

OT-OV

Lesson 53

1. For the past two weeks in conjunction with our teaching of Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen I taught in part the Doctrine of The Three Classes of Men. In fact last week I almost completed this very essential doctrine.
2. I want to review some of that learned and then pick up with new material at point 8.3 on page three where we were concluding our definition of the Spiritual Man.

The Doctrine of the Three Classes of Men

1. There should be an obvious difference in the character and quality of the daily life of Christians.
2. This improvement will be experienced by all Christians who fulfill certain conditions. As you might imagine these conditions form an important theme in the Word of God.
3. The Apostle Paul, by the Spirit, has divided the whole human family into three groups:
 - 3.1 The "natural man," is unregenerate, and unchanged spiritually.
 - 3.2 The "carnal man," is a "babe in Christ," and walks "as a man" because he or she does not consistently take in the Word of God under the filling of the Spirit;
 - 3.3 The "spiritual man," consistently takes in the Word of God under the filling of the Spirit.
4. These groups are classified by the Apostle Paul in 1Co 2:9-3:4 according to their ability to understand and receive the spiritual truths found in the Bible.
5. Let's review what we know each of the three classes.

6. The Natural Man

6.1 The unbeliever cannot understand the revealed or deep things of God, because they are spiritually discerned."

1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

6.1.1 In this passage the natural man is not blamed for his inability. This is simply an accurate statement of an unbeliever's limitations.

6.2 He has received only "the spirit of man which is in him." Though he may, with "man's wisdom," be able to read the words, he cannot receive their spiritual meaning.

6.3 Many of the teachings of the Bible are within the range of the capacity of the "natural man." From these sources he may eloquently preach, not even knowing that "the deep things of God" exist.

6.4 The unsaved man, though educated with all of "man's wisdom," and though religious and attentive, is blind to the gospel. (2Co 4:3-4)

6.5 If called upon to formulate a doctrinal statement, the unsaved man will naturally formulate a "new theology" which is so "re-stated" as to omit the real meaning of the cross with its unfolding of the "deep things of God."

6.6 The ability to receive and know the things of God is not attained through the schools, for many who are unlearned possess it while many who are learned do not possess it. It is an ability which is born of the indwelling Spirit.

7. The Carnal Man

7.1 The Apostle proceeds in 1Co 3:1-4 with the description of the "carnal, man:"

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"

7.2 The "carnal" man, or "babe in Christ," is not "able to bear" the deep things of God. He is only a babe; but it is important to note that even in his carnality he is infinitely superior to the natural man and can never be compared with the utter incapacity of the "natural man."

7.3 The "carnal" man, being so little occupied with true spiritual meat however, yields to envy and strife which lead to divisions among other believers.

7.4 But the "carnal" Christian is also characterized by a "walk" that is on the same plane as that of the "natural" man. "Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (compare 2Co 10:2-5).

7.5 The objectives and affections of the carnal man are centered in the same unspiritual sphere as that of the "natural" man. In contrast to such a fleshly walk, we read: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." This is spirituality: consistently taking in the Word of God under the filling of the Spirit.

8. The Spiritual Man

8.1 The second classification of believers addressed in our passages is the spiritual man. He, too, is proven to be all that he is said to be by one test, his ability to receive and know divine revelation.

8.2 The progressive order of this whole context is evident:

8.2.1 First, there is faith alone in Christ alone.

8.2.2 Second, positive volition results in divine revelation. That revealed concerns things which, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." It is revealed by the Spirit (1Co 2:9-10).

8.2.3 Third, basic doctrines are presented at first and if positive volition continues, God the Holy Spirit will teach the more complex doctrines called "the deep things of God."

8.2.4 Fourth, the divine wisdom is hidden in the very words of God's Book; but the spiritual content of these words is understood only as one is able to compare spiritual things with spiritual (1Co 2:13).

8.2.5 Fifth, the "natural man" cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness neither can he know them, because they are only discerned by the Spirit of God. (1Co 2:14)

8.2.6 Sixth, a carnal Christian is born again and possesses the indwelling Spirit; but his carnality hinders the full ministry of the Spirit (1Co 3:1-4).

8.2.7 Seventh, he that is spiritual discerns all things. There is no limitation upon him in the realm of the things of God. He can "freely" receive the divine revelation and he glories in it. He discerns all things; yet he is discerned, or understood by no man. How could it be otherwise since he has "the mind of Christ?"

8.3 There are two great spiritual changes which are possible to human experience the change from the "natural" man to the saved man, and the change from the "carnal" man to the "spiritual" man.

8.4 The former is divinely accomplished when there is faith in Christ; the latter is accomplished when there is an adjustment to the Spirit. The one who is saved through faith in Christ, may at the same time wholly yield to God and enter at once a life of true surrender.

8.5 Doubtless this is seldom the case. It was thus in the experience of Saul of Tarsus and yet later in his life we find him failing. The Scriptures record three major trips into reversionism:

8.5.1 His failure to forgive John Mark,

8.5.2 His failure to preach at Troas,

8.5.3 His trip to Jerusalem against the wishes of God.

8.6 Most of us at some time or another become carnal either by sin and/or evil. To these the word of God gives clear direction. The directions from God are to use the two power options. Rom 12:1-2.

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

8.7 Lewis Sperry Chafer has written: "The "spiritual" man is the divine ideal in life and ministry, in power with God and man, in unbroken fellowship and blessing. To discover these realities and the revealed conditions upon which all may be realized is the purpose of systematic theology."

End Lesson

