

LECTURE I: THE CHURCH AND THE GOSPEL:
THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH, MODERNITY, POST-MODERNITY,
AND
POST-CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICALISM

In facing the present the evangelical church centers her faith and practices in accordance with the Gospel. In the face of many contesting claims evangelicals respond to post-modernity and post-conservative evangelicals by defining the Gospel afresh, by committing themselves to the Gospel, by critically evaluating perspectives on the Gospel, by engaging with ecclesiastical and societal traditions, by affirming and celebrating the Gospel, and by living as Gospel-centered Christians. When Evangelicals understand and confront the real challenges of their times, they reaffirm the Gospel.

I. CONTESTING CLAIMS (see *Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times*, ed. Millard J. Erickson, Paul Kjos Nelson, Justin Taylor (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004).

A. MODERNITY

1. Representatives

- a. Descartes (XVII): "I think therefore I am" (orphan mentality)
- b. Gabler (XVIII): *wahr* and *rein* in biblical theology
- c. Adolph von Harnack: *Geschichte* and *Historie*
- d. Ernst Troeltsch (1898)
 - (1) Criticism/probability: look critical at all traditions
 - (2) Analogy: subject tradition to principle of analogy -- correspondence with normal, occurring events
 - (3) Correlation: interaction with all human phenomena -- an individual event/tradition
- e. Gerhard von Rad: *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history)
- f. John Barton, "The commitment to the human intellect's ability and right to choose between different interpretative possibilities on rational grounds, unconstrained by the deliverances of authority, shows at once that biblical criticism is a child of the Enlightenment ... it is equally a child of the Reformation." (*The Future of Old Testament Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, 11).

2. Image: laboratory

3. Conclusions:

- a. Immanentistic
- b. Attempt at objectivity, historical verification
- c. Methodological skepticism: individual vs. community.
- d. Narrow reading of the biblical text (methodological straightjacket)
- e. Theological bias and anti-church. Möller: "historical criticism has driven people away from the churches which have assimilated themselves to the dominant cultural ethos with the result that they no longer have a distinctive message to offer." (158)

- f. Dependent on commitment to the scientific principle. Students of the Bible must accept the axiom of modernity. See Jon D. Levenson: "historical critics depend for their livelihood upon the vitality of traditional religious communities, Jewish and Christian." (*The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, 110).

4. Questions

- a. How can faith be left out of the laboratory without faith ending up in the laboratory? Karl Möller: "all knowledge is socially and culturally determined in that historians or interpreters are themselves deeply embedded in their own cultures with all of that culture's attendant prejudices and biases" ("Renewing Historical Criticism," *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000, 145-71).
- b. How did the Gospel survive so long in the world of modernity?

B. POST-MODERNITY

1. Phenomena

- a. The collapse of history (L. G. Perdue, *The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, OBT, 1994)
- b. Text without boundaries
- c. Deference of meaning (Jacques Derrida)
- d. Texts without authors, see "the death of the author is the Magna Carta of creative interpretation." (Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998, 89).
- e. Hermeneutic of suspicion

2. Image: playground

3. Conclusions

- a. Individualistic
- b. Celebration of subjectivity
- c. Methodological suspicion
- d. Open reading of (biblical) texts
- e. Theological bias against the claims of the exclusivity and uniqueness of the Gospel and of Jesus Christ
- f. Dependency on one absolute truth: everything is relative

4. Question: Is there any meaning to life, the faith, and the church?

C. POST-CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICALISM (see *Reclaiming the Center*)

1. Major players

- a. Stanley Grenz (*Revisioning Evangelical Theology*, 1983) and with John Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*, 2001
 - (1) The Gospel is spirituality, not creed or propositions

- (2) The Gospel is a reflection of the believing communities
- (3) The Gospel is mediated by the Spirit who is not restricted to our thoughtforms, our cultural context, or the text of Scripture
- (4) The Gospel is the accumulative reflection of the believing community (not the theologians or Bible scholars)

b. Bryan McLaren (*A New Kind of Christian*, 2001)

- (1) The Gospel is much more than propositions, abstractions, and universals
- (2) The Gospel is the search for mere Christianity
- (3) Christ is the center of the Gospel
- (4) The Gospel is the story of the faith of Christian communities over the centuries and is a resource for faith
- (5) The Gospel transforms people by the power of the Spirit

2. Image: communal reflection

3. Conclusions

- a. Anti-foundational
- b. Attempt at integrating postmodern concerns
- c. Relative importance given to context over text
- d. Relative importance given to community than to Christian verities**

4. Question: Can the Emerging Church fly "in the theological fog"? (see Millard J. Erickson, "On Flying in the Theological Fog," *Reclaiming the Center*, 324-49).

D. THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH (see Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 1995; *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 2004)

1. THE CULTURAL CHURCH -- David Neff, "No one should be an accidental evangelical -- or a merely cultural one. Unfortunately few evangelicals can actually articulate the gospel. They can lead people to Christ and help them pray the sinner's prayer, but when it comes to setting forth just how Jesus saves, most of us flounder." ("A Call to Christian Unity." *CT*, June 14, 1999, 49)

a. Phenomena

- (1) Communal orientation: Vox populi
- (2) Political orientation: Realpolitik
- (3) Patriotic orientation: Civic religion
- (4) Born again
- (5) Family orientation:
 - (a) Family values
 - (b) Pro-life
- (6) Driven by agenda, theology, and ideology
- (7) Narrow in focus, local expression, anti-intellectual, opposed to diverse expressions
- (8) Legalistic
- (9) Schismatic

b. Images:

- (1) A blimp
- (2) Freedom fighter
- (3) TV "show"
- (4) a political caucus

c. Conclusions

- (1) Individualistic and communal
- (2) Objectivity in doctrine and loyalty to communal goals
- (3) Methodological equivocation
- (4) Surface (cultural) reading of texts
- (5) Theological openness to relativity and multiple perspectives that do not conflict with the communal values
- (6) Values are defined by the community, including cultural values

d. Question: How long can evangelicalism remain afloat?

2. THE GOSPEL (EVANGELICAL, REFORMATIONAL) CHURCH

a. J. I. Packer (*Evangelical Anglican Identity Problem*, 1978)

- (1) Claims
 - (a) Practical Christianity
 - (b) Pure Christianity
 - (c) Unitive Christianity
 - (d) Rational Christianity
- (2) Convictions
 - (a) Supremacy of Scripture
 - (b) Majesty of Jesus Christ
 - (c) Lordship of the Holy Spirit
 - (d) Necessity of conversion
 - (e) Priority of evangelism
 - (f) Importance of Christian fellowship (church)

b. John Stott: the Trinity (*Evangelical Truth*, 1999)

- (1) The revelation of God
- (2) The cross of Christ
- (3) The ministry of the Holy Spirit

c. See C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

E. NEW WINDOWS: A TIME FOR REDEFINITION

1. OUR AGE

- a. Post-modernity
- b. Multi-culturalism
- c. A long history of marginalization and racism

2. OUR RECENT PAST: FUNDAMENTALISM AND BIBLICISM

a. FUNDAMENTALISM AND THE WORLD OR THE WORLD OF

FUNDAMENTALISM (see J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God???*)

- (1) Anti-intellectual: what about our minds?
- (2) Narrow view of creation: what about general revelation?
- (3) Narrow view of history: what about believers before and after Christ?
- (4) Schismatic: separatistic, cliquish, clannish, tribal. What about believers in other camps?
- (5) Waspish; what about ethnic diversity?

- (6) Discipling the nations: what about the disciplines?
- (7) Cultural Christianity: what about the Church of Christ universal?
- (8) Image: Colonialism

b. THE BIBLE IN THE HANDS OF FUNDAMENTALISM

- (1) Unbiblical warrants (age of the earth)
- (2) Divine sovereignty that approaches Islam's view of Allah (see J. Ellul, *The Subversion of the Gospel*)
- (3) Existential, spiritual and mystical application of God's Word, with little or no interpretation
- (4) Confidence and triumphalism in understanding the signs of the times, but pessimism toward the present moment
- (5) Image: Legalism (the sword)

II. THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST (from "The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration")

Preamble: "The Gospel of Jesus Christ is news, good news: the best and most important news that any human being ever hears. This Gospel declares the only way to know God in peace, love, and joy is through the reconciling death of Jesus Christ the risen Lord."

- A. The Gospel as the key to Scripture -- "This Gospel is the central message of the Holy Scriptures, and is the true key to understanding them."
- B. The Gospel and the Trinity -- "This Gospel identifies Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, as the Son of God and God the Son, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, whose incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension fulfilled the Father's saving will. His death for sins and his resurrection from the dead were promised beforehand by the prophets and attested by eyewitnesses. In God's own time and in God's own way, Jesus Christ shall return as glorious Lord and Judge of all (1 Thess. 4:13-18; Matt. 25:31-32). He is now giving the Holy Spirit from the Father to all those who are truly his. The three Persons of the Trinity thus combine in the work of saving sinners."
- C. The Gospel and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ -- "This Gospel sets forth Jesus Christ as the living Savior, Master, Life, and Hope of all who put their trust in him. It tells us that the eternal destiny of all people depends on whether they are savingly related to Jesus Christ."
- D. The uniqueness of the Gospel -- This Gospel is the only Gospel: there is no other; and to change its substance is to pervert and indeed destroy it."
- E. The profundity of the Gospel -- "This Gospel is so simple that small children can understand it, and it is so profound that studies by the wisest theologians will never exhaust its riches."
- F. The Gospel, Scripture, and the Rule of Faith -- "This Gospel of Jesus Christ which God sets forth in the infallible Scriptures combines Jesus' own declaration of the present reality of the kingdom of God with the apostles' account of the person, place, and work of Christ, and how sinful humans benefit from it. The Patristic Rule of Faith, the historic creeds, the Reformation confessions, and the doctrinal bases of later evangelical bodies all witness to the substance of this biblical message."
- G. The unity of the children of God
 - 1. United in a common commitment to the Gospel -- "All Christians are called to unity in love and unity in truth. As evangelicals who derive our very name from the Gospel, we celebrate this great good news of God's saving work in Jesus Christ as the true bond of Christian unity, whether among organized churches and denominations or in the many transdenominational co operative enterprises of Christians together."

2. United in God's family -- "The Bible declares that all who truly trust in Christ and his Gospel are sons and daughters of God through grace, and hence are our brothers and sisters in Christ. All who are justified experience reconciliation with the Father, full remission of sins, transition from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, the reality of being a new creature in Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. They enjoy access to the Father with all the peace and joy that this brings."
3. United in worship -- "The Gospel requires of all believers worship, which means constant praise and giving of thanks to God, submission to all that he has revealed in his written word, prayerful dependence on him, and vigilance lest his truth be even inadvertently compromised or obscured."
4. United in witness -- "To share the joy and hope of this Gospel is a supreme privilege. It is also an abiding obligation, for the Great Commission of Jesus Christ still stands: proclaim the Gospel everywhere, he said, teaching, baptizing, and making disciples. By embracing the following declaration we affirm our commitment to this task, and with it our allegiance to Christ himself, to the Gospel itself, and to each other as fellow evangelical believers."

III. THE CENTRALITY OF THE GOSPEL (*This we believe: The Good News of Jesus Christ for the World*, ed. John N. Akers, John H. Armstrong, and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000))

A. BASIC CHRISTIANITY (SEE John Stott, *Basic Christianity and Evangelical Truth*)

B. TRINITARIAN

1. A THEOCENTRIC GOSPEL

2. A SIMPLE AND A COMPLEX GOSPEL

- a. A SIMPLE GOSPEL -- Heb 1:1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

(1) God is one:

- (a) One creator
- (b) One redeemer

(2) God has spoken

(3) God has one plan and one people

(4) Centrality of Jesus Christ

(5) One meta-narrative: creation - fall - redemption

- (a) All humans reflect God's image
- (b) All humans have sinned
- (c) All humans need redemption

b. THE COMPLEX GOSPEL

(1) GOD

- (a) Three persons in the Trinity
- (b) The relationship between heaven and earth

(2) GOD HAS SPOKEN IN MANY WAYS AND IN DIVERSE TIMES

- (a) Creation, alienation, and redemption
- (b) General and special revelation
- (c) Old and New Testament; Law and Gospel
 - i) Moses, the prophets, and the sages
 - ii) Jesus and the apostles

(3) THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

(4) JESUS CHRIST AND PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS

(5) THE DISTANCE AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE META-NARRATIVE:
THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(6) HUMANS ARE WITNESSES TO THE GOSPEL IN THEIR PECULIAR TIME
AND SPACE

C. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CONSIDERATIONS

1. PRIMARY

a. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL

- (1) Scripture and the knowledge of God
- (2) The Cross of Jesus Christ: the incarnation, resurrection, ascension, and present ministry
- (3) The ministry of the Holy Spirit
- (4) Christian community and biblical ecumenicity and unity

b. PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION AND INTEGRITY (a lifestyle of wisdom)

2. SECONDARY

a. INTERPRETATIVE DETAILS, such as Creation

b. VIEWS THAT KEEP CHRISTIANS FROM SEEING THEIR UNION IN JESUS CHRIST, such as elements of discontinuity between Old and New

c. PERSPECTIVES THAT GIVE RISE TO HOPE (ESCHATOLOGY), such as pre-, a- or post-millennialism; pre-, mid- or post-tribulationalism

D. ASPECT OF THE GOSPEL FOR CONSIDERATION

1. THE GOSPEL AND THE CREATOR

2. THE GOSPEL AND THE TWO TESTAMENTS

3. THE GOSPEL AND HOPE

FOR FURTHER READING:

Thomas C. Oden, *After Modernity -- What?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.

David W. Schenk and Linford Stutzman, *Practicing Truth: Confident Witness in a pluralistic World* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1999).

LECTURE II: CENTERING THE GOSPEL: PART I -- THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH
AND
HER CONFESSION THAT GOD IS THE CREATOR

The meta-narrative of Scripture opens on a vista of God as the Creator. At issue are not the contested claims of evolution, but of one's starting point. The basic belief in the existence of a gracious Creator opens up a perspective on God, the world, and human existence. When Evangelicals are united in their confession in God as Creator, they reaffirm the Gospel.

The heart of the Gospel is that **our holy, loving Creator, confronted with human hostility and rebellion**, has chosen in his own freedom and faithfulness to become our holy, loving Redeemer and Restorer. The Father has sent the Son to be **the Savior of the world** (1 John 4:14): it is through his one and only Son that God's one and only plan of salvation is implemented. So Peter announced: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). And Christ himself taught: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Through the Gospel we learn that **we human beings**, who were made for fellowship with God, are by nature—that is, "in Adam" (1 Cor. 15:22)—dead in sin, **unresponsive to and separated from our Maker**. We are constantly twisting his truth, breaking his law, belittling his goals and standards, and offending his holiness by our unholiness, so that we truly are "without hope and without God in the world" (Rom. 1:18-32, 3:9-20; Eph. 2:1-3, 12). Yet God in grace took the initiative to reconcile us to himself through the sinless life and vicarious death of his beloved Son (Eph. 2:4-10; Rom. 3:21-24). The Father sent the Son to free us from the dominion of sin and Satan, and **to make us God's children and friends**. Jesus paid our penalty in our place on his cross, satisfying the retributive demands of divine justice by shedding his blood in sacrifice and so making possible justification for all who trust in him (Rom. 3:25-26). The Bible describes this mighty substitutionary transaction as the achieving of ransom, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, and conquest of evil powers (Matt. 20:28; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 3:23-25; John 12:31; Col. 2:15). It secures for us a restored relationship with God that brings pardon and peace, acceptance and access, and adoption into God's family (Col. 1:20, 2:13-14; Rom. 5:1-2; Gal. 4:4-7; 1 Pet. 3:18). The faith in God and in Christ to which the Gospel calls us is a trustful outgoing of our hearts to lay hold of these promised and proffered benefits. This Gospel further proclaims the bodily resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus as evidence of the efficacy of his once-for-all sacrifice for us, of the reality of his present personal ministry to us, and of the certainty of his future return to glorify us (1 Cor. 15; Heb. 1:1-4, 2:1-18, 4:14-16, 7:1-10:25). In the life of faith as the Gospel presents it, believers are united with their risen Lord, communing with him, and looking to him in repentance and hope for empowering through the Holy Spirit, so that henceforth they may not sin but serve him truly.

Unity in the Gospel. Christians are commanded to love each other despite differences of race, gender, privilege, and social, political, and economic background (John 13:34-35; Gal. 3:28-29), and to be of one mind wherever possible (John 17:20-21; Phil. 2:2; Rom. 14:1-15:13). We know that divisions among Christians hinder our witness in the world, and we desire greater mutual understanding and truth-speaking in love. We know too that as trustees of God's revealed truth we cannot embrace any form of doctrinal indifferentism, or relativism, or pluralism by which God's truth is sacrificed for a false peace. Doctrinal disagreements call for debate. Dialogue for mutual understanding and, if possible, narrowing of the differences is valuable, doubly so when the avowed goal is unity in primary things, with liberty in secondary things, and charity in all things. In the foregoing paragraphs, an attempt has been made to state what is primary and essential in the Gospel as evangelicals understand it. Useful dialogue, however, requires not only charity in our attitudes, but also clarity in our utterances. Our extended analysis of justification by faith alone through Christ alone reflects our belief that Gospel truth is of crucial importance and is not always well understood and correctly affirmed. For added clarity, out of love for God's truth and Christ's church, we now cast the key points of what has been said into specific affirmations and denials regarding the Gospel and our unity in it and in Christ.

2. We affirm that the Gospel is the saving power of God in that the Gospel effects salvation to everyone who believes, without distinction (Rom. 1:16). This efficacy of the Gospel is by the power of God himself (1 Cor. 1:18). We deny that the power of the Gospel rests in the eloquence of the preacher, the technique of the evangelist, or the persuasion of rational argument (1 Cor. 1:21; 2:1-5).

3. We affirm that the Gospel diagnoses the universal human condition as one of sinful rebellion against God, which, if unchanged, will lead each person to eternal loss under God's condemnation. We deny any rejection of the fallenness of human nature or any assertion of the natural goodness, or divinity, of the human race.

4. We affirm that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation, the only mediator between God and humanity (John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5). We deny that anyone is saved in any other way than by Jesus Christ and his Gospel. The Bible offers no hope that sincere worshipers of other religions will be saved without personal faith in Jesus Christ.

5. We affirm that the church is commanded by God and is therefore under divine obligation to preach the Gospel to every living person (Luke 24:47; Matt. 28:18-19). We deny that any particular class or group of persons, whatever their ethnic or cultural identity, may be ignored or passed over in the preaching of the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:19-22). God purposes a global church made up from people of every tribe, language, and nation (Rev. 7:9). (From "The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration")

I. CREATOR AND CREATION (James Houston, *I believe in the Creator*)

A. FOCUS ON CREATION

1. When?
2. How long ago?
3. Process?
4. Meaning of "day"

B. FOCUS ON THE CREATOR

1. Creator of all
 - a. Unity
 - b. Diversity
2. Pattern: work and rest
3. Image: creation as God's palace or temple in space
4. Place of humans in the cosmos

II. META-NARRATIVE: CREATION-FALL-REDEMPTION

A. CREATION, CHAOS, AND REDEMPTION: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE (Ps 104) (SEE John Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*)

1. CONTEXT OF PRAISE (FRAMEWORK)

- a. Yahweh's kingship -- 104:1 Praise the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty.
- b. Yahweh's wisdom -- 104:24 How many are your works, O LORD! **In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.**
- c. Yahweh's glory -- 104:31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD

rejoice in his works.

- d. Yahweh's justice (commitment to order) -- 104:33 I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. 104:34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD. ... 104:35b Praise the LORD, O my soul.

2. COSMOS (in history, in present, and in future)

- a. Heaven -- 104:2 He wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent 104:3 and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind.
- b. The earth -- 104:4 He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants. 104:5 He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.
- c. Water -- 104:6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.
- (1) Limitations -- 104:7 But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; 104:8 they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. 104:9 You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth.
- (2) In the service of Yahweh -- 104:10 He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. ... 104:13 He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work.

d. Vegetation and creatures

- (a) Wild creatures -- 104:11 They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. ... 104:18 The high mountains belong to the wild goats; the crags are a refuge for the coney.
- (b) Birds -- 104:12 The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. ... 104:17 There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the pine trees.
- (c) Cattle -- 104:14 He makes grass grow for the cattle,
- (d) Humans -- and plants for man to cultivate--bringing forth food from the earth:
104:15 wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.
- i) Trees -- 104:16 The trees of the LORD are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

e. Heaven

- (1) Seasons -- 104:19a The moon marks off the seasons,
- (2) Day and night -- 104:19b and the sun knows when to go down. 104:20 You bring darkness, it becomes night,
- (3) Animals 104:20a and all the beasts of the forest prowl. 104:21 The lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God. 104:22 The sun rises, and they steal away; they return and lie down in their dens.
- (4) Humans -- 104:23 Then man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening.

- f. Water -- 104:25 There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number--living things both large and small. 104:26 There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.

3. CHAOS AND REDEMPTION

- a. Past -- 104:7 But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; 104:8 they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. 104:9 You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth.
- b. Present -- 104:27 These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. 104:28 When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. 104:29 When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. 104:30 When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.
- c. Future -- 104:32 he who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke. ... 104:35 But may sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

4. SEE PS 104-106: NARRATIVE OF CREATION, REDEMPTION, ISRAEL'S REBELLIOUSNESS, AND EXILE

B. CREATION AND BLESSING

1. FRAMEWORK: IN PRAISE OF YAHWEH'S GLORY -- 115:1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness. ... 115:17 It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to silence; 115:18 it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore. Praise the LORD.

2. THE GODS OF THE NATIONS AND THE GOD OF ISRAEL (polemical)

- a. THE TRUST OF THE NATIONS -- 115:2 Why do the nations say, "Where is their God?" ... 115:4 But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. 115:5 They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; 115:6 they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; 115:7 they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. 115:8 Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.
- b. THE TRUST OF "ISRAEL" ("those who fear the Lord")
- (1) The freedom of the Creator -- 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.
 - (2) The help of "Israel" -- 115:9 O house of Israel, trust in the LORD -- he is their help and shield. 115:10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD -- he is their help and shield. 115:11 **You who fear him**, trust in the LORD -- he is their help and shield.
 - (3) The Sustainer of "Israel" -- 115:12 The LORD remembers us and will bless us: He will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron, 115:13 he will bless **those who fear the LORD -- small and great alike**. 115:14 May the LORD make you increase, both you and your children.
- c. THE CREATOR, THE SUSTAINER OF "ISRAEL," AND HUMANITY -- 115:15 May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. 115:16 The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to **man**.

C. CREATION AND REDEMPTION

1. PRAISE -- 135:1 Praise the LORD. Praise the name of the LORD; praise him, you servants of the LORD, 135:2 you who minister in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God. 135:3 Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant.

2. REASONS FOR PRAISE

a. ELECTION -- 135:4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his treasured possession.

b. YAHWEH'S EXCELLENCE OVER THE GODS OF THE NATIONS -- 135:5 I know that the LORD is great, that our Lord is greater than all gods. ... 135:15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. 135:16 They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; 135:17 they have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths. 135:18 Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.

(1) His freedom in creation -- 135:6 The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths. 135:7 He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

(2) His power in redemptive history

(a) Memories -- 135:8 He struck down the firstborn of Egypt, the firstborn of men and animals. 135:9 He sent his signs and wonders into your midst, O Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants. His power in 135:10 He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings -- 135:11 Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan and all the kings of Canaan -- 135:12 and he gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to his people Israel.

(b) Expectations -- 135:14 For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants.

(3) His enduring name -- 135:13 Your name, O LORD, endures forever, your renown, O LORD, through all generations.

3. PRAISE -- 135:19 O house of Israel, praise the LORD; O house of Aaron, praise the LORD; 135:20 O house of Levi, praise the LORD; you **who fear him**, praise the LORD. 135:21 Praise be to the LORD from Zion, to him who dwells in Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.

D. CREATION AND YAHWEH'S KINGDOM -- 89:5 The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones. 89:6 For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings? 89:7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him. 89:8 O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you. 89:9 You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them. 89:10 You crushed Rahab like one of the slain; with your strong arm you scattered your enemies. 89:11 The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it. 89:12 You created the north and the south; Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name. 89:13 Your arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted. 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.

1. In praise of the Creator-King

2. Yahweh's excellence, incomparability, and wisdom

a. Yahweh's excellence

b. Yahweh's incomparability

c. Yahweh's wisdom and power

(1) Yahweh's wisdom: righteousness and justice; love and faithfulness

(2) Yahweh's power: arm

d. Yahweh's kingdom

(1) Realm: creation, including the sea

(2) Past and present

E. CREATION AND WISDOM -- Prov 3:19 By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; 3:20 by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew. ... Prov 8:12 "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. 8:13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Prov 8:14 Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and power. 8:15 By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; 8:16 by me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth. 8:17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. 8:18 With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. 8:19 My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. 8:20 I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, 8:21 bestowing wealth on those who love me and making their treasuries full. 8:22 "The LORD brought me forth (possessed me) as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; 8:23 I was appointed (fashioned) from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. 8:24 When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water; 8:25 before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, 8:26 before he made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world. 8:27 I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, 8:28 when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, 8:29 when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. 8:30 Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, 8:31 rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind. 8:32 "Now then, my sons, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways.

1. The order of creation reflects Yahweh's wisdom

2. Royal qualities

a. Wisdom

b. Power

3. Wisdom personified

III. THE BIBLICAL TEACHING ON CREATION IS SET WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE DOCTRINE OF GOD, THE CREATOR

A. DOXOLOGY: YAHWEH'S GLORY, NAME, AND PRAISE

1. as Creator-King

a. Realm

- (1) Heaven and earth
- (2) Past and present

b. Nature of God

- (1) Freedom
- (2) Wisdom and power
- (3) Excellence
- (4) Qualities, virtues: love, faithfulness, justice, righteousness

c. Connections with redemption

- (1) Cosmos and chaos
- (2) Cosmos and evildoers
- (3) Eschatological dimension
 - (a) End of evil
 - (b) Vindication (redemption) of the righteous)

2. Redeemer

- a. History of redemption
- b. Doctrine of election
- c. Present and future blessing and sustenance
- d. Present and future vindication

B. COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE IN YAHWEH

1. Comfort

- a. General blessings
 - (1) Provisions
 - (2) Rule
- b. Special blessings (see Redemption above)

2. Confidence

- a. Loyalty to Yahweh
- b. Praise to Yahweh
- c. Trust in Yahweh
- d. Fear of Yahweh

C. POLEMICS: YAHWEH AND OTHER FAITHS

1. Creator-King-Redeemer
2. Yahweh's excellence and incomparability
3. Yahweh's wisdom

D. PURSUIT OF AND GROWTH IN WISDOM: critical reality (see LECTURE III: THE TWO TESTAMENTS)

1. Exploration (observation) of different aspects of God's revelation in Scripture and in nature
2. Exploration (observation) of cosmos and chaos, good and evil
3. Exploration (observation) of different belief systems (faith and other faiths)
 - a. Two basic belief systems: Yahweh and other gods
 - b. Two ways of life: wisdom and folly

- c. Two perspectives: Creator or creation/creature
- 4. Exploration (observation) of a lifestyle that is pleasing to God and to humans
 - a. The fear of Yahweh
 - b. The pursuit of good
 - c. The search for order
 - d. The rejection of evil

E. ESCHATOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK (PATTERNS OF HOPE, SEE LECTURE IV = SERMON)

- 1. A New Order and a new humanity
- 2. The end of evil, other faiths, and folly
- 3. The blessing and vindication of the righteous

LECTURE III

CENTERING THE GOSPEL: PART II

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH AND THE TWO TESTAMENTS

Evangelicals are divided on the relationship between the two testaments. The practical demise of the Old Testament has reduced the Gospel to a Jesus' lordship debate, to a search for the historical Jesus, to a focus on the Israel-Church question, to a loss of the purpose and mission of the church, and to an individualistic experience of the Gospel. When Evangelicals are coming together to study the multi-faceted relationships between the two testaments, they reaffirm the Gospel.

This Gospel is the central message of the Holy Scriptures, and is the true key to understanding them. This Gospel identifies Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, as the Son of God and God the Son, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, whose incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension fulfilled the Father's saving will. His death for sins and his resurrection from the dead were promised beforehand by the prophets and attested by eyewitnesses. ...

6. We affirm that faith in Jesus Christ as the divine Word (or Logos, John 1:1), the second Person of the Trinity, co-eternal and co-essential with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Heb. 1:3), is foundational to faith in the Gospel. We deny that any view of Jesus Christ which reduces or rejects his full deity is Gospel faith or will avail to salvation.

7. We affirm that Jesus Christ is God incarnate (John 1:14). The virgin-born descendant of David (Rom. 1:3), he had a true human nature, was subject to the Law of God (Gal. 4:5), and was like us at all points, except without sin (Heb. 2:17, 7:26-28). We affirm that faith in the true humanity of Christ is essential to faith in the Gospel. We deny that anyone who rejects the humanity of Christ, his incarnation, or his sinlessness, or who maintains that these truths are not essential to the Gospel, will be saved (1 John 4:2-3).

8. We affirm that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, propitiating the Father by paying for our sins and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God's eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel. We deny that any view of the Atonement that rejects the substitutionary satisfaction of divine justice, accomplished vicariously for believers, is compatible with the teaching of the Gospel.

9. We affirm that Christ's saving work included both his life and his death on our behalf (Gal. 3:13). We declare that faith in the perfect obedience of Christ by which he fulfilled all the demands of the Law of God in our behalf is essential to the Gospel. We deny that our salvation was achieved merely or exclusively by the death of Christ without reference to his life of perfect righteousness.

10. We affirm that the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead is essential to the biblical Gospel (1 Cor. 15:14). We deny the validity of any so-called gospel that denies the historical reality of the bodily resurrection of Christ.

11. We affirm that the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone is essential to the Gospel (Rom. 3:28; 4:5; Gal. 2:16). We deny that any person can believe the biblical Gospel and at the same time reject the apostolic teaching of justification by faith alone in Christ alone. We also deny that there is more than one true Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).

12. We affirm that the doctrine of the imputation (reckoning or counting) both of our sins to Christ and of his righteousness to us, whereby our sins are fully forgiven and we are fully accepted, is essential to the biblical Gospel (2 Cor. 5:19-21). We deny that we are justified by the righteousness of Christ infused into us or by any righteousness that is thought to inhere within us.

13. We affirm that the righteousness of Christ by which we are justified is properly his own,

which he achieved apart from us, in and by his perfect obedience. This righteousness is counted, reckoned, or imputed to us by the forensic (that is, legal) declaration of God, as the sole ground of our justification. We deny that any works we perform at any stage of our existence add to the merit of Christ or earn for us any merit that contributes in any way to the ground of our justification (Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

14. We affirm that, while all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and are in the process of being made holy and conformed to the image of Christ, those consequences of justification are not its ground. God declares us just, remits our sins, and adopts us as his children, by his grace alone, and through faith alone, because of Christ alone, while we are still sinners (Rom. 4:5). We deny that believers must be inherently righteous by virtue of their cooperation with God's life-transforming grace before God will declare them justified in Christ. We are justified while we are still sinners.

15. We affirm that saving faith results in sanctification, the transformation of life in growing conformity to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification means ongoing repentance, a life of turning from sin to serve Jesus Christ in grateful reliance on him as one's Lord and Master (Gal. 5:22-25; Rom. 8:4, 13-14). We reject any view of justification which divorces it from our sanctifying union with Christ and our increasing conformity to his image through prayer, repentance, cross-bearing, and life in the Spirit.

16. We affirm that saving faith includes mental assent to the content of the Gospel, acknowledgment of our own sin and need, and personal trust and reliance upon Christ and his work. We deny that saving faith includes only mental acceptance of the Gospel, and that justification is secured by a mere outward profession of faith. We further deny that any element of saving faith is a meritorious work or earns salvation for us.

17. We affirm that, although true doctrine is vital for spiritual health and well-being, we are not saved by doctrine. Doctrine is necessary to inform us how we may be saved by Christ, but it is Christ who saves. We deny that the doctrines of the Gospel can be rejected without harm. Denial of the Gospel brings spiritual ruin and exposes us to God's judgment.

18. We affirm that Jesus Christ commands his followers to proclaim the Gospel to all living persons, evangelizing everyone everywhere, and discipling believers within the fellowship of the church. A full and faithful witness to Christ includes the witness of personal testimony, godly living, and acts of mercy and charity to our neighbor, without which the preaching of the Gospel appears barren. We deny that the witness of personal testimony, godly living, and acts of mercy and charity to our neighbors constitutes evangelism apart from the proclamation of the Gospel.

Our Commitment. As evangelicals united in the Gospel, we promise to watch over and care for one another, to pray for and forgive one another, and to reach out in love and truth to God's people everywhere, for we are one family, one in the Holy Spirit, and one in Christ. Centuries ago it was truly said that in things necessary there must be unity, in things less than necessary there must be liberty, and in all things there must be charity. We see all these Gospel truths as necessary. Now to God, the Author of the truth and grace of this Gospel, through Jesus Christ, its subject and our Lord, be praise and glory forever and ever. Amen (from "The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration")

I. THE GOSPEL AND THE HUMAN CONDITION (Gen 1-11)

A. CREATION

1. Distinctiveness of the human race
2. Unity of the human race

B. FALL, TOTAL DEPRAVITY, AND HUMAN REBELLIOUSNESS

1. From exaltation to alienation

- a. Exaltation -- Ps 8:4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? 8:5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings {5 Or < than God> } and crowned him with glory and honor. 8:6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet. See Gen 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."
- b. Alienation -- Ps 144:3 O LORD, what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him? 144:4 Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.

2. The story of human rebelliousness

- a. Gen 3: human rebelliousness (Adam and Eve)
- b. Gen 4: transgenerational rebelliousness (Cain)
- c. Gen 6: human corruption (Gen 6)
- d. Gen 8: human nature after the flood -- Gen 8:21 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."
- e. Gen 11: human revolution -- Gen 11:3 They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. 11:4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

C. HUMAN ALIENATION

1. Nature

- a. Multi-dimensional, fracturing all meaningful relationships
- b. Restlessness, cf. Job 3:26 "I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil."
- c. Uncertainty: everything is ephemeral, unreliable, elusive (Ecclesiastes)
- d. Pain, anxiety, death

2. Human ingenuity in conquering alienation: FOLLY

- a. Power
- b. Competitiveness
- c. Isolation
- d. Death

II. THE GOSPEL AND FATHER ABRAHAM (Gen 12-24)

A. FATHER ABRAHAM

1. God's call, presence, and promises

- a. God's call
- b. God's presence (covenant) -- Gen 17:7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.
- c. God's promises
 - (1) God's provision
 - (a) Progeny
 - (b) Provision
 - i) Blessing
 - ii) Land and earth
 - (2) God's protection
 - (3) God's inclusion of the clans of the earth

2. Abraham's faith

- (1) Abraham as a paradigm: justification by faith -- Rom 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? 4:2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about -- but not before God. 4:3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (see "Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness," Gen 15:6)
- (2) The nature of Abraham's faith -- Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. Heb 11:9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11:11 By faith Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. 11:12 And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.
- (3) The faith of Abraham is the paradigm
 - (a) for Israel (Pentateuch)
 - (b) for everybody -- Rom 4:23 The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, 4:24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. and for all people, regardless of ethnicity
 - i) Exclusion of Jews -- Matt 3:9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. (Luk 3:8). See also Luk 13:25 Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' "But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' 13:26 "Then you will say, 'We

ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' 13:27 "But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!' 13:28 "There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. 13:29 People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. 13:30 Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

- ii) Embrace of Gentiles -- Matt 8:8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ... 8:10 When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 8:12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

B. The GOSPEL

1. BACKDROP OF THE UNIVERSAL HUMAN CONDITION

- a. The world of human alienation (Gen 3-11; cf. Rom 1)
- b. The world of Israel's alienation (OT; cf. Rom 2-3)
- c. Renewal of the Abrahamic covenant through Jesus Christ -- Gal 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." (see Deut 21:23) 3:14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. 3:15 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. 3:16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," (see Gen 12:7; 13:15; 24:7) meaning one person, who is Christ. 3:17 What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. 3:18 For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. 3:19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.
 - (1) Inclusion of sinners -- Luk 19:8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." 19:9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."
 - (2) Exclusion of self-righteous -- John 8:39 "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would {39 Some early manuscripts < "If you are Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then> } do the things Abraham did. 8:40 As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. 8:41 You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here.

I have not come on my own; but he sent me. 8:43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

2. FAITH, PROMISE, AND INCLUSION

a. FAITH AND INCLUSION -- Gal 3:6 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (see Gen. 15:6) 3:7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. 3:8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." (see Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18) 3:9 So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."

(1) Gentiles -- Rom 4:9 Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. 4:10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.

(2) Jews -- 4:12 And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

b. FAITH AND THE PROMISE

(1) Extent of the promise -- 4:13 It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

(2) Faith and promise -- Rom 4:16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace

(3) The promise belongs to all of Abraham's children -- 4:16b and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 4:17 As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." (see Gen 17:5) He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed -- the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

(4) Children of the promise -- Rom 9:6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 9:7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." (see Gen 21:12) 9:8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. 9:9 For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son." (see Gen 18:10, 14)

(5) Unity of the children of Abraham -- Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. 4:1 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate.

- (6) Freedom of the children of Abraham -- Gal 4:22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 4:23 His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. 4:24 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. 4:25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. 4:26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. 4:27 For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband." {27 Isaiah 54:1}

III. THE GOSPEL AND MOSES

A. MOSES

1. The Israel of faith

- a. Internalization of the law -- Deut 30:14 No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.
- b. Regeneration -- Deut 30:6 The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.
- c. Life in Yahweh alone -- Deut 30:20 and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

2. The revelation of God to Moses

3. Paul's summary -- Rom 9:4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 9:5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. 9:6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 9:7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." {7 Gen. 21:12} 9:8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.

- B. THE GOSPEL -- Heb 4:2 For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

C. METAPHORS

1. CREATOR

2. KING

3. FATHER

4. HUSBAND/BRIDEGROOM (Hosea)

LECTURE IV

CENTERING THE GOSPEL: PART III

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH AND HOPE

The reduction of the Gospel has also taken away the rich perspectives offered by the Gospel. Both testaments witness to the pattern of suffering (discipline), perseverance, character, and hope. A renewed embrace of the Gospel encourages the acceptance of reality, tensions (paradoxes), and of a perspective that is transformed by a vision of the reality that the Lord has prepared for us when he renews creation and places a new community within the newly created order. When Evangelicals are living with hope, they reaffirm the Gospel.

Regrettably, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration" says little about the subject of hope.

TEXT -- Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 5:2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 5:3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 5:4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. Rom 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 5:7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 5:10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 5:11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

I. TRINITARIAN HOPE

A. PEACE WITH GOD

1. PEACE WITH GOD -- Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 5:10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 5:11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.
2. LOVE -- God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (v. 5). ... 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

B. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

1. MEANS OF RECONCILIATION -- Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
2. MEANS OF GRACE -- 5:2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.
3. LIFE THROUGH DEATH -- Rom 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 5:7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 5:10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

C. SPIRIT: ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE -- 5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because

God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. See Rom 8:6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

II. INDIVIDUAL IN COMMUNITY

A. THE WORK OF THE TRINITY IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF REDEMPTION

B. THE WORK OF THE TRINITY IN THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION TO THE NEW COMMUNITY: WE, US, OUR

III. HOPE

A. GLORY OF GOD -- Joy in the hope in the glory of God (5:2)

B. SUFFERING AND HOPE -- 5:3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 5:4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

C. SUFFERING AND GLORY -- Rom 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

1. THE NEW CREATION -- Rom 8:19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope Rom 8:21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. Rom 8:22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.
2. NEW CREATURES -- Rom 8:23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. Rom 8:24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?
3. Rom 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. Rom 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. Rom 8:27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.
4. Rom 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Rom 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Rom 8:30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. Rom 8:31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? Rom 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Rom 8:33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Rom 8:34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.
5. Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? Rom 8:36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." {36 Psalm 44:22} Rom 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Rom 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, {38 Or < nor heavenly rulers > } neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, Rom 8:39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.