.

For this morning, we're going to look at two aspects of the doctrine of man, or anthropology. They're kind of basic, but they have huge implications, as you will see. The first is: the origin of man. If you turn on the TV [to] the nature channel, or [you] go to public school, or to college, you're told that mankind evolved out of some sort of primordial slime. After millions of years and random chance, with no Intelligent Being involved, chemicals got together for an involuntary chemical symposium. They did this in an oxygen-free atmosphere, which you would have to have for life to begin. Then lightning struck [and] something impossible happened: spontaneous generation occurred. Spontaneous generation is the thought that life comes from non-living matter, which all scientists say is not true, yet they all say they have to believe it if they believe in evolution.

Suddenly, the oxygen-free environment that was needed to start life became an oxygen-rich environment, which you need to sustain life. You ask, "Well, how could that happen?" Don't ask any questions. It's just true. Just believe it. So, instantly, a bunch of complex amino acids formed, and accidentally assembled themselves into proteins, the chance of which is [1 in]  $10^{81}$ —that's ten with eighty-one zeroes at the end. That's just for one to happen, not a bunch, but a bunch [of these assemblages] happened. You ask, "How?" Don't ask. Just believe it.

Though having no intelligence in themselves, just being chemicals and proteins, the [amino acids] then arranged themselves, by the help of noth-

ing, into a creature—a one-celled living organism, which had the ability to consume food, reject waste, [and] reproduce itself because within it [are] all of these little mechanisms, which no one designed, but which are engineered. [This single-celled organism] has the ability to reproduce itself because it has DNA, which came from nowhere. DNA is so complex that even computers today cannot unravel it all—[not even] one strand. [It is] very engineered, very designed, very intricate.

So, you ask, “How can all this be?” Don’t ask. It’s just the way it is. After all, everybody has seen in the textbooks those sequences of the horse starting off little, then [there’s] a little bit bigger horse, and [a] bigger horse, and [a] bigger horse. We’ve all seen that. Well, that first animal there is a rodent, and the last one is [a] thoroughbred. Everything else in between is just artist’s work. You say, “You mean they didn’t evolve like that?” No. No. “Well, how come they’re all in the sequence?” [It is] because artists did it, and artists can do anything. They can make Bugs Bunny talk. Then you have the sequence of the ape slowly evolving into this hunchbacked guy who, pretty soon, [is] holding a briefcase and wearing a business suit. He’s got a little tag, if you look closely, that says, “Evolutionist.” They don’t ever say, “Well, yeah, all those cavemen that came from the ape, there aren’t any. All of them have been proven to be hoaxes. Even though they’re hoaxes, [however], we’ll still put them in the public school books because, after all, it wouldn’t look good if you just had a rodent and a horse, [and] an ape and a guy in a business suit [next to each other]. It wouldn’t be very convincing, and since we all know evolution is true, let’s just make sure that it looks like it.”

Then you see the pictures of the geologic column, with all those different, strata—Cambrian stratum, pre-Cambrian stratum, Protozoac, and all that stuff. “Oh, yes, the Cambrian stratum. That’s the *very old* stratum.” Well, first of all, they forget to tell you that nowhere in the world does the geologic column appear in that order. Sometimes it’s even upside down. That is a problem. Then, they say, “Oh, yes, but the smaller, more simple animals, like the trilobite, which kind of looks like a crab with a tail, started

at the beginning and slowly evolved.” But they don’t tell you that, “Oh, by the way, we find trilobites living today.” Well, what happened? [Did] they forget to evolve? “Oh, they did evolve.” Well, then, why are there still trilobites?

Then you have bigger problems, like the whale they found [that was] buried on its tail, with all [of] these [different sediment] layers [going] up [around it]. Do you think that whale stood there, [or that] somebody propped it up for millions of years so all the sediment layers could gather around it? [That] doesn’t work, does it? It’s almost like there was this huge flood and everything was laid down quickly. But you shouldn’t ask questions; you should just believe it. Now, on TV [and] in public schools, what you have is lies propagated *on purpose*. Even the evolutionists don’t believe the things that the textbook[s] say [that] evolution believes. Why? This is why: Because men don’t want God reigning over them. They want to be able to sin with a clear conscience and [to] not [have to] think that they’re going to hell if they do what is wrong. So, evolution is the best myth that men have been able to come up with, having ruled out the truth as a possible answer because men want to sin with a clear conscience. They don’t want to think there’s a God up there and that [that] God is going to get them if they rebel.

So, you’re left with what? The truth. Turn to Genesis 2. Let’s look at the truth. [Do] you want to know how man got here? Well, he didn’t crawl out of the slime [or] drop out of the tree and lose his tail. He was created *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, along with all creation. God spoke it all into existence. Turn to Genesis 2:7: “Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Look at verse[s] 18[–22]:

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what

he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

There we go. That's where we came from. God Almighty, out of a divine act, created the heavens and the earth and all they contain. On the sixth day of creation, He took some dirt, He formed it into man, He breathed the breath of life into him, [and] man became a living being. Then He took some[thing] out of the side of the man, and fashioned the woman. That's how it happened. That's what we learn here. God had Adam name the animals so he could see his need for a counterpart, because on that sixth day of creation, [God] created all [of] the animals, and said, "Adam, why don't you name everybody?" He did, and he realiz[ed], "Well, there's Mrs. Cow and Mr. Cow, and Mrs. Giraffe and Mr. Giraffe," he was seeing all [of] these male/female [counterparts], and he realized he was missing his counterpart. That's when God made [Adam] fall asleep, formed the woman out of his side, and then that is the end of creation.

That's how it all started. God did it, He did it on purpose, [and] He did it for a reason. These truths have [an] important implication. The implication is that God is the Creator, and since God is the Creator, He owns everything because He made everything, and He sustains everything by the word of His power. [This] means [that] He has a right to tell you what to do and not to do because He made you, and the earth, and all it contains. He is the judge, He is the Holy One, [and] He's always right. We owe Him our allegiance [and] our obedience because He is our Creator.

[Imagine] a perfectly obedient dog. I had this dog [that was] like that. This dog was given to me by a guy who trained sheepdogs. It was one of those English sheepdogs where you could never see its eyes, you know? You always wondered if it was looking at you. This thing was so perfectly trained—Poke was his name—that when I walked, he would stay right there by my side. If I went this way, he went [this] way. If I went that way, he went that way. When I got the dog, the dog was about six months old, and [the trainer] said, “Just take Poke around the perimeter of your property, and say, ‘Don’t go past here,’ and he won’t.”

“Really?” I lived in the mountains and I didn’t have a fence, so I took him around, and he never went outside the property. He never barked; he never bit anybody. If I told him to fetch something, he would. He was just incredibly obedient.

Now, what if you had a dog like that, and all of a sudden, the dog has a personality change, and decides to start chewing up your furniture, devouring your shoes, eating holes in your couch, and chewing the legs off your chairs? You kick him outside, and he starts digging in the flowerbed, digging holes in the yard, chewing up your prize begonias, or whatever. Then you go out there to deal with him, and he bites you. You beat him off, and he bites your hand. So you hide in the house, and you think, “Well, maybe he just needs to cool off a little bit.” So [later] you try to go out there again, and he snarls at you, and his teeth are hanging out. He attacks you, and you beat him off [again].

[A] neighbor comes by, and says, “Hey, what’s going on?” and [the dog] goes after your neighbor. He sees the neighbor’s cat, [and] he kills the neighbor’s cat. What do you do? You know what you do. Farewell and ado, to you dear Spanish ladies. I mean, that is it. That dog’s going night-night.

You call the people with the boxy truck with that big pole [with] the snare on the end, and say, “Take this mongrel away. This dog is out of control!”

Well, God is *our* Master. He created us perfect, and we rebel against Him over and over again. He is perfectly holy, and perfectly just, and He

tries to help us, and we bite His hand. He tries again, we bite His leg. He sends other people [to help us], [and] we bite them. What do you think He's going to do to us? [We]'re going down, way down. We deserve that because we've rebelled against God, haven't we? We have rebelled against our Creator. It puts a whole new perspective on things, doesn't it? This is the state of man: He was created by God, God owns him, but men do not own God.

[The second aspect of the doctrine of man is]: the constitution of man. What I mean by "constitution" is the makeup of man. What is man made up of? Well, we just learned [that he came from] dust, but [what is he made up of] more specifically? I've got a lot of dust in my yard, but it's not living. Well, there are two basic views. One view is called the "trichotomist view," [which] says that man is made out of "tri," three, parts—body, soul, and spirit. Hebrews 4:12 [says]: "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*, of both *joints and marrow*" [emphasis added]—soul, spirit—joints and marrow are part of your flesh—body. See? [Then] you go to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, [which says]: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame." There it is, [the] trichotomist view. Obviously the Bible teaches that.

The problem is [that] when you start looking at Scripture and you look at other texts besides those two, you discover that man comes in a composite unity. For instance, it's not enough to just have flour and say that it is a cake because cake is more than flour. A doorknob isn't a house. [If] you go [and] get your appendix out, that appendix is not a person, though it's part of a person. A body is not a person, and a spirit is not a person, and a soul is not a person. The problem is [that] the Bible uses a lot of other terms like "conscience," "emotion," "thoughts," "mind," and many other things to describe the physical characteristics and spiritual characteristics of man. There are a whole bunch of terms.

You think, “Well, it could be equally argued that man is mind, soul, heart, and spirit, or mind, soul, heart, conscience, and spirit. Who’s to say that that’s not true?” The best view to take is the dichotomist view, the two parts of man view, and just say [that] man has physical parts and spiritual parts. If you want to talk about joints, marrow, blood, kidneys, liver, brain, eyes, ears, if you want to go into that, fine. If you want to say soul, spirit, heart, mind, emotions, intellect, will, you want to do all that, fine. But the best thing is just to say that man is a composite entity of physical and spiritual attributes, or realities.

Job says in Job 7:11: “Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.” There we have soul and spirit used interchangeably. In texts like Genesis 3:19, it says, “By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.” In other words, your physical body is just dust and it’s going to back to the dust [from which] you were created. That emphasizes the physical aspect.

Then you get into other texts, like James 2:26, which says, “For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.” It says there’s a body, the physical part, and spirit, the spiritual part. Or, [there is] 2 Corinthians 4:16, where Paul says, “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.” Here it’s referred to as the “inner man,” so if you want, [you can] use “inner man,” soul, spirit, whatever.

This is what we learn from the Scriptures: man has been created with spiritual characteristics and physical characteristics. If you look at Genesis 1:26[–27]—if you’re still [turned to] Genesis—you read this:

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God



created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Now, notice here that God is talking to Himself in the first person plural: "Let *Us* make man in *Our* image." It's almost like there is more than one person in the Godhead. Yeah, it's alluded to, isn't it? Not only that, that word "God" there, when it says, "God said," that word "God" is "Elohim," and in Hebrew whenever you want to have a plural masculine ending on a noun, you put "im" on there—"Elohim." So it is a plural ending for the name of the singular God. Again, [it is] hinted [at] that there is a Trinity of persons within this single Godhead.

It says here we're made in the image and the likeness of God. We know that God is spirit, that He doesn't have flesh and bones, so what does this mean? I don't think it means that God has always existed like we are, and [that] He created us to look like Him physically, since God is not physical. So what *does* it mean? Well, three things, basically. First of all, man has character qualities, or attributes, which are unique in God alone: the ability to worship, the ability to have self-introspection, the ability to have historical reference, to have extra complex social awareness, and initiative. All things like this are attributes [that] God has that He has imparted to mankind, [and] which mankind has, unique and separate from the animals.

Second, mankind had holiness like God. In other words, when Adam and Eve were first created, they were sinless, just like God [is] sinless. Now, of course, we're not that way, but when we come to faith in Christ, and we are saved, we will regain that sinlessness [that] Adam and Eve had before the Fall. This is what John Bunyan's book *The Holy War* is all about. It is about the fall of Mansoul, a town, and then the king's effort to rid Mansoul of its corruption and restore it to its original place. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a similar allegory.

Third, and finally, we are like God in that we function like God. We are created to function like God. If you look at Genesis 1:26, notice [that] it says: "Let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky

and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth”—rule over, that is, have dominion over. Just as God rules heaven and earth, He created man on earth to rule the earth as kind of a little sub-king and queen. In verse 28, you see the same thing: “God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” What we see from this is that God, being the Creator, created man in His image and likeness. We have character qualities and attributes [that] are like God[‘s], and [that] cause us to be distinct from the animals.

[Mankind] had—Adam and Eve did—original holiness before the Fall, and we who believe in Christ will receive that again. That is, we will become perfectly holy again. Finally, we have a function, which makes us to be kings and queens of the earth. Of course, when mankind fell, and Adam and Eve submitted to Satan, then Satan became the god of this world, but we know from the Scriptures that in Christ’s kingdom, we will again be a kingdom of priests, a royal priesthood [see Revelation 5:10], and we will rule and reign with Christ forever, and then we will be able to have all of the stuff [for which] we were originally created.

What have we learned here? Man’s origin: God created man in six days—six literal, twenty-four hour periods. There are no eons of time in there, but six days like we know days. Man is composed of two basic parts: physical and spiritual. Man is created in the image and likeness of God, which [means that] we have attributes like God; we will have, through faith in Christ, holiness like God; and we were created to function like God.

That’s just the beginning. Too bad we’re out of time, but we’re going to come back, Lord willing, and we’re going to delve into man and sin, and that’s when the eyes will probably start popping open, and you’ll be able to see, “Oh! So that’s why God saves us the way He does, because if He didn’t, then no one would be saved!” Let’s pray.

Father, we thank You for what we were able to learn this morning. We thank You for the blessing of being able to meet here to look at Your Word,

to be reminded that You are the Creator God, that You created the heavens and earth, that nothing is too difficult for You. Father, I pray that as we go out of this place today, we will ponder, meditate on, and consider You as our Creator, to remind ourselves that You own us, that You have a right to tell us what to do, You have a right to judge us if we don't do what is right. And, Father, may we then, out of gratefulness and thankfulness for Your mercy and grace toward us in that we have not been judged like we deserve, Father, may we serve you with whole hearts and willing minds. Father, if there is anybody here who doesn't know Christ as his or her personal Savior, may he or she, right now, in the quiet of his or her heart, cry out to You, and say, "God, save me. I know I am a sinner, I know I have rebelled against you, and I know that Jesus died on the cross for me, was buried, and rose again on the third day. I accept that as my only hope of salvation." Father, save some today. Open their hearts to Your truth, change them forevermore by Your grace, for Your glory. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

---

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture is taken from the New American Standard Bible<sup>®</sup>, ©1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995, by The Lockman Foundation.