

Session Six

Reformed Doctrine I: Scripture, God, Creation

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before class)

Sources: *The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF, Ch.1-7)*
The Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy, Translated
PCA Creation Study Committee Report to the 2010 GA, Introduction & Recommendations

Note: The topics covered in this assignment are HUGE, and can hardly be answered adequately in a sentence or two. (Try 2000 years of church history!) Consider this exercise an opportunity to become familiar with or get a refresher on the major areas of Christian theological thought, in brief.

Chapter I (WCF): Holy Scripture

1. What are the two types of revelation? How are they different?
2. What do we mean when we say the Bible is inspired?
3. How are we to interpret Scripture?
4. Does the Holy Spirit speak apart from Scripture? Explain.

Chapter II (WCF): God & the Holy Trinity

1. What does it mean that God is “unto himself all-sufficient”?
2. What is God’s purpose in creating other beings?
3. What do we mean when we say the persons of the Godhead are of one substance, power, and eternity? Why is this important?

Chapter III (WCF): God's Eternal Decree

1. In a sentence or a phrase, what is God's eternal decree?
2. If God has ordained "whatsoever comes to pass" how is he not responsible for sin?
3. What is the difference between God's foreknowledge and God's predestination?
4. The *Confession* says that the doctrine of predestination "is to be handled with special prudence and care." What are the practical applications of such a doctrine?

Chapter IV (WCF): Creation *[More on this topic below]*

1. The *Confession* asserts that God created the world "of nothing" (*ex nihilo*) "in the space of six days." What is the theological significance of these statements?
2. The *Confession* 4.2, gives a detailed account of the endowments that God gave man when He created him. Compile and organize these.
3. What do we mean when we say "man is created in the image of God?"

Chapter V (WCF): Providence

1. What is the difference between "fate" and "Divine Sovereignty?"
2. What does the *Confession* mean by "second causes?" How does this help explain how God can be sovereign and yet not responsible for sin?
3. According to the *Confession* 5.5, why does God sometimes leave His own people to face temptations and inner corruptions?

Chapter VI (WCF): Fall, Sin, and Punishment

1. What were the consequences of the "fall of man" recorded in Genesis 3?
2. What effect does sin have on the believer in Christ? How is the believer's experience different from that of an unbeliever?
3. What does the *Confession* mean when it says that "the guilt of this sin [Adam and Eve's fall] was imputed . . . to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation?" Theologians call this the imputation of Adam's sin. Explain.

Chapter VII (WCF): God's Covenants with Man

1. What is the "Covenant of Works?" Who broke this covenant? Who fulfilled it?
2. What is the "Covenant of Grace?" When did God institute it?

More on the Doctrine of Scripture:

From *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* (Translated):

1. What problems arise from an approach to the Bible that asserts that it is *sometimes* in error?
2. What "biblical phenomena" might be mistaken for errors? (See Article XIII)
3. What was Jesus' opinion of Scripture? How have people explained away his evaluation of it? (See Article XV)
4. What is the meaning of the final "Denial" on this list?

More on the Doctrine of Creation:

PCA Creation Study Committee Report to the 2010 GA, Introduction & Recommendations

1. In this report's conclusions, what beliefs are considered *non-negotiable* for orthodox faith, especially in the case of leaders in our denomination?
2. What beliefs about creation are considered *negotiable*, or at least tolerable, in the PCA?
3. How can you, personally, contribute to a climate of tolerance in this area, while maintaining both orthodox and personal convictions about this doctrine? What are some potential interpersonal challenges?