



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

TRANSCRIPT

“The Origin, Personality and Nature of Man”

Now tonight our subject is: What is Man?, *or* His Origin, Personality and Nature. And I would like for you to turn with me again to the first chapter of the Book of Genesis and I want to read three verses, verse 26, 27 and verse 31, of the first chapter, and then the second chapter, verses 4 through 7. So Genesis 1, verse 26 and 27 first,

“And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the creatures of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So, God created man in his own image. In the image of God, created he him. Male and female created he them. And God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good (and, men, that includes the female, too, I presume) and the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

Now chapter 2, verses 4 through 7 --Some of you didn't take that very seriously -- verse 4 of chapter 2,

“These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens and every plant of the field before it was in the earth and every herb of the field before it grew. For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole place of the ground and Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into the nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.”

Now, the subject for tonight might appear, at first glance, to be a modification of our series of studies for, remember, we have been studying angelology or satanology. But since the affairs of Satan and of man begin to cross in purpose and plan, it’s necessary for us to stop for a few lessons and consider the question of man and his Fall. Now let’s review just for a moment some of the things that we have learned.

We have learned first of all that Satan exists and that to deny the existence of Satan leads to blasphemy of Jesus Christ. Logically, the reason for this is -- as I have explained several times -- that Jesus, himself, described the temptation, which he experienced as a temptation from Satan. If Satan were not a person but a force or an influence within us, then your Lord Jesus is not a sinless person. For the temptation, which he described as a temptation involving Satan would be a temptation that arose from within himself. And if it arose from within himself, he’s not sinless. So for us to deny the existence of Satan leads ultimately to blasphemy against Jesus Christ.

The second thing that we learned was that Satan has personality. He is not simply a force or an influence. Although, of course, he is a force and he is an influence in human experience.

Thirdly, Satan is a created spiritual and heavenly being.

Fourth, Satan was created a spirit being of great moral and spiritual beauty. The person we know as Satan or the Devil is a person who has fallen. He was not originally created in the same way that we find him today.

Fifthly, Satan was given great authority in God’s creation; he was, it seems, the priest and the mediator of the angelic host. Now, these terms we cannot, of course, be precise about, but from what we learn in Scripture that Satan occupied a position in creation of God that might be characterized by a priest and mediator, because he was the head of the angelic hosts and it was through him that the instructions from God were carried out.

Sixthly, that the first sin was Satan’s sin in heaven. And from that time there existed at least two wills in the universe. When God created everything in the beginning there was one will, God’s will. But, ultimately, when sin was found in Satan, there were two wills in the universe.

And finally, we learned in our last study a couple of weeks ago that Satan was not alone in his revolt. He associated with himself a group of angels who also fell with him. And that, from the standpoint of the revelation of the word of God, there now exists, not only a fallen being, Satan, but a well organized hierarchy of angelic beings. The demons, and they are under Satan and he, apparently, controls them.

So now, tonight, we want to consider “man” for the simple reason that the next thing in the program according to the word of God is the temptation of man, God’s creation, by Satan. And so before we consider the rest of the story of Satan and the angels, we need to have two or three times on the subject of man and we want to combine that anyway for we are studying not only angelology but anthropology or the study of man. So tonight, the origin, personality and nature of man.

And in our outline, Roman I, Capital A: The divine counsel, and that, of course, is reference to Genesis chapter 1, verse 26 and 27 and also Genesis chapter 2, but primarily those verses.

Now let’s stop for a moment before we look at these two texts -- verse 26 and verse 27 -- to say something about the creation accounts as found in the Book of Genesis. It is rather surprising that in much of our theological literature which penetrates, which ultimately filters down into the Sunday school literature of our churches. A claim is made that in the Bible there are two accounts of creation.

Now you will find this in all types of Sunday school literature and now even in the literature for the study by the children of the word of God. This is set forth as a dictum, that is, as a truth that everybody accepts. That in Genesis, chapter 1 we have one account of the creation and in Genesis chapter 2, we have a second account of creation. And the implication often stated plainly, other times just implicitly, is that these two accounts are in contradiction, one to another.

Now let me say that I do not believe that we have here two accounts in the sense in which that statement is often made. As if they are two independent accounts of the creation of man and we are somehow expected to try to harmonize them. It seems very obvious as you read Genesis chapter 1, that in the first Book of Genesis we have the creation of the entire universe, inclusive of man and woman or particularly of man, for while male and female is mentioned, it is primarily the creation of man. But then in the second chapter, beginning at the fourth verse, which is really the next section in the Book of Genesis, we have a creation described, but it is primarily the creation of man and woman. There is no repetition of the previous creation of the universe.

As a matter of fact, all of that is assumed. And so what really is given us in chapter 1, verse 1 through chapter 2, verse 3 is the creation of the entire universe inclusive of man. But then in chapter 2, verse 4 that creation is examined specifically with reference to the creation of man, and his probation in the earth. So that the repetition -- and there is some repetition -- the repetition is designed to give us a place from which we may study the probation of man. So it’s just as if I was to describe for you the vision of the Grand Canyon generally and, then, because my information that I wanted to give you

is very specific, I might at that point describe for you the Grand Canyon from the standpoint of a trip from the North Rim down into the Grand Canyon.

In other words, while I describe the Grand Canyon generally, and then more specifically. And so that is what we have with reference to creation. We have the general account in Genesis chapter 1 and now specific details with regard to man’s creation, the female’s creation and man’s probation in the second chapter.

We should not be puzzled by things like this and, frankly, it has become such that in the 20th Century, we have to test every statement that is made by the men who write our Sunday school materials because so often they have accepted the interpretations of men who have not really bothered to study the Bible through from the standpoint of, not only grammatical, historical criticism, but faith, as well.

For example, let me be specific with you. In verse 7 of chapter 2, “And the Lord God created man of the dust of the ground and breathe into his nostrils the breath of life and Man became a living soul.” Now the eighth verse reads in the English text, “And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden.”

Now at first glance it would seem that this is a further description of creation, but in Hebrew, as well as in Greek, and often in English, a past tense, dependent upon its use in the context, may be translated not only as our English past, such as in this case, [indistinct] but also as a blueprint, and that is the way that the Hebrew text, the Hebrew verse can be translated here. It is “past” planted in verse 8. In other words, he is trying to put man into the perspective of the creation and he says, “And now the Lord God had planted a garden eastward in Eden. And there he had put the man whom he had formed.”

So we then do not have two accounts of creation and whenever you see that and you’re going to see it, sooner or later, just do not believe it. It is not true. We have the creation given generally and then we have it given specifically with reference to man.

But look now at verse 26 of chapter 1 where we have the divine counsel, “And God said let us make Man in our image.” Now I want you to notice the statement, “Let us make.” Now he does not say, “Let me make.” He does not say, “I will make.” But he says, “Let us make.” And in the Hebrew text that is plural. “Let us make.”

Now I want you to notice verse 24, “And God said, let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind.” So when he comes to man the language varies. It is not, “let the earth bring forth.” It is, “let us make.”

Now by this, the writer of the Genesis account is designedly stressing the difference between the creation of the material universe and the animate creation and the creation of man. “Let us make man.”

Now I think also that this “us” tells us immediately that God’s unity is not a monolithic unity. That is, we cannot say, from this text then that God is one person. If we read, “let us make man in our image,” we must in our description or definition or analysis of the person of God allow for the fact that God may speak of himself in the plural number. Now, of course, this is not an argument for the Trinity specifically at this point, for we do not have anything in the text that suggests only three persons in the Godhead. But at least we can say from verse 26 that the Godhead is not a monolithic unity. “Let us make man in our image.”

Now I’m going to stop right at this point and try to show you that in the Book of Genesis itself we have some indication of Trinity. But it is not specifically stated. I want you to turn with me a few pages back to -- or on to Genesis chapter 18.

Now in Genesis chapter 18 we have the account of the visit from “three” men -- I put this in quotes of “three” men to Abraham. Let’s read the first two verses of Genesis chapter 18. “And the LORD appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him.”

Now notice that we have the first verse beginning with, “And the LORD appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day (now notice) and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.”

And verse 3 says, “And said, My Lord,” now notice this is capital L, little o, little r, little d. So that tells us that this is not the covenant keeping name for God, Jehovah, as we had in the first verse because in the first verse we had four capital letters. So Abraham does not recognize this person as a divine person at this point. He simply says, sir. “If now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.”

So Abraham, in the next two verses, expresses himself to the effect that he wants to show some hospitality to these three men who have come. Verse 9, “And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, ‘after I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?’”

Now by the way you’ll notice that Sarah calls her husband “lord” and Peter argues on the basis of that, that it’s not a bad idea for women to do that in the New Testament. Remember in 1 Peter chapter 3 -- men ought to turn to that and read it sometime and meditate upon it a little while -- show it to your wife and see if you get anywhere. [Laughter] Verse 13, “And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD?” -- You’ll notice now that the term that is used for the Lord here is Jehovah --

“At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And

he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh. And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from there, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.”

Now -- you see now -- there were “three” men, apparently, who had come to Abraham, but now one remains and he is called, the LORD. I want you to read chapter 19, verse 1 and verse 2, or just verse 1. “And there came two angels to Sodom at evening.” And those, you see, are the two others. So Abraham entertained angels on the lam, as the thirteenth chapter of the Epistles of the Hebrews put it. So the three that came before Abraham to give him this promise were two angels and Jehovah.

Now here, of course, we have some indication of Jehovah coming down to minister directly to men. Now we have back in Genesis chapter 1, verse 26, “Let us make man in our image.” But now Jehovah is among men.

Now if we stopped here and I took time out for the rest of the hour to talk about the angel of Jehovah and tried to, and pointed out to you where I think it’s confusing that the angel of Jehovah, is the pre-incarnate Christ, we have at least two persons in the Trinity. For we have Jehovah, who is a spirit, our great God on high, and we have one of the “Jehovah’s” who mingles with men before the time of the incarnation. Now will turn back to the second verse of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, “And the earth was

without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

And so, there you see, we have the three persons of the Trinity, we have the great Jehovah, we have the spirit of God and we also have one of the Jehovahs who mingles with men. So when we read, “Let us make man in our image,” in verse 26 of chapter 1; I think that we are justified in saying that this is an anticipation of the Trinity of the New Testament. It is not specifically stated and we want to be careful not to say more than the text of the Bible says. But it does suggest to us the Trinity -- or I should say a plurality in the Godhead. And another fact suggests to us at least three persons in that Godhead. And you read through the rest of the Old Testament and you discover, of course, that there is no other person who is accorded this rank.

And so, it’s not surprising that in the New Testament we read, for example, in the Book of Matthew, that the Apostles are to go forth and they are to baptize in the name – singular, for that suggests the unity of the Godhead -- in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the three persons of the one God. So when we read then let us make -- we have the divine counsel with regard to man. Man’s creation then is product of counsel within the three persons of the Trinity.

Now, Capital B in our outline: The divine creative act. Verse 26 and verse 27; let’s just notice verse 27, “So God created man in his own image.” Now mediate creation -- that is creation by means of some intermediary -- is suggested in the eleventh verse of Genesis, chapter 1. Let’s take a look at that. “And God said, let the earth bring forth vegetation.” In other words, God created the earth and then he said, now let the earth bring forth vegetation. So the earth is mediately the means of the grass. God creates the earth and from the earth there comes grass.

But when we come to the creation of man, we have immediate creation -- that is a direct creative act of God. So God created man in his own image. You’ll notice, too, in this verse “male and female created he them.” Now the purpose of this, as far as I can tell

since we do not yet have the description of the creation of the female, is to stress the fact that humanity is bi-sexual. And I think that, implicit in this is the fact, that each sex is a complement of the other, and that we are not really complete without the other sex; the female and the male. “Male and female created he them.” So that we are necessary one to the other. There is an order; the woman is created out of the man. But, nevertheless, they are each essential for the other. Paul really developed that in 1 Corinthians and other places later on.

The animals’ creation -- as you go over the first chapter of the Book of Genesis -- is a creation after their kind. Over and over again you read this was created after their kind. But when you come to the creation of man, we have something that’s different. The animals have their type.

But man’s type is God himself. We read, “So God created man in his own image. In the image of God created he him.” It’s not after “their kind” but it’s “after the image of God.” That’s why in the Book of Acts, in chapter 17 and verse 28, Paul speaks of man as “the offspring of God.” He is in the image of God.

And it’s perfectly all right for us to say that man is a “son” of God if we remember that in that sense were talking about a son by creation, offspring of God. Now when we talk about a spiritual “son of God,” we’re talking, of course, about one who has believed in Jesus Christ. As Paul puts it, “Now we are the sons of God, by faith in Jesus Christ.”

You often hear modernists or liberal preachers say that, “We are all the sons of God.” But they often do not quote the remainder of the text, “By faith in Jesus Christ.”

Not everybody is a spiritual Son of God. Only those who have believed in Jesus Christ may call themselves spiritual Sons of God. Everybody is an offspring of God, belongs to that offspring. In that sense, we may say that. But we must not misuse that expression.

Not everybody is a child of God. That’s one of the errors that we see all over our newspapers, you know. Whenever you see something spiritual, you can always be sure

that there probably is an error there theologically, somewhere. It’s very rarely that you ever find anything in the Bible, in the newspapers theologically correct. An amazing thing.

Even an interview with a man who is a fine Christian man usually comes out twisted and warped. If you read, for example, that Billy Graham said so and so and so and so, and so and so, if it’s more than three lines long, it probably has some theological error which has been interpreted into the account by the newspaper reporter who took it down. Because he doesn’t understand what is being said. It’s an amazing thing.

I’ve seen this happen over and over again and, therefore, I never believe anything I read in the newspapers spiritually anymore. You can never even be sure that’s what was said, unless you can put the signature of the man after it. They just don’t understand.

Very frequently, when you read, “we’re the sons of God” or “we’re the children of God,” that’s just a reflection of a failure to understand the Biblical facts about a new birth and the spiritual relationship that comes when we believe in the one who has died for us on Calvary’s cross. It is only by that faith in the crucified Christ that we enter the family of God and become “sons of God.”

Now, of course, from this it’s obvious that the Bible does not support the theory of evolution. And since we’ve said something about that, we don’t want to stop and talk about that. But it’s obvious that the Bible sets forth the fact that man was created by God. He did not evolve. He came directly from the hand of God. It does not teach Theistic evolution, either. It teaches the “immediate” creation by the hand of God. Now let’s move on.

Roman II: The personality of man. Now this is a very difficult subject but certain facts seem clear. Capital A: The elements of it.

Now if we define -- for the sake of simplicity -- personality as comprising intellect, emotions; and then, I think, that we can say that man possesses personality.

Let’s take a look, first, for intellect; chapter 2, [should be verse 18] and verse 19. And verse 20, “And the LORD God said, it is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help fit for him -- and now notice -- and out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field.” This is chapter 2, verse 19 and verse 20. “Every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them.” Now this was an intellectual task for Adam. What would he call them? “And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help fit for him.”

So Adam possessed intellect. I think this must have been quite a challenge to Adam to name all of the animals. He must have had quite an intellect.

By the way, two years ago I read in *Time* magazine an interesting article. It was a very long article; it was one of *Time*’s special essays. And in it was a discussion of the philosophy of a Frenchman, by the name of Levi-Strauss -- Claude Levi-Strauss. It’s a rather interesting philosophy and it’s become very popular in continental Europe. And the substance of the philosophy of Levi-Strauss is that man’s intellect has not developed through the centuries, that the ancient early man had an intellect just as great as our modern intellect. And many scientists have now accepted this -- that there is no evolution in the intellect of man -- that they have exercised amazing powers of intellect in the creative activity of the early stages of the history of the human race.

Now if you think that in the 20th Century because you have somebody going toward the moon, that your intellect is better than the cave man, science has now discovered that there is serious question about that that the greatest changes in the human experience occurred then and not now.

So Adam had an intellect -- and I have a hunch that he had a tremendous intellect. I wouldn’t be surprised to discover that our intellect, just like the Fall of man, are intellects

that cannot measure up at all to the intellect that those early individuals had. But now I’m getting way out of my sphere of some kind of competence, so I’d better stop at that point.

Let’s think about emotions for a moment, Genesis chapter 3, verse 6. “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food” -- yum, yum; you know. [Laughter] Now that is emotion. “And it was pleasant to the eyes, [ah], and a tree to be desired to make one wise.” In other words, as far as we can tell, man had emotion, which we don’t. “She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”

And so the third capacity associated with personality is will, and apparently they had a will for they voluntarily took up the fruit and ate of it. So they had intellect, they had emotion, and they had will. I presume from this that it is right for us to say that man has personality. I thought I had personality all along but I’m glad to see that it is at least supported by the word of God.

Now I want to say something else before we move on. I put it here in the outline not too clearly – but, The extent of this personality. And here I want to discuss for just a moment the question of the image of God.

Let’s go back to chapter 1, verse 26 and verse 27 again, and let’s notice these expressions the “image of God” and “the likeness of God” and then let’s ask the question, “What does that mean?”

“And God said, let us make man in our image.”

What does that mean? Man in the image of God? I’m sure we don’t look like God, physically, for God is a spirit. “After our likeness,” in verse 27. “So God created man in his own image.”

Now I’m going to drop the question of whether there is any difference between “image” and “likeness.” This has [been] debated by theologians and there is no certain

answer to that question. Apparently at first glance, it appears that these words are synonyms because in the twenty-seventh verse only one of them is mentioned.

“So God created man in his own image.” But what is it to be created “in the image” of God? Now of course we know that man was not created to the degree of perfection that God possesses. He is a created being. Furthermore, as far as we can tell, man was probably created something like a child is created, or something like a child is born.

A child is born perfect, in all of his or her parts, but not yet in degree. In other words, there needs to be growth or maturity. And apparently man was created, in some degree, in this way. He was created with a limited amount of maturity but a great deal of perfection so far as his properties and capacities were concerned.

Well, what does this mean specifically? Why, I think that we could probably say that when God created man in his image, man had the capacity for spirituality. God is a spiritual being and man was created with a spirit. So the “image of God” must have, at least, included the idea of spirituality.

It probably included the quality of invisibility for there is, you know, a part of me that is invisible. My spirit, you cannot see it. You do not know what I’m thinking when I look at you. I don’t know whether you’d laugh or cry if you knew what I was thinking sometimes. [Laughter] Perhaps -- if you really knew what I was thinking -- you’d probably laugh at me.

Also I think it’s probably true to say that man possesses the quality of immortality, endowed. Now I know the Bible says God only hath immortality and so I want to say it is an “endowed” quality, that is, something given by God. For every man shall exist for all of eternity.

Those who do not believe in Christ exist for all of eternity in separation from God. Those who do believe exist in the presence of God. It is no use for a person to say, “I

will not receive Jesus Christ as Savior. I’ll just be wiped out.” It’s no use to say, “I will avoid eternal judgment.” He cannot do it. It is one or the other.

I think, also, that there must have been included in the “image of God” a true knowledge. In addition, righteousness, and a holiness -- not developed, but at least the beginnings of righteousness and holiness more than simple innocence is involved. In fact I rather doubt that there is such a thing as innocence. But at any rate it was not a developed righteousness and a developed holiness. And also, of course, there is also a rational and moral nature. That is suggested by the “image of God” for God is a rational moral personal being.

Well if man had all of this in his creation, what happened in the fall? Did he lose the “image of God?” Well now, surprisingly, the Bible says that man did not. 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 7 reads this way. 1 Corinthians 11:7, “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.”

In other words, even after the Fall, man is in some measure still in the image of God. In what sense could that be? Well, he of course, does not have righteousness. He does not have holiness any longer. He does not have true knowledge.

As a matter of fact, one of the things that regeneration does for us is to restore the knowledge of God. But he still possesses an intellect. He still possesses emotion. He still possesses a will. He’s still a rational and moral being. And, in this sense, he possesses the image of God. And so man is a defaced image of God, but he still possesses the basic structure of the “image of God.” You know what that means? Let’s just think for a moment about the implications of it?

Why is murder such a heinous crime? Well of course, it becomes then the destruction of one who has been created in the “image of God.” It acts to explain, you see, that a lot of things that are found in the Bible. There is such a thing as “the true dignity of man.”

Now when you read in the newspapers about the dignity of man, ordinarily, it means how wonderful man is. But the true sense of the dignity of man is that he still bears within himself the “image of God” though defaced and marred by sin.

Now, finally Roman III. [Indistinct]

Capital A: The constituent elements of “human nature”

Now we have to distinguish two things, in theological talk, [Indistinct; Dr. Johnson moves away from microphone 40:01 – 41:22]

Now, what is man? Theologians have debated this down through the centuries, and they are still debating it. Some think that man is dichotomous. That is, he has a body, which we agree that man has a body. But that all of the other expressions in the Bible are not designed to point out any differences in man’s immaterial being but just are different ways of expressing the one immaterial part of man. So that man is composed of a material part, a body, and an immaterial part sometimes called a soul. Sometimes called a spirit. So that man is immaterial and material. He has an inner man and he has an outer man.

Now if you believe that about man, you accept the theory that man is dichotomous. If you believe, however, that man is trichotomous, you believe that man possesses a body, and that he possesses two immaterial parts to his being. And, generally speaking, this is [indistinct]. To believe that man has a body, that man has a spirit, and that man has, or is, a soul.

Now we don’t have time to go into this, and to discuss all of the passages of Scripture that pertain to the question. There is good reason for believing in both of these theories, that is, some support from Scripture can be mustered for both. Personally I think that more support can be mustered for man as trichotomous. That is that man is trichotomous. He possesses a body, a spirit, and a soul. And on the basis of 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 23, you can read chapter 4, verse 12 and some other

passages. I believe that this is probably the biblical teaching. Man has a body, he also has a spirit and he has a soul.

Now I would distinguish that as the body is that part of man that makes contact with the world. You can see me and I see you. By reason of the fact that [indistinct]

The spirit is that part of man which maintains contact with God or which may have contact with God. It is the intellectual part of his being. It is the part of man that knows. And it is the part of man with which God makes contact. And [indistinct] It is the man’s “self.” So, in the body we have moral consciousness. In the spirit we have God consciousness. And with the soul we have self-consciousness. It is the soul in which we have the emotions of hate and fear and love. It is the spirit, by which we receive direction and information, and knowledge about God.

[Indistinct] God speaks to us through our spirits which he hath renewed, through the new birth. And the knowledge of God is communicated through our personality, to ourselves, to our souls, [indistinct] word which I express through my personality, or through my soul, under the direction of the spirit. [indistinct] So that man is tri-partite.

Now, finally, the origin of the soul. [Indistinct] Again, we’ve plunged into matters regarding which considerable ink has been spilt, where do we get our souls?

Well, this is a contemporary issue do you know that? Two years ago, in June 1967 to be exact --not two years ago. There was a case in the Arizona courts, which was most interesting. A man by the name, James Kidd, an eccentric Arizona copper miner, had died. He disappeared in 1949. He was declared legally dead sixteen years later. Then it was discovered among his possessions that he had a hand written will which directed the disposal of his estate, which, it so happened, amounted to \$198,000. One hundred ninety-eight thousand, one hundred and thirty eight dollars and fifty-three cents. And this money, according to his hand written will, was to be used for – quote -- “research, or some scientific proof, of a soul of the human body which leaves at death.”

And so the judge in Phoenix was faced with the solution of the problem created by this man’s will. And so when the case finally came to court no fewer than seventeen organizations and seventy individuals had put up a \$15.00 filing fee and were prepared to stake their claims for the research money left in that estate.

One was a housewife who described herself as a clairvoyant from California. She said that the soul was a hazy tinted form resembling that of a body. That is what the soul was and she was prepared to demonstrate that by research, I guess. And she said at the hearing that she had detected Mr. Kidd -- he was the miner -- his soul was in the courtroom pacing up and down with his hands behind his back, shaking his head at the proceedings. I presume she meant that the judge should have given her the money and have settled the case right there.

Another California housewife claimed to be in constant contact through her entire nervous system with a dentist friend who died two years ago. She asks the dentist’s soul yes or no questions and the answer comes by the soul causing her head either to nod or to shake. One is yes and one is no [laughter].

And then there was a Lt. Colonel in the Thailand army. There was a geophysicist who contended that the soul was the center of cosmic vibrations. There was the founder of the University Life Church in Phoenix, with a membership of fourteen hundred people, who claimed the power to communicate with the soul.

And I like this one. Among the 4500 letters of advice coming, there was one, which told how to discover the presence of the soul. And this was it, “Take a man who is about to die into a small room. All the doors, windows and ventilators should be thoroughly closed so that there’s no place for the soul to get out. As soon as the man shall die, his soul shall pierce or crack the window glass, thus giving proof of its existence.” [Laughter]

Where do we get a soul? What about our soul? From where does it come? Most theologians have settled on one or two explanations. One is creationism moment of

birth is the moment of the creation of the soul, that God creates a new soul the moment at which we are born.

And then there’s another theory called by traducianism. T-R-A-D-U-C-I-A-N-I-S-M. Traducianism. Traducianism claims that the spirit and the body originate by human propagation; that God created the soul of Adam, but that God’s creative processes with regard to the inner man ended there. And that men are responsible for the creation or the existence of the human soul and the human spirit. In other words, in each one of us is the power to propagate the inner man as well as the outer man. And as far as I can tell the Bible stands a little more on the side of traducianism than it does on creationism. For it seems to explain better human depravity. It seems to explain the inherited human characteristics, which we have. It would be difficult to explain how human characteristics are carried down in certain families, like in the Johnson family. Everybody is smart and intelligent in the Johnson family, you see. How could you explain that if it was a fresh creation every time someone was born? But if there is a sense somehow in which we communicate, we propagate not only the outer man, but the inner man as well, it would seem to accord with the fact.

Now this is a very controversial subject and I would not, if I were you, be too worried about it. It’s impossible for us to prove one or the other, I think. But, at least, I believe that probably the Bible and human experience stands more on the side of traducianism.

Well now, that’s the story of “What is man?” Next time we’re going to look at the fall. Let’s close with a word of prayer. We’re going to have an intermission for fifteen minutes.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word and we ask Thy blessing upon it as we have considered it. Enable us to understand and appropriate it.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

“The Origin, Personality and Nature of Man” by S. Lewis Johnson
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