

Systematic Theology session 23
The Doctrine of Man, Part 3

- The study of hamartiology.
 - Hamartiology is the study of sin, from the word hamartia, one of the Greek words for sin.
 - Hamartiology involves examining what happened to mankind with the fall.
 - Hamartiology is profitable because we will see the value of forgiveness in Christ. When we know that we are forgiven of much, we will love Christ that much more.
 - Hamartiology is necessary to avoid a low view of sin, which leads to false doctrine and false practice.
- The definition of sin, from the Westminster Larger Catechism:
 - “What is sin? Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.”
 - “Reasonable creature”: Angels and humans are creatures that can use reason.
 - “Want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God”: We fall short of what we should do (sins of omission), and we transgress in our actions (sins of commission).
- Mankind, in their fallen state, are practitioners of lawlessness.
 - There are gradations of sin, as shown by the order of the Ten Commandments, but there is also a sense in which when we break any law of God, we have broken the whole body of law (James 2:10-11).
- The Old Testament type of the Year of Jubilee as showing sin as both slavery and debt.
 - Slavery as not just being a legal status, but something that governs the entire life of the slave.
 - The Westminster Larger Catechism: “What misery did the fall bring upon mankind? Answer: The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.”
 - The notion of human autonomy is a lie from Satan. There is no autonomy. We will serve as slaves to sin, or as servants to the benevolent master, Christ.
 - Sin as a debt that it is impossible for us to repay from our own resources.
 - The law of God as an obligation; when we violate the law, we fail to meet the obligation, and incur debt.
 - We cannot repay this unimaginably large debt. Only the work of Christ could pay the debt for His people, wiping away and canceling the debt.
 - Christ is the antitype, or fulfillment, of the type of the Year of Jubilee.
- Pelagianism: The heresy of the 4th-5th century monk Pelagius, that Adam’s sin in the garden only injured Adam, and every person born after Adam is a “blank slate,” having the ability to never sin. This heresy held that those born after Adam bore no guilt for Adam’s sin.
- Semi-Pelagianism: Salvation is possible by a mixture of God’s grace and the native ability of the sinner.
 - Shown in the medieval saying: “God will not deny his grace to those who do what lies within them.”
 - An example of semi-Pelagianism: Charles Finney (1792-1875) in the Second Great Awakening.
 - Finney held that the doctrine of total inability was false; people have native ability to decide for Christ, and they just need a push. Finney used “new measures” to produce an emotional push. He taught that revivals could be produced at will using techniques.