

SELECT Course in Systematic Theology

Summaries and Study Guide Supplement

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Lecture #1 – **Theology and Christian Identity****Dr. Winston D. Persaud**Section One Summary

Christian theology is necessarily contextual and global, because it is grounded in the universal reality of Jesus Christ, whom Christians confess is God uniquely incarnated for the sake of the whole creation. Theology has fundamental rules which need to be followed. Yet, the discipline of theology is in flux and has a dynamic character. Theology is an academic discipline that addresses both the church and the world. Finally, theology must attend to its sources, its method, its audience, and to God's mission – the *missio Dei*.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. What would you say is the content of the Christian message?
2. What biblical text or texts inform your answer? In other words, what is the biblical basis for your claim?
3. Is Jesus Christ necessary to what you say the Christian message is?
4. Would you say it differently if you were talking to a Buddhist? A Hindu? A Muslim? A Jew? Someone from another religion or faith?

Section Two Summary

We, more often than not, know (or learn) best what we believe by being in the company of others who do not believe like we do, and when we have to say what it is we believe. We have to say it and to be seen to be living by it. Theology is critical reflection on Christian faith for the sake of God's mission in and through the church. Theology has been characterized as dogmatics, apologetics, philosophical, or political. Theology is an intra-Christian enterprise and calls for inter-religious reflection and engagement as well.

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. What would it mean to speak about the fundamentals of Christian faith in the company of people of other faiths?
2. What 3-5 points would you want to note?

Section Three Summary

Theology is a contemporary enterprise with a centuries-old history. It is a conversation among Christians, but not restricted to Christians. Doing theology means taking up the challenge to think about the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Christian faith's core is this: God alone is the source of life; God is essentially Triune; salvation is from the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. In and through Jesus Christ, who is fully human and fully divine, in the power of the Holy Spirit, God reveals God. Intra-Christian and inter-religious consideration of the fundamentals of the Christian faith is indispensable to understanding the core of what Christians believe. The task of Christian theology is to find clear, persuasive, reasonable, and faithful ways to articulate Christian faith in a world of religious and non-religious alternatives. Christian theology must go beyond an anthropocentric focus and address God's creative and salvific work for the whole of creation. Christian theology must be grounded in the Incarnation. Finally,

Christian theology begins with faith and is to be spoken of as ‘faith seeking understanding’.

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. What are the questions of ultimate concern that people are asking?
2. How do you see the Christian message addressing those questions?
3. Give an example of how your faith in Jesus Christ has led you to ask some hard questions about particular experiences in life, your own and/or others’.
4. How was your questioning a reflection of ‘faith seeking understanding’?

Section Four Summary

Theology has both an *intra-Christian* and an *inter-religious* character. It is salutary to welcome the challenge to avoid the use of technical, doctrinal language, and, instead, to use other non-technical, everyday language which is faithful to the substance of the doctrine and teaching under consideration. Intrinsic to the Christian message is its infinite translatability. In *intra-Christian* and *inter-religious* dialogue, two primary challenges are to know the fundamentals of what we believe and to learn something about the other.

Section Four Questions for Discussion

1. How does faith in Christ come about?
2. What is the source of faith?
3. Give an example of how we try to protect God from the messiness of life. What rationale has been given for this?

Section Five Summary

Faith comes through hearing of the word. There is the natural human tendency to distrust God; human beings cannot not turn away from God. The Holy Spirit creates faith in the hearing of the Word. Thus, it is by faith in Jesus Christ that the sinner is justified by God. Theology is about the critical consideration of what norms the Christian faith and its claims. It is about the art of giving a credible account of what Christians believe and about why they believe that God’s self-disclosure in Jesus Christ is true. Faith is not to be reduced to our feelings. An additional point is that the biography of the interpreter plays a critical role, sometimes a or the decisive role, in the interpretation of the text. Finally, there is no orthodox definition of salvation.

Section Five Questions for Discussion

1. What is present in your biography that plays a critical or decisive role in your interpretation of the text?
2. How would you define salvation? Is this definition different from others in different contexts? What is the value of conversation between these multiple definitions?
3. Ultimately, what do you believe about God’s self-disclosure in Jesus Christ?

Lecture #2 – Revelation and the History of Religions Dr. Kristin Johnston Largen

Section One Summary (General Revelation)

General revelation is referred to as the unveiling of God that is self-evident, that is, visible and obvious to anyone who has eyes to see, not simply to those who are Christians. Typically, this type of revelation is linked to creation, and more specifically, to the deeds, the acts of God. God, the Creator and Lord of the universe, has stamped God's presence on all things made from God's hand and through God's word. Thus, it is possible to discern something of God's nature through the observation and contemplation of creation. It's something akin to recognizing the hand of Michelangelo in the Sistine Ceiling, for example, or hearing the distinctive voice of Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet*. The Creator leaves a mark on her creation, and thus the world in all its beauty and diversity bears the mark of the One who created it.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. Are there times or places in your life when you have experienced God's revelation in nature?
2. What was revealed to you about the nature of God during those times?
3. What Scripture passages would you use to describe this type of revelation?
4. Do you think this type of revelation is present in all religions? In the same way as it is present in Christianity?

Section Two Summary (Special Revelation)

Contrasted to natural revelation, but not in opposition to it, is what we call special revelation or supernatural revelation – revelation that goes beyond what is known of God in nature. This type of revelation reveals not just what God does, but who God is at the very core of God's being; and for Christians, the place where we receive this revelation, first and foremost, is Scripture. The biblical story that includes both the Old and the New Testaments is a confessional narrative that retells an astonishing sequence of saving acts through which God reveals not only God's redemptive will for the whole of human history, but also God's very being as the One who is for us and with us – and will be for all eternity. Over and over again, what we see in Scripture is that God is not content to be a God who holds Godself aloof and apart from the world. Instead, God willingly enters into the world and binds Godself up with God's chosen people, and from that time forward, all human history, our history as a human race, and our individual human histories, is filled with the presence of God, and bears the mark of God's saving grace.

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. What are some examples of God's special revelation to the people of Israel? When did God "show Godself" to either the people as a whole or individuals in a special way?
2. What are some examples of God's special revelation in the ministry of Jesus? Were there some times in Jesus' ministry when Jesus' identity as the Son of God was clearly visible?

3. After Jesus' death and resurrection, how does God continue to reveal Godself in the world? Can you think of any examples from the book of Acts, or the Epistles?

Section Three Summary (Exclusivism)

As you might guess from the name, exclusivism advocates Christianity as the exclusive possessor of God's saving grace as revealed in Jesus Christ. The classic expression of this position is found in the Latin phrase *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* – "Outside the church, no salvation." In other words, this position states that the Christian religion is true, and all other religions are false.

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. What might be some advantages to this particular Christian response to non-Christian religions?
2. What are some Bible passages that seem to argue for this position?
3. What might be some drawbacks to this position?
4. Are there some Bible passages that seem to counter such a position?
5. What is your personal reaction to this position?
6. How might you explain this position to a non-Christian?

Section Four Summary (Inclusivism)

Another possible Christian response to non-Christian religions is called Inclusivism. Basically, inclusivism also holds that the Christian faith is true, but it is not so strongly opposed to non-Christian religions. Instead, inclusivists argue that while God's revelation is indeed most fully seen and expressed by Jesus Christ, people in other religions can also experience this revelation, even if they don't know Jesus or haven't heard the Christian message. In other words, inclusivists believe that God's message of love and grace, embodied in Jesus Christ, is for the whole world, and can reach even those who are outside the Christian church. The Christian gospel is still the one true revelation of God, but it is not seen here as the exclusive possession of the Christian church. Everyone is "included" in the revelation of Jesus Christ – whether they know it or not.

Section Four Questions for Discussion

1. What might be some advantages to this particular Christian response to non-Christian religions?
2. What are some Bible passages that seem to argue for this position?
3. What might be some drawbacks to this position?
4. Are there some Bible passages that seem to counter such a position?
5. What is your personal reaction to this position?
6. How might you explain this position to a non-Christian?

Section Five Summary (Pluralism)

One helpful form of pluralism has been articulated by Diana Eck. Instead, of either exclusive or inclusive positions, she proposes the model of the "world house," in which those of us from different religions actively engage our differences and seek to understand each other, rather than just tolerate each other, but still maintain our own

personal religious commitments. For Eck, pluralism is the difficult and unavoidable encounter between people who have differing religious beliefs and practices, and yet in spite of those challenging differences must learn to live in harmony in our shared “world house.” In this view, the proper aim of religious dialogue is mutual transformation: that is, through the act of comparison, we might learn more about ourselves, our own religious tradition, as well as about someone else, and another religious tradition. What might be some advantages to this particular Christian response to non-Christian religions?

Section Five Questions for Discussion

1. What are some Bible passages that seem to argue for this position?
2. What might be some drawbacks to this position?
3. Are there some Bible passages that seem to counter such a position?
4. What is your personal reaction to this position?
5. How might you explain this position to a non-Christian?

Lecture #3 – Revelation and Scripture**Dr. Faye E. Schott**Summary

For Christians, the revelation of God has three characteristics: it comes as gift, it occurs as history, and it results in transformation. A distinction has been made between general revelation (through the world around us) and special revelation (through the specific history of Israel and the followers of Jesus as recorded in the biblical writings). The Bible came into being over many years through oral and then written traditions that were eventually recognized as authoritative. The Old Testament canon, including the law, the prophets and the writings, was closed by 90 CE, and the New Testament took final form by 397 CE. The canon of Scripture was not determined by church leaders, but rather by the fact that those writings included in the canon had proved to be essential for the life of the church. The Bible has authority as the record of witness to God's presence and action in history, as the means for that witness to reach people in the present, and as the center of the church's faith and life. The diversity and ambiguity in the biblical writings remind us that interpretation is always involved in the original biblical witness and in our reception and passing on of that witness. Hermeneutics is the study of how that interpretation has taken place and developed over time. The difference in the early church between literal and symbolic tendencies in reading biblical texts evolved into more complicated methods of interpretation in the Middle Ages. The Reformation emphasized the principle of "scripture alone" as the basis for faith and teaching, as well as the idea of the essential message of salvation through Christ as "the canon within the canon" and law and gospel as the forms in which that message is embodied in the Bible. More recently the idea of "scripture alone" has met with challenges from modern science and philosophy, and theologians have engaged in more critical methods of examining the biblical writings and their original contexts. Karl Barth and Paul Tillich were two 20th century theologians who endeavored to express how Christians in our time may understand the Bible as the Word of God. Debates about how the Bible is understood to be true continue, and Christians from non-Western and non-Christian cultures are now contributing to the discussion. The historic creeds function as summaries of Scripture, laying out the essentials of the Christian faith. The Nicene Creed is the only creed officially accepted by an ecumenical council of the church (325), and is associated with the eucharist as the sign of the church's unity. The Apostles Creed evolved in Western Europe, and from its beginning was used as a baptismal affirmation of faith. The Athanasian Creed was primarily a teaching tool in monastic communities and a guard against heretical doctrines concerning the Trinity and the divine and human natures of Christ.

Key Terms:

general revelation, special revelation
oral tradition
canon
septuagint
apocryphal or deuterocanonical books
hermeneutics
sola scriptura

canon within the canon
law and gospel
Word of God
infallible, inerrant
creed

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are some ways in which you have experienced the revelation of God? How has the Bible been formative for your life of faith? How has the Christian community past and present been involved in your experience of revelation?
2. What purpose do you think the canon serves for the church today? The Episcopal Church includes a few readings from the deuterocanonical books in its lectionary; how would you feel about using a reading from Tobit or Judith in a worship service, and why?
3. What kinds of meaning has the Word of God had in your faith experience? How might the authority of Scripture be different, depending on the ways in which it is used (for example: in corporate worship, individual devotional reading, discussions concerning appropriate Christian response to a particular ethical issue, etc.)?

Lecture #4 – Dr. Theodore F. Peters A Biblical, Trinitarian Theology of Creation

Section One Summary

Systematic theology can be seen as the collection of all important Christian teachings ordered roughly in the way we find them in the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds. Theologians construct coherent concepts to depict God's relationship to the world. They are based in Holy Scripture. The concept of creation is within the First Article. Creation is not merely something God the Father makes, but is also the ongoing life of God as Trinity.

The existence of the world is an answer to divine call. The natural world provides us with a "book" of revelation. The Bible tells us about the story of redemption. The separation of science from religion restricts scientific knowledge to this world only. This division imbues the contemporary cultural context of systematic theology.

Nothing exists that resists God. God created out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*). The created world is not divine; God is divine. The world is temporal; God is eternal. The existence of the world is contingent upon God's will that it exist. The future will not be identical to the past. God plans to alter existence of the present to make "all things new." Some theologians speculate about continuous creation (*creatio continua*). This is God's gracious daily action to maintain existence and provide the world with openness to newness.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. How would you describe the current relationship between science and religion? How comfortable is the church in navigating this relationship? How comfortable are you as a leader in the church with navigating this relationship?
2. How would you hold *creatio ex nihilo* and *creatio continua* in critical dialogue in preaching and teaching within your ministry setting?
3. How do these concepts affect your understanding of global and local ecological concerns?

Section Two Summary

The Bible promises that all things will become unambiguously good. In the new creation the ambiguity of evil in nature and evil in human activity will be removed. It will take a New Creation to complete the Creation. The unambiguous good applies to the creation completed by the New Creation. It may be proposed that the creation story of Genesis is happening now, that we still live within the "week of creation," that God is still waiting for the divine Sabbath rest, that the rest will come only with the New Jerusalem, and that God's plan for eschatological redemption is simultaneously God's plan for completing the divine work of creation.

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. What impact on beliefs and practices would occur if this view of Creation was the dominant voice within your congregation, community, or country?
2. Does this view of Creation challenge your current belief structure or reinforce what you believe? How?

Section Three Summary

Human beings are tied to the earth and transcend our earthly origin. The breath of God moves through us. That breath is eternal. The human race is defined by a tension between soil and spirit (*metaxy*). By endowing the human race with creativity, God gave us a role in making a future that would be different from our past. God has created us with the freedom to initiate action; and God has created the world to be malleable so that our action can lead to transforming effect. This is to be a *created co-creator*, in the *image dei*. Only God creates *ex nihilo*. As created co-creator there is an ethical mandate to press our creativity into the service of love toward God and love toward our neighbor. We have the freedom to be sinful, as well as the freedom to transform our world into a healthier place. The human race is pressed into service of God's mission.

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. What are the challenges the church will face if it takes seriously the call to view humanity as created co-creator? What challenges do we face on an individual basis?
2. How would Christian advocacy be different if the church embraced this role? How would this affect beliefs on global ecology and environmental issues?
3. How is the concept of created co-creator Good News?

Section Four Summary

In the Incarnation we can describe God as Emmanuel. We are united with Christ at the advent of the new creation. The Holy Spirit is God in the work of uniting, of bringing together, of bonding, and of loving. The Holy Spirit binds the divine life to the human life, or to the life of the entire world. Through *perichoresis*, the three persons of the Trinity can relate to one another through the world in which we live. This doctrine of the Trinity conceptualizes the complex interactions that are internal to God's life in relation to God's actions with the creation. God relates to Godself in the immanent Trinity through God's economic relations with the world. The world of creation is taken up into the divine life. Many criticize this doctrine. Historically, the Unitarians reject Trinitarian thought. Currently, Islam has the most forceful denunciation of the Christian understanding of God as Trinity. In no way does Christian theology surrender the oneness or the unity of God. The unity of God is a complex unity, not a simple unity. God in three persons is the ultimate reality; no other reality transcends Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Section Four Questions for Discussion

1. Do you think Christians are tritheists?
2. Does Christian theology compromise the commitment that other monotheists make to the oneness of God?
3. Just how might we think about the relation of God to the world if we want to think of God as ultimate and as Trinity?

Section Five Summary

Christian ethicists can hold up a vision of a world where the human race lives in harmony with nature, where healing replaces suffering, and where life has overcome death. God, the creator of the world, loves the world. The incarnation in Jesus Christ is an

expression of divine caring for this cosmos. The Christian faith has a central commitment to the future and Christians must find common cause with all other persons for whom the care of the earth is a priority. This approach may be called *Proleptic Ethics*. These are the seven principles: 1) project a vision of a healed world 2) promote a sense of global community 3) provide for posterity 4) protect human dignity 5) proffer the distinction between needs and wants 6) propose alliances among all persons of good will and 7) profess faith.

Section Five Questions for Discussion

1. What are local ways in which you might seek the advancement of Proleptic Ethics? Regionally? Nationally? Globally?
2. What are the unique resources that the church brings to the goal of care for the whole world?
3. How might you proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in a manner that seeks restoration of creation?
4. How will you live as created co-creator in your particular context?

Lecture #5 – **Trinitarian Doctrine of God****Dr. Cheryl Meese Peterson**Section One Summary

Most people and most cultures have some kind of believe in a greater power, or even divine creator. Furthermore, there is much that can be known about God through natural revelation. Yet, Christians believe in a God who has been revealed not only in nature, but in Scripture. Christian tradition has identified God as “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” The Trinitarian doctrine of God identifies for Christians WHO God is, and who God is FOR US. A Christian is one who believes in a Trinitarian God. Some theologians argue that the doctrine of the Trinity gives God’s proper name and God’s proper work. Feminist theologians are critical of this claim because traditional Trinitarian language for God, through the use of the masculine gender, reinforces a patriarchal understanding of God and the Church.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. How do you describe the God in whom you believe? What is God’s character like? What names do you use to pray to God?
2. Where does Trinitarian language for God appear in our worship services?
3. How much can we know about God apart from what the Scriptures reveal to us about God’s nature and will?
4. What does it mean to think of God as “personal?” Why is that important for Christians?
5. What do you think of the idea that the doctrine of the Trinity serves to identify the God in which Christians believe? Is this a new way of thinking about the Trinity for you?
6. What questions do you bring to the study of the Trinitarian doctrine of God?

Section Two Summary

The doctrine of the Trinity reveals a deeper truth about WHO GOD IS. The Triune God is a God of love and God in God’s very being is relational. Trinitarian doctrine developed out of the struggle of early Christians to understand who God is in light of the Christ event. The three-fold experience of God is based in the New Testament. Theologically, the development of Trinitarian doctrine is seen as organically related to the development of Christology. Early church fathers developed ideas about how the Son of God is divine, but there was a lack of clarity as to how the Son related to and is distinct from the Father.

Monarchianism appeared in two basic forms in 2nd and 3rd centuries. Monarchianism is the single, undivided rule of God the Father. The two forms were: Dynamic Monarchianism (Adoptionism) and Modalist Monarchianism (Sabellianism). Adoptionism claims that Jesus is adopted as God’s Son and receives divine power from the Father in Baptism. Modalism teaches that the self-revelation of the one, undivided God took place in different modes.

In 318 CE, Arius argued that the Father and Son were distinct and different kinds of beings. The Son was subordinate to the Father and had a “beginning.” The debate between Arius and Alexander revolved around whether Son has same “substance” as Father. Athanasius believed that only God could redeem or bring salvation to created

beings. To be our Savior, the Son must be divine. These views upheld in Council of Nicea (325 CE) and Council of Constantinople (381 CE).

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. What are some passages in the New Testament (besides Matthew 28:18-20) that bear witness to a “Trinitarian pattern” (Alister McGrath) or “proto-trinitarianism” (Ted Peters)?
2. What is modalism and how is a Trinitarian understanding of God different from a modalistic understanding?
3. The word “trinity” does not appear in the Bible. However, theologians on both sides of the debate over the relation of the Father to the Son appealed to the Scriptures. Look up some of the passages on both sides of the debate: John 1:3, 3:35, 10:30, 14:10, 17:11 (Athanasius and the opponents of Arianism); John 14:28, John 20:17 (Arius and his supporters) and discuss why this sort of appeal to the Scriptures did not settle the debate.
4. What two arguments did Athanasius make for his assertion that the Son is divine as the Father is divine?

Section Three Summary

In 325 CE, the Council of Nicea affirmed Athanasius’ position and used the Greek word for “of one being”, *homousios*, to describe this relationship. A second group believed the proper word was *homooisios*, “of like substance.” A third group distinguished between one substance and three persons. The three persons are all of one substance, but are distinct persons distinguished by their relation to the other persons.

In 381 CE, the Council of Constantinople addressed the Holy Spirit and claimed that the Holy Spirit was divine by nature, and the same substance as the Father. The Son is “eternally begotten” of the Father and the Holy Spirit “proceeds” from the Father. The filioque (and the Son) was added by the Western Church. This filioque controversy became major factor in split between eastern and western churches.

The doctrine of the Trinity was developed in response to a concern for salvation. In order to affirm that the Son saves, one must move beyond simplistic monotheism and avoid tri-theism. The unity of the Godhead is found in the divine community created by the interpersonal dynamics between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three persons of the Trinity share fully in all the divine works – creation, incarnation, redemption, etc.

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. When you confess the Nicene Creed in worship, how do you understand the statement, “We believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father?”
2. How did the contribution of the Cappadocians help clarify the post-Nicene debate about the relationship between the Father and the Son, as well as the relationship of the Spirit to both? What language did they use explain how Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are both “one” and “three?”
3. What is the “filioque” and what was controversial about it?

4. How does the doctrine of the Trinity help you understand both the oneness and the threeness of the Christian God? What questions do you still have about the Trinity?

Section Four Summary

The Christian doctrine of God originated as a way to express the idea that the events of salvation identify who God is and that God is FOR US. Trinitarian doctrine is proving tremendously important as a resource for theological reflection on several concrete issues facing the church and society. First, Trinitarian doctrine provides a new understanding of the *mission Dei*. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit send the church into the world. This mission teaches us that God is not only a community of love, but also a community of sent-ness. Second, Trinitarian doctrine speaks about what it means to be church. The perichoretical exchange of energy between the persons of the Trinity by virtue of their eternal love is the basis for a social doctrine of the Trinity. God is a community of co-eternal and co-equal persons relating to each other in mutuality and equality and the church ought to reflect this intra-divine model. This understanding of the social Trinity applies to the ecumenical discussion of the church. Finally, most feminist theologians hold a social doctrine of the Trinity because it calls for and implies a true equality and shared authority among human beings. Critique of male language for God is not that male terms are used, but that male terms contribute to and legitimize patriarchal structures in family, church, and society. There are three options to this challenge: 1) retain traditional language but emphasize masculine and feminine qualities of God's being 2) consider the Holy Spirit as feminine aspect of Trinity and 3) find other images of God which embraces both male and female humanity. One must avoid functionally modalistic language in addressing this challenge. Ultimately, the church must explore alternative Trinitarian formulas in preaching, hymnody, and prayers that measures up according to sound Trinitarian doctrine.

Section Four Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss Augustine's description of the Trinity as a "society of love." Is this a helpful way to think about God's "being?"
2. What does the Trinity have to do with "mission?" What implications does the concept of "*missio dei*" have for how we think about the church?
3. What is "*perichoresis*" and how does it apply to the doctrine of the Trinity?
4. Is it possible or helpful to model the church or even society on a "social concept of the Trinity?" How does the concept of the church as a "communion modeled on the *perichoresis* of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit" reshape or challenge how you think about your local congregation?
5. Why might someone have difficulty calling God "Father?" What do you think of the three linguistic options offered by Elizabeth Johnson for dealing with the problematic of male language in the traditional Trinitarian formula? What do you think of Robert Jenson's position? Ted Peters (who follows Catherine Mowry LaCugna) and Barbara Lundblad seem to be seeking a middle ground between the tradition of the church and contemporary concerns. Where do you find yourself in this discussion?

6. After completing this session, do you think Dorothy Sayers still has a point when she says that the doctrine of the Trinity is “incomprehensible . . . Something put in by theologians to make it more difficult – nothing to do with daily life and ethics?”

Lecture #6 – **Anthropology: Image of God – Sin and Evil****Dr. Richard J. Perry**Section One Summary

The focus of this lecture is human, theological anthropology – image of God: sin and evil. The framework for this lecture is baptism and culture. Baptism, a universal sacrament among Christians, is the primary entry point into the Christian community. Attention must be paid to communities of origin. Our community of origin takes on the responsibility of translating, transmitting, and forming how we understand the Christian tradition and what it means to be human. The relationship between theological anthropology and the practices of a community of origin will be explored.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. Do you find beginning a discussion on theological anthropology—image of God: sin and evil centered in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism useful? Why or why not?
2. What is your community of origin?
3. In what ways do you see or experience the interface between theology and your community of origin?

Section Two Summary

There are three tasks for the African American theologian: 1) clarifying the context 2) articulating and assessing doctrinal statements of faith and 3) examining the moral implications of faith. Clarifying the context is a task for all Christians. The gospel will only have meaning as it closely relates to one's own situation. There are several challenges when thinking about human anthropology. The first challenge is racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, and cultural diversity. A second challenge is technology along with science. A third challenge is the relationship between science and religion. A fourth challenge is rampant consumerism. These challenges present opportunities for the Christian community to offer a decisive word about human anthropology. All human beings are *simul justus et peccator* (simultaneously saint and sinner.)

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. Do you agree that diversity, technology, science, and consumerism challenge our contemporary understanding of what a human is and what it means to be human?
2. When you reflect on your context, what other challenges emerge?

Section Three Summary

A human being is created in the image and likeness of God. Irenaeus felt that the image of God was imperfect and the natural makeup of God. The likeness of God was perfection which came from the gift of the Holy Spirit. Augustine emphasized that the image of God was the essential nature of the human. An intimate relationship between God and the human constitutes the essence of the human. Luther connected the image of God with justification. The whole person is created in God's image. Body, mind, soul, and spirit are integrated.

God alone is the creator of all people. Our baptism triumphs over blood kinship and we are incorporated into one family. The African American church stands in protest of the practice of relating to people on the basis of biology and inherited characteristics.

Race, sex, economic class, and religious preference have no authority on God's act of liberating grace in and through Jesus Christ.

Anthropology is predicated upon what it means to be liberated from human oppression. Freedom is one pole of the paradoxical nature of human existence. Freedom is connected with the *imago dei*. Freedom has to do with the ability of the human making choices. To be created in the image of God is to be a whole person, a creative and free person.

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. What is your understanding of "the image of God"?
2. In what ways does Philippians 2: 5-8 influence your understanding or articulation of the image of God?
3. What contributions does your community of origin offer in the discussion on the *imago dei*? In what ways do those contributions connect with the Luther?

Section Four Summary

To talk about the "image of God – sin and evil" is to talk about human nature. We are part of a fallen humanity, but liberated from sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. One must attend to the distinction between sin and evil. Sin is anything that breaks our relationship with our Creator. Evil is pain and suffering brought about by natural events. Human beings have nothing to do with natural evil. All humans confront sin in their lives (rebellion against God and denial of God's will.) Luther believed it possible to lose image of God. In Baptism, humans receive forgiveness through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

African American theologians offer another viewpoint about sin. Sin is anything that counters the community's well being. Sin has two meanings (focusing on individual rather than communal values and cooperating with those persons and communities who seek to perpetuate oppression.) Socially constructed evil (sin) focuses on inherited or biological characteristics, namely race, sex or class. Institutional racism (sexism and classism) fails to see that all people are created in the image of God. Socially constructed evil (sin) must be publicly identified or named for the breach in the horizontal relationship to be restored.

Sin and evil is our attempt to challenge the authority and creative power of God. One can begin to understand the image of God – sin and evil through the Sacrament of Baptism. In baptism, we learn whose we are, what we are, who unites us, and what our mission is.

Section Four Questions for Discussion

1. What do Lutherans mean by saying the human being has a paradoxical nature?
2. In this section, the writer supports Cone's idea of sin being a community concept. Can you identify ways in which this understanding of sin affects your concept of sin?
3. What socially constructed evil (sin) prevents you and members of your community of origin from experiencing being created in the image of God?
4. What resources can you identify that support your concept of the human being as a paradoxical being?

5. Does naming socially constructed evil (sin) help in moving the Christian community toward being reunited with our Creator? Why or Why not?

Lecture #7 – Who is Jesus Christ?**Dr. Duane A. Priebe**Section One Summary

The question of heresy is very different from the question of whether things one thinks may be wrong. People in churches often elevate differences in what people think to a much more serious level than they deserve creating fights and splits. We all make errors in interpreting biblical texts and the Christian message. That simply belongs to our life in the church of Jesus Christ. Heresies are ways of interpreting and proclaiming the message of God's saving action in Jesus Christ that fundamentally distort the core of the message. I have proposed three simple affirmations that mark the boundary between heresy and orthodoxy.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss how that might affect issues currently debated in our churches.
2. How does it relate to your own interpretations of the Christian message?

Section Two Summary

The lecture suggests that the incarnation, which includes the eternal Son becoming human, his birth of the Virgin Mary, and his suffering and death on the cross, is itself the event of salvation, happening for us and for our salvation.

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss how this would affect the ways you understand what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.
2. What ways of understanding the meaning of Jesus' suffering and death for us does this open up?

Section Three Summary

The lecture suggests an analogy between the birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary and our new birth as Christians, building on John 1:12-13.

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss how you understand that and what it means for how you think of yourself as a Christian.

Section Four Summary

Martin Luther speaks of the happy exchange, in which Christ took upon himself the sins of the world, and our reality as sinners, including suffering, death and hell, and grants us his righteousness and life. He died not only for Christians, but for the whole world. If all our sins are taken into Christ, and his blessing is upon the world, Luther suggests that to see anyone in terms of their sins would, in effect, deny God's power and deity, because their sins would be more powerful than God.

Section Four Questions for Discussion

1. How would this affect how we live in the world and with others?

Section Five Summary

The Indian theologian Vengal Chakkarai notes that the Incarnation touched the deepest depths of human despair, wretchedness, misery, and anguish, even the desperate cries of the lost. In his resurrection, Jesus Christ does not leave all this misery behind, but his suffering and the depths of human misery are taken into the life and being of God.

Section Five Questions for Discussion

1. What would such an understanding of the Incarnation mean for our how we understand ourselves, the world, and God?

Lecture #8 – What Has God Done in Jesus Christ? Dr. José David Rodriguez

Synopsis of the Lecture

The lecture provides a brief historical review of the Christian teaching on the saving work of Jesus Christ from the biblical documents to the present. While the nature of this study limits the author to a selective approach in the attempt to bring a comprehensive understanding of this teaching, the goal of the study is to provide the readers with the main issues, concerns and debates that have been placed on this teaching throughout the history of the Christian Church. The perspective, focused on the subject to be examined while aiming to be ecumenical, highlights the contribution of Lutheran authors. The study also provides an original soteriological proposal from a Hispanic/Latino/a Lutheran perspective.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. Why does the understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ have a central place in Christian theology?
2. What do the terms “soteriology” and “atonement” stand for?
3. What has been the Christian understanding of salvation?
4. Name some of the types of Christology in the New Testament writings.

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. What is the significance of the pluralism of Christologies present in the New Testament writings?
2. Explain the significance of Michael Root’s contention regarding the constitutive nature of the narrative structure of soteriology.
3. Name and briefly describe the three classical theories of the saving work of Christ.
4. Who were the originators of each of these theories?
5. Describe some important elements in Luther’s understanding of the saving work of Christ.
6. Explain the significance of the Christological debates during the 16th century (violent and/or non-violent) conquest of America.

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. Name some of the challenges raised during the 20th century to the Christian teaching of the saving work of Jesus Christ.
2. What are some of the questions raised by feminist theologians to the classical theories of the saving work of Jesus Christ?
3. What are some of the issues raised by African American religious leaders about the saving work of Jesus Christ?
4. What are some of the concerns raised by Latin American theologians about the saving work of Jesus Christ?
5. What are some key concepts and important challenges faced by an authentic Asian Christology?

6. Describe the three basic models commonly used in interpreting the relationships between Christianity and people of other faiths in discussing the topic of salvation.
7. What is your opinion about Mark Thomsen's proposal for an understanding of the central place of the saving work of Jesus Christ in the context of our contemporary inter-religious debate?

Section Four Questions for Discussion

1. Do you agree with this author's proposal for a Hispanic/Latino/a Lutheran understanding of the saving work of Jesus Christ? Explain your position.
2. Provide a brief description of the main elements of your own perspective on the saving work of Jesus Christ.
3. What else would you like to learn about the Christian teaching of the saving work of Jesus Christ?

Lecture #9 – Trinitarian Theology of the Cross Dr. Phil L Ruge-Jones

Section One Summary

Luther called Christians to pay attention to God where God has chosen to be revealed: in Jesus Christ. In Christ God is not seen as terrifying, but as comfort and love. If “God is as Christ does” what do we find out about God when we look at Christ? Luther further focuses on Christ hanging on the cross as the place where God performs divine love for humanity. As Jesus is dying, he cries out to the God whose presence he cannot see. Yet he does this as God, creating a divine connection for all those who have felt abandoned by God in their life. This connection with humanity in its brokenness and weakness is the way God’s power works in the world. Rush to glory without the cross and you will trample on any who get in your way.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. Luther struggled with an image of God as tyrannical judge. Do you think that people still see God in this way?
2. How might seeing Jesus as the revelation of God redefine our understanding of God?
3. Have you had experiences in your life that you would connect with Jesus’ cry of abandonment on the cross? Have you felt forsaken by God? Have you known others who have? In what circumstances?
4. Is solidarity in brokenness really a kind of power that God exercises? Have you had other people join you in your brokenness in a way that made you feel empowered?
5. Is solidarity in brokenness enough?
6. Have you ever seen people so confident that they know what God in glory is like that they trample on others who may not see things their way? Do you think overconfidence in what we know about God can lead to violence against others?

Section Two Summary

The cross of Christ is not only a transaction that happens between God and Jesus. The cross of Christ is the historical response of the life commitments that Jesus lived out. Because Jesus lived out of the heart of God which is love, he was rejected by those who could not tolerate God’s way. Christians dare not ignore the life that Jesus lived. “Minding the gap” between Jesus’ birth and death is crucial to understanding God’s presence in the world.

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think of the way that the presenter has described “the gap”?
2. If you had to describe the stories that you feel most drawn to in the life of Jesus, what would you chose?
3. What do these stories reveal to you about the way God wishes to be known in the world?
4. Are there reasons that the stories you mention might lead people to want to crucify Jesus?

Section Three Summary

If the crucifixion is the verdict of the world on Jesus, his resurrection is God's verdict on the world. When God raises Jesus in the power of the Spirit, he vindicates his life and commitments as faithful performances of God's love. Because it is the crucified one who is raised, the resurrection can be embraced as a sign of life. God lives in the world by being willing to die with us, or even at our hands. He returns to those who had betrayed him to again offer them life in the Spirit of God's love. When the dead man Jesus is raised to life, he speaks not of vengeance, but of peace. His failed followers are shown that nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus, not even death itself.

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. Have you ever thought of the resurrection as God's vindication of Jesus and the life he lived? Is it helpful for you to think this way?
2. If Jesus returns to his failed followers and offers them peace, what does that say about his response to us when we fail?
3. It often seems like death has the final say on this earth, how does the resurrection of Jesus challenge that claim?
4. When and how have you come to know that nothing can separate you from God's love?

Section Four Summary

The people who God embraces in the resurrected Christ are called to live in the peace that God offers in Christ and to live out that peace for the world. Our lives become conformed to Christ's as God's love comes to define our existence and we die to death in its daily manifestations.

Section Four Questions for Discussion

1. Given what you have said about the life that Jesus lived, what should be the shape of Christian life?
2. Where have you seen the church live up to this expectation?
3. Where do you hope the church will come to live up to this expectation?
4. What is your role in your community's practice of the way of Jesus?
5. How is the Spirit of Jesus discernible in what you say and do?

Lecture # 10 – **The Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life** Dr. Lois Malcolm

Section One Summary

In the Hebrew Bible, the word translated as Spirit (ruah) means wind, moving air, and breathe. However, this word also refers to God, human beings, animals, and supernatural spirits. In the period of Judges, individuals receive spirit of the Lord in order to perform specific tasks. In general, the pre-exilic prophets shy away from language about the Spirit. It is with Isaiah and Ezekiel that we have the most explicit descriptions of the Spirit's activity. In these sections, the "Spirit" and "Word" are both linked to God's judgment and promise of a better world. "Spirit" and "Word" are linked with divine power that liberates and creates all things. The Spirit brings about a "new covenant" with the people and enables them to keep God's statutes and ordinances. With the Psalms, we see explicit attention to the Spirit's activity and presence within individuals. After prophesy, apocalyptic literature, wisdom literature, and the law tell us how God is present among the people of Israel. Apocalyptic literature tells of a time when God's Spirit will be poured out on all flesh. Wisdom literature has to do with our experience of God throughout all time and in all creation. The law and its interpretation of all aspects of life dominated much of Judaism.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. Have you experienced the Holy Spirit as the power which enables you to carry out lives of faithfulness? How?
2. Prior to this lecture, what was your understanding of the Spirit's role in the Hebrew Bible? How has this been modified/changed/reinforced?

Section Two Summary

The New Testament draws on the panoply of the Hebrew Bible to interpret who Jesus is and to depict how Jesus fulfilled expectations for a messianic reign or a "new creation." The Holy Spirit is present at Jesus' conception. The "Spirit of God" is present at Jesus' baptism. Jesus begins his work with an inaugural address that alludes to depictions of a Spirit-anointed servant who brings good news to the poor, proclaims release from captives, etc. Jesus is depicted as God's wisdom and as the creative Word. In Jesus' death on a cross, the Spirit is present as the unity between the Father and the Son. The Spirit raises Jesus from the dead. Jesus gives the disciples the Spirit, giving them the power to forgive and retain sins. Jesus carried out the Father's mission in the power of the Spirit and calls his disciples to carry out same Spirit-led mission.

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. What was the Spirit's role in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ?
2. Given that Christ's disciples are filled by the Holy Spirit, what implications for daily life do you see?
3. How is the church affected by the presence of the Holy Spirit within the lives of the people? In your understanding, what effect does this have on mission and ministry?

Section Three Summary

The Spirit gives birth to the church at Pentecost, coming to the disciples. This fulfills the apocalyptic image from Joel of God's Spirit being "poured out on all flesh." The Holy Spirit is the Advocate that counters sin, brings about righteousness, and judges the demonic ruler of this world. The Spirit guides the disciples into all truth and enables us to know and love the deep intimacy of the Father and the Son. Paul enables us to understand that in our baptism, in the Lord's Supper, and in the proclamation of Christ's cross and resurrection, we participate in the "new age" of the Spirit. In the Spirit, each receives a distinct set of gifts or talents. Those who live by the Spirit enact the "fruit of the Spirit." The Spirit gives life to our very human existence. The Spirit is always with us, interceding for us. In the Spirit, Christ enables us. The Spirit breaks down our usual conceptions of power and weakness, creates community, animates all of existence, and leads us in mission for the "common good."

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. In what ways does the Holy Spirit call you to mission in your own context? How might you lead others to see the Spirit's work as enabling all the Body for mission?
2. Do you have examples when the Spirit's activity in your life produced "fruits of the Spirit?"

Lecture #11 – Church and Sacrament

Dr. Michael J. Root

Section One Summary

The church is the congregation and communion of the saints (*congregatio et communio sanctorum*), the pilgrim people of God. The church is a communal, corporate participation in the life of the Trinity. This communal, corporate participation of the church in the life of the Trinity is prior to and the means by which individuals participate in the life of the Trinity. The Spirit-filled Word always seeks community and will always create community. The church is thus essential to God's salvific purposes and will exist until the return of Christ. The church is created by and gathered around the Spirit-filled Word. Though possessing non-evident or invisible aspects, the church is a visible community, especially in the signed works of the Spirit. While the boundaries of the true church and of the empirically evident church may not be the same, the true church is not other than the empirically evident church.

The Risen Christ and the Church do not remain simply external to each other but interpenetrate; the Church lives in Christ and Christ lives in the Church. Christ is present in, as, and to the Church. Church and Christ interpenetrate so fundamentally that the church may be called the Body of Christ. If the church is rightly called the Body of Christ, then there is no relation to the Risen Christ that does not have a communal or churchly orientation. The church as the Body of Christ must be understood in a way that still allows us to speak of a presence of Christ to the church, i.e., a relation in which Christ still stands over against the church.

In Christ, distinctions of status are not ultimately significant; all are equally worthy and righteous before God. Equality before God in Christ does not imply that the church is a homogeneous body. The Spirit, as the Spirit wills, gives different gifts to different persons and thus calls different persons to different ministries. While every Christian has a ministry given by the Spirit and thus has a non-delegated authority within that ministry, every ministry is to be exercised collegially with other ministries. In the collegial interaction of ministries, the Holy Spirit guides the church. Essential to the identity of the church is a leadership or pastoral ministry called to regularly proclaim the Word within the life of the community and to preside within the worship life of the community, especially its sacramental life. This ministry is both a ministry over against the wider community, representing the Word to it, and one ministry among others within the community, relating collegially with other ministries.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. How does this theological description of the church relate to your own experience of the church? What aspect of your experience of the church is missing from this description? What failings in the contemporary church are highlighted by this description?
2. How in your own ministry do you encounter Christ in the church, as the church, and over against the church?
3. How do you see your own specific ministry and that of the roster for which you are training fitting into the collegial unity of ministries in the church?

Section Two Summary

The primary and decisive actor in the Christian life is God, as the Spirit unites us with Jesus and thus with Jesus' unity with the Father. If the Christian life is unity with God through Jesus, then God must be the primary agent, for only God can unite us with God. The Christian life is oriented to those means by which God has promised to be at work redemptively uniting us with Jesus: most notably baptism, the proclamation of the Gospel, and the Eucharist. Those events in which God has promised so to be at work are also (and not accidentally) the center of the life of the church.

Baptism is an initiation rite. Baptism is the act by which the Spirit unites individuals to Jesus in uniting them to the church, the Body of Jesus. Only God, not the individual nor the church as a merely human community, has the power to unite the individual with the church. Baptism does not symbolize an event that occurs independently of the rite, but is intrinsic to that event. The baptismal promise is the foundation of the entire Christian life. Baptism mediates the Spirit and the forgiveness of sin in that it unites the individual with Jesus and the church. Classically, the identity or validity of baptism requires the use of water and of the triune name and the intent to do what the church does. While baptism is valid (i.e., a baptism and not something else occurs) regardless of the subjective faith of the baptized, baptism does involve a confession of faith and an orientation toward a life of faith. The evangelical character of the sacrament depends on its validity (i.e., identity) not being made dependent on subjective factors. The baptism of infants who will be raised within the community is best understood in terms of the confession of the community representing the confession of the infant rather than in terms of infant faith, analogies with circumcision, or unnuanced appeals to the priority of grace. That the confession of the community is allowed to represent the confession of the infant is justified by the relation between the community and the developing identity of the infant raised within the community.

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. How can we better communicate baptism as the foundation of the entire Christian life?
2. How do you see baptism and faith interrelating in the lives of individual Christians and of the entire church?

Section Three Summary

The Eucharist has a three fold temporal reference: the remembrance of Jesus, the living presence of the crucified and risen Jesus, and a foretaste of the eschatological banquet. While the Eucharist is a remembrance (especially of the Last Supper and the ensuing death of Jesus), it is not only a remembrance. As only a remembrance, the Eucharist would be our act of commemoration, not God's act of self-bestowal. The true host and primary agent of the Eucharistic meal is Jesus. In the Eucharist, Jesus gives himself in and through the Spirit so that we might be one with him. The forgiveness of sins is mediated in the Eucharist in that Jesus unites us with himself in the Eucharist. A sacramental union unites the body and blood of Jesus with the elements. To say we receive the body and blood of Jesus is to say we receive his full, living humanity. In the reception of Jesus' body and blood through the physical act of eating and drinking, we are made one with Jesus in the entirety of our beings, including our bodies. As we are one

with Jesus in our eating and drinking, we are one with each other. In the Eucharist, we offer our praise and thanksgiving and our very selves. God accepts our offerings in their unity with the sacrificial self-offering of Jesus. The single sacrifice of Jesus is not repeated in the Eucharist, but we participate in that sacrifice through the Eucharist. Any understanding of the Lord's Supper as our "Eucharist" or thanksgiving must not obscure that the primary actor is the Jesus who bestows himself on all who receive, taking us up into his offering of himself. The Eucharist is finally a foretaste of the eschatological, messianic banquet. The Eucharist is thus a foretaste of the unity of all humanity and all creation.

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. How do past, present, and future come together in the Eucharist as it is celebrated in your congregation?
2. Lutherans have often stressed the communication of the forgiveness of sins in the Eucharist. How does the forgiveness of sins fit into your own total understanding of the Eucharist?
3. What aspect of your experience of the Eucharist is left out of the description offered? How would the missing element fit into the framework offered in the description?

Lecture #12 – Eschatology: New Life in the Spirit Dr. Ann L. Fritschel

Section One Summary

The ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus are foundational for the Christian understanding of eschatology. There are several different eschatological voices in the New Testament and Christian history, but all understand eschatology to be about Jesus and the reign of God. Eschatology is concerned with present promise and future fulfillment, must be relevant to our lives and hopes of this world, and concerned with final fulfillment for both individuals and all of creation. Finally, eschatology is grounded in Jesus Christ and his victory over death.

God stands outside the limitations of human understandings of time and space. God's future has broken into present through life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (prolepsis). The reign of God comes through the intervention of God, who creates a new reality. Prolepsis says the future determines the present. God's reign is seen in people being made whole (Shalom). Shalom is for all of creation. There is a tension between the promises given to us in Jesus' death and resurrection and their complete fulfillment of universal transformation. Eschatology recognizes these tensions.

Section One Questions for Discussion

1. What effect does the proleptic nature of God's reign have on the life and ministry of the church and the individual believer?
2. What does it mean for the reign of God to include necessarily the promise of Shalom for all of creation? How would this affect government policy in your context?

Section Two Summary

In the Hebrew Bible, the Holy Spirit is the presence of God in the human world and historical reality. The Spirit is associated with life. Christians live in new age of salvation, baptized into Christ's death and resurrection and given the Holy Spirit. New life in the Spirit is a present reality. The Holy Spirit drives us beyond ourselves and calls us into a new transformed life. The new life in the Spirit is a life in the future and God's future possibilities for us. This new creation and new life is realized through the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is a power which shapes and transforms life. New life in the Spirit is a life of freedom; freedom from sin, death, and evil and freedom for love and service to our neighbor.

New life in the Spirit is life in community. We are individuals who belong to and are accountable to each other. The Spirit gives a variety of gifts and talents to build up the church. This community finds its fullest expression in diversity. New life in the Spirit is a life of love. New life in Spirit is a life of mission to and for the world. A service and mission particular to Christians is to witness to Christ Jesus as the power of reconciliation, forgiveness, new life, and salvation to the entire world. New life in the Spirit means a life of service, mission, and evangelism.

Section Two Questions for Discussion

1. How does the concept of “freedom from and freedom for” challenge you and the church to think differently about interacting with the world in our current context? What are the challenges?
2. How can the variety of gifts and the diversity of the Body create new opportunities for mission and evangelism in your context?
3. How have you experienced the Spirit as a Spirit of transformation?

Section Three Summary

With a proleptic understanding of God’s reign, we need not fear death, the end times or judgment. For most of the Hebrew Bible death was the end of human life. Our lives are transitory, unlike God who endures forever. Unwilling to affirm the oppression and persecution, resurrection of the dead became to be seen as a reward for righteous people. The Jewish concept of resurrection was entirely bodily, rather than the Greek concept of the immortality of the soul. God creates us as embodied human beings and creation is good. Salvation is for entire person. Death is an end to life in its entirety. Resurrection is for all of creation. The end is not a threat because the victory over death has already been won on the cross. For Christians, judgment should be faced with hope in Jesus Christ.

Section Three Questions for Discussion

1. How has this discussion of Christian eschatology affected your understanding of life in the Spirit, the end times, judgment, and the resurrection?