

**CLASS 1 – JANUARY 21: THEOLOGY SURVEY**

**I. What is Theology?**

**A. Definition:** Theology (θεολογία): The study of the nature of God.

1. **Etymology:** From the Greek words Theos (θεός), meaning "God," and logia (λογία), meaning "utterances, sayings, or oracles" (a word related to logos (λόγος), meaning "word, discourse, account, or reasoning").
2. **Augustine of Hippo:** Reasoning or discussion concerning God.
3. **Richard Hooker:** The science of things divine."

**II. Some Basic Theological Concepts—Questions and Answers:**

**A. Who is God?**

1. **The Trinity—One God in Three Person:** From the Latin *trinitas* ("triad" or "threefold"): There is one God in three *consubstantial* persons or *hypostases*—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The three Persons are distinct, yet are one "substance, essence or nature" (*homoousios*). The Fourth Lateran Council (1214) declared that "it is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds," (see also Nicene Creed) and in their relations with one another, they are stated to be one in all else, co-equal, co-eternal and consubstantial, and each is God, whole and entire.

**B. Who Is Christ?**

1. **The Incarnation—Fully Man, Fully God:** From the Latin *incarno* ("to make into flesh, or "to be made flesh") (John 1:14). God became flesh and assumed a human nature in the form of Jesus, the Son of God.
2. **Hypostatic Union:** From the Greek word *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις), meaning "foundation, substance, subsistence." Jesus Christ is fully man and fully God. Christ's humanity and divinity (his two natures) are united in one "hypostasis" or one individual existence.

**C. Who is Man?**

1. **Imago Dei:** *Lit.* "the image of God." Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27). The image of God is intimately linked to the idea of Original Sin.
2. **Original Sin:** The *imago Dei* that was present in Adam at creation was partially lost with the Fall. Only through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross can humans can be reunited with God. Despite the *imago Dei* being partially lost, each fundamentally has value regardless of class, race, gender, etc.

**D. How Do We Know About God, Christ and Man?**

1. **Revelation:** The revealing or disclosing of some form of truth or knowledge through communication with God.
  - a. **General Revelation:** Knowledge about God and spiritual matters discovered through natural means; plainly available to all.
  - b. **Special Revelation:** Knowledge about God disclosed through the Bible or miracles (II Timothy 3:16-17).

## E. How are We Saved? The Work of Christ

1. **Substitutionary atonement (lit. "at-one-ment"):** The forgiving and pardoning of sin through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ *in our place*. (I. Pet. 2:24, I Pet. 3:18). Christ is a sacrifice by God on behalf of humanity, taking humanity's debt for sin upon himself, and propitiating God's wrath. (Heb. 9:11 ff.)
2. **Justification:** God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while also declaring a sinner righteous through Christ's atoning sacrifice. (A central issue in the Reformation).
  - a. **Infused Righteousness (Catholic):** Through keeping the commands of Christ, regular confession and penance, and receiving the sacraments, God's righteousness is "infused" in believers more and more over time, and their own "righteousness in the flesh" becomes subsumed into God's righteousness.
  - b. **Imputed Righteousness (Protestant):** The righteousness of Jesus is credited to the Christian, enabling the Christian to be justified by faith (II Cor. 5:21).
3. **Sanctification:** From the Latin *sanctus* ("holy") and *facere* ("to make"). The process of God's work within us by means of which we grow into the fullness of the redeemed life. Richard Hooker distinguished between the "righteousness of justification" that is imputed by God and the "righteousness of sanctification" that comprises the works one does as an "inevitable" result of being justified. Sanctification cannot be attained by any works based process, but only through the works and power of the divine.

## F. God's Work in the World:

1. **Divine Providence:** Latin *providentia* ("foresight, prudence"), from *pro-* ("ahead") and *videre* ("to see"). God's intervention in the world.
  - a. **General Providence:** God's continuous upholding the existence and natural order of the Universe
  - b. **Special Providence:** God's extraordinary intervention in the life of people (miracles).

## G. The End/Goal of History

1. **Eschatology** (from the Greek *ἔσχατος* (*eschatos*) meaning "last" and *-logy* meaning "the study of": the part of theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind. The Second Coming of Christ is the central event in eschatology. There are various views concerning the order and significance of other eschatological events.

## H. What Are We?

1. **Evangelical** *εὐαγγέλιον* *euangelion*, from Latin *eu* "good", *angel-* the stem of, among other words, *angelos* "messenger, angel." Transdenominational Christian movement holding that essence of the Gospel consists of salvation by grace through faith in Christ's substitutionary atonement.
2. **Evangelical Quadrilateral (David Bebbington):**
  - a. **Biblicism:** A particular regard for the Bible (e.g., all essential spiritual truth is to be found in its pages).
  - b. **Crucicentrism:** A focus on the atoning work of Christ on the cross.
  - c. **Conversionism:** The belief that human beings need to be converted.
  - d. **Activism:** The belief that the gospel needs to be expressed in effort.