

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: (ORGANIZED BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

Part V: Anthropology

C. Man As A Believer

I. Introduction

- A. Though he ruined his ideal, wholesome life in Eden, by way of Genesis 3:22-24 and Revelation 22:2, God graciously opened the door for man to gain victory over his fallen sinful state.
- B. That rescue comes through faith in God's provision offered in Jesus Christ, Romans 3:24-25.
- C. However, to make the most of that salvation in this life, the believer needs to understand the dynamics of what he is and what he **faces** in life as follows:

II. Man As A Believer (I am indebted to L. S. Chafer's Systematic Theology, vol. II and to Charles Ryrie's work, The Holy Spirit for basic content in this lesson):

- A. Man as an Old Testament Believer had a living arrangement differing from believers in the Church era:
 1. Old Testament believers were justified (pronounced righteous by God) when they believed what God at the **time** selected as the content of what He wanted them to believe, cf. Genesis 15:3-6.
 2. However, they were justified based upon the atonement of Jesus Christ yet to come, and God kept their sins covered only to be removed at the cross of Christ, Romans 3:25.
 3. These believers had eternal security in their salvation, but the Holy Spirit had a much more limited ministry with them than believers in the Church enjoy: the Holy Spirit could come upon them or leave them due to their practical walk with God, 1 Samuel 16:13 and Psalm 51:11b versus John 14:16-17.
- B. Man as a Tribulation Period and Millennial Kingdom believer will have living arrangements that differ with those in the Church also: these believers will have what appears to be the same kind of relationship with God as did Old Testament believers. However, the content of what they believe for salvation differs from the Old Testament eras due to the increase in Biblical revelation regarding Christ, cf. Revelation 7:9-17. Salvation will still be based upon faith in Christ's atonement, Revelation 7:14d.
- C. Man as a Believer in the Church Era, between Pentecost and the Rapture, has a unique relation with God:
 1. The instant one believes in Christ today, he is vitally united with Christ so that he belongs to the spiritual body called the Church, Ephesians 2:14-17.
 2. At salvation, 33 positional truths become effective for the believer as listed in Chafer's Systematic Theology, vol. III, p. 232-265. These riches of God's grace are not experienced in living though they **provide** for the believer's equipping for holy living. This is known as **positional sanctification**.
 3. The believer needs to gain victory over sin in life known as **experiential sanctification** (as follows):
 - a. At salvation, God gives the believer a new nature for righteous living, 2 Pet. 1:3-8; Rom. 8:15-17.
 - b. Yet, he still retains his pre-salvation, old sin nature, 1 Jn. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:2 with 3:3; Rom. 7:15-24.
 - c. Hence, the believe gains experiential sanctification as follows: (a) he discerns from Scripture God's will for him (Ps. 119:105) (b) so he can trust God's leading and equipping him to perform righteous acts (1 Jn. 5:4). (c) He can accomplish these as he depends on God's indwelling Spirit to empower him **both to want** to do as well as **to do** what is right, Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12-13.
 - d. There are a variety of alternatives a Christian will take with a variety of outcomes as follows: (a) He can fail to obey God so that God will discipline him by cutting his earthly life short, 1 Jn. 5:16. He still retains his salvation status even in this experiential failure, 1 Cor. 3:13-15. (b) The believer may obey God by using the spiritual resources described above and receive rewards at the end of his earthly life, 2 Timothy 4:6-8. (c) There can be a mixture of both routes, to varying degrees, with varying resulting degrees of discipline and reward (cf. Rev. 2:2-4 versus 2:8-11 as examples).
 4. **Every** believer will experience **ultimate sanctification** in the eternal state (as follows):
 - a. The rapture of the Church (and various applicable resurrections for saints in other eras) will leave the believer with an immortal body and no more sin nature, 1 Corinthians 15:51-57.
 - b. He will rule with Christ depending on his faithfulness to Christ in his earthly life, Mtt. 25:14-29.

Lesson: It is critically important not only to God, but also in terms of our own earthly welfares and even ETERNAL ministries for us who are IN Christ to USE the positional riches we have in Him, and trust in the Scriptures and in the Spirit's enablings given to us to live godly lives in this world!