

HERESIES, ANCIENT and MODERN.

Lecture 11 – REVIEW AND WRAP-UP

REVIEW

The following chart is a summary of the various heresies we studied:

Judaism/The Galatian Heresy	Adding human works or merit to the truth of salvation by grace alone through faith alone is a modern <i>Judaizer</i> .	Any movement that views human effort in contributing to salvation is heretical. Good works are the necessary consequence of justification, not the cause.
Gnosticism	Seeking secret knowledge and mystical experiences.	Any movement that claims superior spiritual knowledge through contemplation, self-awareness, esoteric experiences, dreams, trances, etc.
Marcionism	Could not harmonize the God of the Old and the God of the New Testaments; nor could he harmonize Law and Gospel. He discounted the Old Testament	We cannot resolve Biblical difficulties human reasoning. We are warned therefore not to try to reconcile and rationalize what God says is true even though we don't understand it. Scripture is the editor and interpreter of God.
Docetism	Docetism allowed that Jesus may have been in some way divine, but it denied His full humanity. Hardcore Docetists taught that Jesus was only a phantasm or an illusion, appearing to be human but having no body at all.	Salvation depends on Christ's really being a man who suffered and was resurrected, so that those in Christ may die and rise with him.
Montanus	Montanus was a 'charismatic,' who maintained that he received direct revelation from the Holy Spirit.	If the error of Marcion was that the Scriptures were insufficient to answer the big questions in life; the error of Montanus was that God was adding revelation to the Scriptures.
Arianism	Arianism argues that Jesus does not share the same essence with God, and thus does not share in the same divine nature with eternity and authority.	We are saved from God by God. Only a divine Savior can bear the weight of God's wrath in atonement. Only Jesus as the God-man can satisfy the enormous debt and penalty caused by human sin against God. No mere human could bridge that gap. Only a divine Savior can pay the costly price for redeeming us from our bondage to sin and death. Only the God-man can conquer all his people's enemies. Our salvation is dependent on the infinite divine capacity of our Savior, Jesus Christ.
Pelagianism	Pelagius taught that sin had not affected human nature at all. Adam's sin set a "bad example," which people choose to follow or not. Christ came to offer a "good example" of life. Salvation means choosing to follow Jesus' example.	We should learn from the Pelagius' dilemma that in fact God ALWAYS commands us to do what we can't do on our own, but Jesus reinforces that " <i>for apart from me you can do nothing.</i> " (John 15:5, ESV). Therefore, we always need enabling grace from beginning to end.
Early Christological Doctrines and Heresies including Apollinarians and Nestorians.	Some denied Christ's divinity while emphasizing Jesus' human nature, and the others that denied His full humanity while emphasizing His divine nature; and others minimized both creating another personage.	Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is completely God, that in reality "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" in him (Colossians 2:9). Jesus Christ is completely human. Those two "natures" do not exist beside one another in an unconnected way but, rather, are joined in him in a personal unity that is inexplicable.

12 Points of Review

There are some very practical things that we've learned in these series of history lectures. I hope they are not easily forgotten. For example:

1. The appreciation and study of Biblical truth – doctrine – is not an academic exercise. It is an act of praise and adoration to the God of truth. Showing contempt for orthodox doctrine is dishonoring to God. The pursuit of precision in Biblical orthodoxy is an act of doxology. When we have a flawed image of God, we no longer relate to him in the same way.
2. The demonic power of heretics enables their brand of teaching to appear *truer than true* to some. Don't expect heretics to appear in satanic or demonic attire. They always, always, always appear as Christians.
3. It is very important to develop a personal theological triage and determine a scale of importance and urgency.
4. Ancient and modern Judaizers teach us that Jesus + anything = nothing. You cannot add to Jesus. Salvation is by faith alone, in Christ alone. One inch beyond that is heresy.
5. Beware of any philosophy that is highly speculative and subjective, very individualistic, inward, anti-institutional, anti-intellectual. Christianity is founded on grace alone through faith in the sufficiency of Scripture.
6. The Scriptures alone adequately explain the complexities of Christianity, the relationship of faith and works, the relationship of the Old and New Testaments and the so-called mysteries that are so prevalent.
7. The complexities, the apparent paradoxes of the Christian faith cannot be resolved by human speculation and wisdom, or modification of the difficult concepts.
8. The canon of Scriptures is complete. Any additional impressions, thoughts or supposed revelations must be tested by Scripture. The Bible is the final court of authority.
9. Words matter. Meanings mean something. Precision of doctrine is a necessary pursuit of Truth. Words like grace, free-will, depravity and many more need to be defined before discussed.
10. Pursuing unity without concern for truth is a façade. Pursuing truth creates unity.
11. The perfect union of humanity and Deity in Christ is essential to the salvation of mankind. One cannot be minimized or elevated above the other.
12. The early Church Councils, particularly Nicaea and Chalcedon contribute helpful and precise wording in relation to articulating the Trinity and the Person of Christ.