



VII. THE WORKS OF GOD

A. Conception

1. Introduction

- a. Conception, though not an accepted theological term, is used here to refer to the eternal state of God in eternity past when He conceived of the universe and made plans for redemption.
- b. Conception is followed by Creation and will eventually be completed by Consummation, a reference to the completion of God's plan for history and the consumption of the universe by fire.
- c. Time and eternity
 - 1) To understand the work of Conception requires an understanding of time and eternity.
 - 2) Time refers to the consecutive events that make up history as we know it. Scientifically, time is considered a fourth dimension and that fits with biblical teaching. Time has a beginning, a movement through time, and a consummation. But God is not limited by time.
 - 3) Eternity present: even now, God dwells in eternity (Isaiah 57:15). That is, He is not contained within the confines of time but dwells outside of time and transcendent to time. As such, although He works with man in time, He looks on past, present, and future as if all were eternally present.
 - 4) Eternity future: this refers to time beyond time. When God completes His plan for this universe, He will burn all things with fire and the elements will melt with fervent heat (2 Peter 3:10-12). He will then create new heavens and a new earth (2 Peter 3:13) wherein will dwell righteousness. Eternity future does not mean that there will be no unfolding of events (see Revelation 22:2). It does mean that the battle for redemption will have been completed and the history we now know will have no influence.
 - 5) Eternity past: this refers to the time before time. The word, time, does not adequately apply to eternity past. However, we must realize that this was not some state of meaninglessness. As we shall see in the following notes, God fellowshiped with Himself at this time and determined His purposes for time. This is a mysterious realm into which we can only glimpse, but the glory of a single glimpse is certainly worth the effort.

2. The eternal works of God

- a. What did God do in eternity? Since the works of God that we know about mostly have to do with time, this is a difficult question. He may have done many things, but we only have a hint of His relationship within the persons of the Trinity.



- b. Eternal fellowship between the persons of the Trinity (Proverbs 8:22, 30; John 1:1)
 - c. Eternal love between the persons of the Trinity (John 17:24)
 - d. Mutual glory between the persons of the Trinity (John 17:5)
 - e. Making plans for the eternal purposes of God (Ephesians 1:9-11)
 - 1) God's works known to Him from the beginning of the world (Acts 15:18)
 - 2) Coming of Christ foreordained before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:19-20)
 - 3) Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8)
 - 4) Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4)
 - 5) Eternal life promised before the foundation of the world (Titus 1:2)
 - 6) Names not in the book of life from the foundation of the world (Revelation 17:8)
 - 7) Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34)
3. The eternal plan of God
- a. A biblical understanding of the eternal plan of God requires an understanding of several biblical words. Many have developed unscriptural systems of doctrine in this area because they have developed intellectual systems instead of allowing God to speak fully for Himself.
 - 1) Hierarchy of terms (see Ephesians 1:5, 9, 11)
 - a) Purpose – God established His own purpose in Himself (Ephesians 1:9).
 - b) Pleasure – From this purpose came His good pleasure (Ephesians 1:9).
 - c) Will - God determined His will according to His good pleasure (Ephesians 1:5, 9)
 - d) Counsel – From this will, God brought forth the counsel or wisdom by which His will would be accomplished (Ephesians 1:11).
 - e) Work – His counsel (wisdom) resulted in the working of all things (Ephesians 1:11).
 - 2) Purpose
 - a) The purpose of creation, of redemption, of all the things that God accomplishes by His work comes from His purpose in Himself (Ephesians 1:9). That is, He has His own purpose for all that He does and that purpose is found in His inner being.
 - b) Characteristics of the purpose of God
 - i. It is an “eternal purpose” (Ephesians 3:11). It was a part of the essence of God from the beginning.
 - ii. It is an unchangeable purpose (Isaiah 14:24, 27; Jeremiah 4:28).



- iii. It is an absolute purpose (Jeremiah 51:29). Every purpose of God will be fulfilled.
 - iv. It is a completed purpose (Isaiah 46:11). What God purposes, God performs. Contrast this with the failed purposes of man (Job 17:11; Romans 1:13).
 - c) Christ is the center of God's purpose (Ephesians 3:9-11).
 - d) Our calling is according to God's eternal purpose
 - i. Our conformity to Christ (Romans 8:28-29)
 - ii. God's choice for place of service (Romans 9:10-13; Genesis 25:22-23)
 - iii. The holy calling to the work of the ministry (2Timothy 1:9)
- 3) Pleasure
- a) God's pleasure is founded on His purpose in Himself (Ephesians 1:9).
 - b) God's pleasure is an expression of His character.
 - i. His goodness (Psalm 51:18; 2Thessalonians 1:11)
 - ii. His righteousness (Isaiah 42:21)
 - c) God's works are an expression of His pleasure (Psalm 115:3; 135:6; Jonah 1:14); he "hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."
 - i. To give each grain a body as He sees fit (1 Corinthians 15:37-38)
 - ii. To accomplish His work by His word (Isaiah 55:11)
 - iii. To make the children of Israel His people (1Samuel 12:22)
 - iv. To have His fullness dwell in the Son (Colossians 1:19)
 - v. To redeem by the suffering of His Son (Isaiah 53:10)
 - vi. To save by the foolishness of preaching (1 Corinthians 1:21)
 - vii. To set members in the body as He sees fit (1 Corinthians 12:18)
 - d) The purpose of all creation is the pleasure of God
 - i. Created for His pleasure (Revelation 4:11)
 - ii. Created for His glory (Isaiah 43:7)
 - iii. Made for Himself (Proverbs 16:4)
- 4) Will
- a) God's will is His decision to do something
 - b) God's will is founded on His pleasure (Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:5)
 - c) It is important to note in scripture the distinction between God's purposed will and God's preferred will.
 - i. God's purposed will could also be called God's predetermined will. This refers to God's absolute determination that a particular thing will or will not happen. "I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isaiah



46:11). God's purposed will will not change or alter. When Jesus says, "I will come again" (John 14:3), God's purpose will surely come to pass.

- ii. God's preferred will is God's desire for His creatures (angels and men) that He does not force on them. He would have gathered Jerusalem unto Himself, but they would not (Matthew 23:37). That is, He was willing, but they did not obey. God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9), but many will perish because they reject God's offer of salvation. God's preferred will allows for disobedience and rebellion. It does not destroy the free will of man.

5) Counsel

- a) God's counsel is His wisdom in determining how to accomplish His will (Ephesians 1:11).
- b) God's counsel is wonderful (Isaiah 28:29) and great (Jeremiah 32:19).
- c) God's counsel will stand forever (Psalm 33:11; Hebrews 6:17).
- d) God's counsel cannot be overturned (Proverbs 21:30).

6) Decree

- a) A decree is an official order.
- b) Most decrees in the Bible are made by men (Ezra 5:13; Esther 9:1; Luke 2:1).
- c) Several scriptural decrees are made by God.
 - i. The decree of the rain (Job 28:26)
 - ii. The decree of the boundaries of the seas (Job 38:8-11; Proverbs 8:29; Jeremiah 5:22)
 - iii. The decree on the waters above the heavens (Psalm 148:4-6)
 - iv. The decree of judgment on Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:24-25)
 - v. The decree of the begotten Son (Psalm 2:7)

B. Creation

1. God as Creator

- a. The title is used five times in the Bible
 - 1) The "Creator" (Romans 1:25); to be worshipped, as opposed to the creature which is not worthy of worship
 - 2) The "Creator of the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 40:28)
 - 3) The "creator of Israel" (Isaiah 43:15)
 - 4) "thy Creator" (Ecclesiastes 12:1); to be remembered in the day of youth
 - 5) A "faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:19); to be trusted with the keeping of our souls even in times of suffering
- b. To see God as Creator is the foundation of all we know about God



- 1) The Bible first introduces God as the Creator (Genesis 1:1).
 - 2) Our foundational relationship to God is that of creature (created being) to its Creator (Hebrews 4:13; Revelation 5:13).
 - 3) Our foundational relationships within the family structure are determined by creation (1 Corinthians 11:3, 7-12, 14-15)
 - 4) The first introduction of God to the heathen should be as their Creator (Acts 17:22-29).
 - 5) It is through creation that the heathen can know God's eternal power and Godhead (Romans 1:19-21)
 - 6) All creation groans and travails for the redemption to come (Romans 8:19-23)
 - 7) God's position as Creator gives Him the right to bring all creation to an end (Revelation 10:6).
- c. God is revealed as the Creator of all things.
- 1) Of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 42:5; 45:18)
 - 2) Of the generations of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 2:4)
 - a) This is the first listing of generations in a book that has several generations (Genesis 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2)
 - b) Refers to all that proceeds from the heavens and earth (Revelation 10:6)
 - 3) Of the host of heaven (Isaiah 40:26)
 - 4) Of the waters above the heavens (Psalm 148:4-5)
 - 5) Of the ends of the earth (Isaiah 40:28)
 - 6) Of the wind and the mountains (Amos 4:13)
 - 7) Of north and south (Psalm 89:12)
 - 8) Of meats to be eaten (2 Timothy 4:3-4)
 - 9) Of man (Genesis 1:27; 5:1-2; Isaiah 45:12; Mark 10:6)
 - 10) Of Israel (Isaiah 43:1, 7, 15)
 - 11) Of the smith that makes the idol (Isaiah 54:16)
 - 12) Of Lucifer before he fell (Ezekiel 28:13-15)
 - 13) Of the waster to destroy (Isaiah 54:16)
 - 14) Of darkness and evil (Isaiah 45:7)
 - 15) Of a woman to compass a man (Jeremiah 31:22); almost certainly a reference to the virgin birth and the incarnation of Christ.
 - 16) Of new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24; Colossians 3:10)
 - 17) Of the new heavens and new earth (Isaiah 65:17-18)
 - 18) Of all things (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11)
2. The method of creation: word
- a. The method God used to create the world was the simple expression of His word.
 - 1) Created by the word of the Lord (Psalm 33:6; 2 Peter 3:5)
 - 2) Created by the commandment of God (Psalm 33:9; Psalm 148:1-5)
 - 3) The worlds were framed by the word of God (Hebrews 11:3)



- 4) God brought things into existence by calling their name.
 - a) He “callesth those things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4:17)
 - b) He called the host of heaven by name (Isaiah 40:26; Psalm 147:4)
 - c) He created with statements such as, “Let there be light” (Genesis 1:3)
 - b. The account of the six-day creation in Genesis is characterized with the phrase, “And God said.”
 - 1) The phrase is found ten times in the account (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29).
 - 2) The Jewish commentators compared the ten sayings of creation with the Ten Commandments.
 - c. Jesus as the Word
 - 1) Jesus, as the manifestation of the Father and the revealer of His will is called the Word (John 1:1-2, 14)
 - 2) Jesus, as the Word, is the person of the Godhead by whom all things are made (John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16).
 - d. The power of the word of God
 - 1) The power of the written word (Hebrews 4:12-13)
 - a) It is quick (as the living word), powerful, and sharp.
 - b) The creature will answer to the written word because all that the creature does is manifest in his sight (Hebrews 4:13).
Note: the antecedent noun for the pronoun in “his sight” is the “word of God.”
 - 2) The power of the word to perform miracles.
 - a) The healing of the servant (Matthew 8:8)
 - b) The calming of the storm (Mark 8:39-41)
 - 3) The power of the word to save (1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18, 21)
 - 4) The power of the word to resurrect (John 5:28-29; 11:43-44)
3. The Trinity in creation
 - a. The Father
 - 1) Given the credit in the Old Testament (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11)
 - 2) Said to be the source of creation (1 Corinthians 8:6)
 - b. The Son
 - 1) Said to be the means of creation (1 Corinthians 8:6)
 - 2) Revealed in the New Testament to be the one who did the creating (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2)
 - c. The Spirit
 - 1) In preparation of creation (Genesis 1:2)
 - 2) In the work of creation (Psalm 33:6)
 - 3) In the completion of creation (Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30)
 - 4) In the creation of man (Job 33:4)