

FIRST CLASS:

Module 4

Jesus the Christ: The Christological Mystery

Review of Module 3: HUMANITY: THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL MYSTERY

Here is a summary of the main points of Module 3. If you have any questions and want to dialogue, please contact one of Trinity's pastors!

The Christian understanding of that huge existential question "what is man?" (what is human) is based on what the Bible reveals about this topic. The Bible reveals that humans were created at the end of the divine work of creating everything that exists (on the sixth day of a six day process). Unlike God's creation of the other living things (plant kingdom, animal kingdom) on earth, man is not brought forth by a simple command of God to come forth from the land itself, or the water, and the human species is not created in the plural. God is more intimately involved in creating and fashioning with greater personal attention to the creation of a singular human male. The Bible says *the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

***In the Bible there is a distinct and a huge difference between animals and humans. In contemporary biology for some generations now, human (homo sapiens) is classified as a species of the animal kingdom. But in Scripture there is most definitely a human kingdom which is given dominion (authority and responsibility) over all the other living creatures and the earth. The Creator Himself gave humans this calling to care for the earth He created for human benefit and human enjoyment. Only humans are made in the image of God. Only humans have been given the mental, emotional, and spiritual abilities to exercise such a "lordly" rule over the life of this planet.**

***Adam and Eve were the first two humans on earth. The grammar of Genesis is narrative non-fiction. It's claim is that what is described is historical fact, what really happened. In our twenty-first century language (understanding the fact that scientific theory does change as new evidence emerges), we might say the whole of human DNA was there in our first parents. They were created perfectly holy and able to obey God. They were immortal. All life was in perfect harmony.**

- *The relationship of the first two humans is indeed in perfect harmony. They are created with great equality and perfect fellowship. God loves them equally. They are both given the Law of God, His commandments are fixed securely and eternally in their minds, hearts, and souls. They are both given dominion over the earth. They both have perfect minds, perfect passions (emotion), and perfect souls. They are both given the command, ability, and pleasure of participating in the ongoing creation of the human race through the gift of the sexual relationship (which is a physical gift to be used as designed in the oneness God had designed for their relationship as man and wife). They are both called children of God. Within such perfect unity and equality they were given, God also gave to them a uniqueness of personhood. Physically they are made differently, as male and female, in order that they might be partners in their calling as rulers over the earth. Adam is created first, and seemingly by this order of creation, he as male and as husband is assigned a headship of responsibility for his family as it grows and develops into a society. Eve is assigned to be Adam's helper in this enterprise.**
- *When Adam and Eve fall into sin, God's design for human life on earth is destroyed along with the perfect harmony enjoyed in the human relationship with God, human relationships with each other, and even the harmony of nature. The other living things and creatures in plant and animal kingdom are quite innocently impacted by the human fall. The most serious effect of this fall from grace is that death enters into this new reality of a fallen world and a fallen humanity. The Law of God ceases to be man's delight and guide for life's choices and decisions; now the Law will condemn men and women continuously. Sadly the relationships and roles that God gave to men and women, husband and wife, will be corrupted. Men will abuse and redefine the "headship" role from one of loving stewardship and care-driven responsibility to selfish, chauvinistic gender rule. Women will always be consigned to this male abuse of his role, but will also be subject to her own "out-to-get-him," sinful desire to oppose the design of her role. In other words the gender war begins without end. All of God's designs for marriage, family, community, and society are now in contention with the human sinful desires and designs.**
- *The greatest truths we learned in Module 3 were found in: Genesis 3:15 (a Word of promise and hope as Adam and Eve hear God the Creator inform Satan that He will send a baby boy into the world who will undo what the devil had accomplished, a Man who would crush Satan and the sin, death, and evil he had brought to Adam and Eve; Genesis**

3:20 Adam, on the basis of seeing that God is not going to totally abandon them, as they deserved, responds by renaming his wife Eve (mother of all the living). This is the beginning of fallen man's worship of God (God speaks, acts, delivers. . . humans respond by saying back to God what He has spoken and promised); Genesis 3:21 God acts to take care of a basic, ongoing need His children have in this now fallen world—He clothes them properly, covers their nakedness and shame. He does this by sacrificing an innocent scapegoat, an animal whose blood must be shed, whose life must be lost; and, finally in Genesis 4:1, when Adam and Eve experience the birth of their first child, the world's first baby, Eve remembers the promise of God that a single, male baby will be the Savior.

Now let us proceed to the revelation of God's rescue of the fallen race, His plan for our second chance at a life in connection with our Creator, and the cost of that plan to us and to Him.

No one knows how old the world is or how many centuries and millennium existed before the time came in God's plan to fulfill His promise from Genesis 3:15. In the Hebrew Scriptures (the first 39 books of the Bible, known to Christians as the Old Testament), God's involvement in human history is recorded. In what we often think of as "prehistoric" times (the Bible defines that period of history for which we have no "historic record" the time between creation and the world after an event recorded in Genesis 6-9, a universal flood to save the world from human self-destruction), and through Biblical history from Genesis 12 and following, God appointed prophets to speak His Word. In about 1500 B.C. He established an entire nation to be a kingdom on earth that would proclaim and live His Word before the world cultures. His people were sinners also and did not always faithfully follow His Word. Yet, as with Adam and Eve, He never totally abandoned them. This is the story of the Old Testament.

And then when the time God had appointed came, very hidden and quietly, He began to unfold the fulfillment of His promise to send a Savior for the human race.

Christians celebrate these amazing days in human history in a festival called Christmas, a holiday that has impacted our American culture (and others in the world), who also celebrates Christmas, but for a different reason.

Turn to the New Testament and read these lovely narratives:

1) Luke 1:26-56

***To whom, where, when, and how does God first announce that the time has come to fulfill His promise to send a Savior into the world?**

***What is the content and substance of the message the angel from heaven, Gabriel, brings to Mary?**

***What are Mary's reactions to Gabriel's message?**

***How will the very Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, become a human being?**

***What practical "sign" does Gabriel give to Mary so that she can somewhat confirm the message and have an "excuse" to get away for awhile before she is obviously going to have to explain her coming "crisis pregnancy?"**

2) Now read how Mary's fiancé Joseph receives the news of her pregnancy in Matthew 1:18-25:

***While the details of just how Joseph came to know that Mary was expecting a child (he knew was not his child) are not revealed in the text, what is Joseph's response to this news?**

***How did an angel appear to Joseph, what was the angel's message to Joseph, and how does the content of this message change Joseph's course of action?**

3) Finally read the very well-known narrative, known down through the centuries and around the world, of the birth of Jesus, Luke 2:1-21:

***Who were Jesus' parents?**

***Where (what town) was Jesus born? Why do you think Jesus was born here and not in his mother's home town of Nazareth in Galilee?**

In what circumstances was He born?

***We do not know the year Jesus was born, although most scholars in our time believe it was between 6-4 B.C. What historical details does the historian Luke give to bring context to the event of Jesus' birth?**

***Who, besides Joseph and Mary, were the first human beings to meet the baby Jesus and to become the first human witnesses of His birth?**

Centuries later one of the men Jesus would choose to be a leader of the New Testament Church Jesus would establish, a dear friend and disciple of Jesus named John, would write a highly theological and philosophical description of who He was. Read John 1:1-18 and write below any observations or questions you have from these verses below:

The remainder of this Module is a self-study or group-study on your own of material from your Small Catechism with Explanation.

Turn to pages 164-194

Within the box on page 164 is the text of the ancient Apostles Creed, the Second Article, and Luther's 16th century explanation (*What does this mean?*) Read and meditate upon these words; if you are working with someone else or a small group, read these words aloud.

Continue reading pages 164 (bottom) to 194. . .
Make any notes or observations below:

***On the Incarnation of Jesus**

***On the two natures of Jesus (divine and human) being united in 1 Person¹**

***On being rescued by Jesus**

***On being redeemed by Jesus (the whole concept of redemption)**

***On the absolute importance of the bodily resurrection of Jesus**

***On the Person of Christ**

On His True Deity and why this is referred to as His Exaltation

***On His Real and True Humanity and why this is referred to as His Humiliation**

***On Jesus being called the “Christ” (Messiah)**

***On Jesus fulfilling the Old Testament office of Prophet**

***On Jesus fulfilling the Old Testament office of Priest**

***On Jesus fulfilling the Old Testament office of King**

Congratulations! You have completed the most difficult of the Modules in this course!

Return your answers on pages 2-7 of this module to

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or by fax 417-866-5629

**or by mail Trinity Lutheran Church
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If you want to ask questions or enter into dialogue on any of the above questions or related issues, we'd love to engage in conversation with you:

wmarler@trinitylutheranspfd.org 417-866-5878 (ask for one of our pastors)

¹The Personal Union

In Christ, God and man are united into One Person. The Divine assumes the human. At the time appointed by God, by the power of God, the Second Person of the Godhead becomes flesh and blood. This is a unique Union. God is present with all His creation; one might say, 'God is in every tree.' In a more special way God is united with the people of His Church; one might also say, 'God is with this Christian,' or 'God the Holy Spirit is in this Christian.' But in Christ there is something different, something unique and higher. We would not say, 'God is this tree,' 'God is this Christian,' or 'this Christian is God.' But we must say with the Scriptures of Jesus, 'this Man is God,' and in Him, 'God is man.'