

# Study Guide for *Systematic Theology*, Part Two, by Louis Berkhof

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Extra Reading for the course:  
"What is Man?"

ACADEMIC  
PACKET

RESOURCES FOR GROUPS  
USING THE ACADEMIC PACKETS



Read Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology, Part Two, The Doctrine of Man in Relation to God*, pages 196-332.

This reading is divided in three sections: "Man in his original state" (4 chapters), "Man in the state of sin" (5 chapters), and "Man in the covenant of grace" (5 chapters).

**MAN IN HIS ORIGINAL STATE, pages 196-238**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **Chapter 1**

1. How does Berkhof explain the differences between the narratives of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2?
2. How does the author interpret the use of the plural in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man..."?
3. Explain Berkhof's view of whether God used pre-existent material in creating man's body or soul.
4. As indicated in the creation story, what are the basic elements of man?
5. What special position of authority was given to man at creation?
6. Explain briefly the theory of naturalistic evolution of man.
7. Explain Berkhof's objections to the theory of evolution.
8. What is the Scripture testimony regarding the unity and origin of the human race?

#### **Chapter 2**

1. Describe the views of the early church regarding the dichotomic or trichotomic views of man. Which branch of the early church adhered more to the trichotomic view of man?
2. What is the origin of the tri-partite view of man?
3. According to Berkhof, what is the prevailing representation of the nature of man in Scripture?
4. In what sense does the Bible speak of man as a unity?
5. When a person sins, is it only the soul that sins?
6. Was the distinction between different parts of man made clear even in the Old Testament?
7. What does Genesis 2:7 teach us about man?

8. According to Berkhof, do the Scriptures use the terms "soul" and "spirit" interchangeably?
9. How does Berkhof interpret I Thessalonians 5:23, especially whether it teaches the trichotomic view of man?
10. Describe Berkhof's view of how the body and soul relate to each other.
11. Name some key thinkers that believed in the pre-existence of the soul.
12. With regard to the origin of the soul of man, what is the theory of "creationism"?
13. With regard to the origin of the soul of man, what is the theory of "traducianism"?
14. Mention those who tended to favor the theory of creationism, with regard to the origin of the soul.
15. What are some of the major objections to the theory of traducianism, with regard to the origin of the soul?
16. What are some of the major objections to the theory of creationism, with regard to the origin of the soul?
17. According to Berkhof, which view of the origin of the soul is supported by the Genesis account of the creation of Adam and Eve, in which the body was created first from the earth, then God created the soul directly?
18. Describe Berkhof's view of the origin of the soul.

### **Chapter 3**

1. What did the early Church Fathers teach about the meaning of the image of God? Did it include bodily traits?
2. Describe Luther's view of the meaning of the image of God in man.
3. Describe Calvin's view of the meaning of the image of God in man.
4. According to Berkhof, what aspects are included in the image of God in man?
5. After the Fall, did man totally lose all aspects of the image of God?
6. What did Calvin say about God's glory being reflected in man's body?
7. Briefly describe the view of each group of the meaning of the image of God in man.

The Reformed Churches

The Lutheran Church

The Roman Catholic Church

The Socinians

Pelagians, most Arminians, and Rationalists

8. Briefly describe the view of each group with respect to man's original moral condition.

The Protestant view

The Roman Catholic view

Rationalizing views

#### **Chapter 4**

1. In what historical confession did the concept of the covenant of works first find clear official recognition?
2. What main argument does Berkhof use to show that we should speak of a "covenant of works" with Adam and Eve?
3. What does Berkhof say about Christ in relation to the covenant of works?
4. Hosea 6:7 says, "But they like Adam have transgressed the \_\_\_\_\_."
5. What was the promise of the covenant of works?
6. As Adam and Eve were created, did they already possess the highest privileges in store for man?
7. What does the author say about the image of God in Adam and Eve being limited by the possibility of sinning? How could that limitation have been removed?
8. What was the condition of the covenant of works?
9. What was the penalty for disobeying the covenant of works?
10. What is the fundamental idea of death, according to Scripture?
11. According to Berkhof, what was the sacrament of the covenant of works?
12. According to Berkhof, is the covenant of works still in effect? Explain.
13. After the Fall, can anyone can keep the condition of perfect obedience in order to receive eternal life?

#### **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PERSONAL APPLICATION**

1. What is your view of the theory of evolution? Can it be harmonized with the biblical teaching about creation? Do you believe that man was created as an immediate act of God, or through a process of natural development? What is the practical importance of this issue?
2. How do you reconcile the apparent differences between the accounts in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2?
3. What is your view of the age of the earth? Is it millions or billions of years old? Or is it relatively young, just a few thousands of years?
4. What is your opinion regarding the elements of the human nature? Do you accept the dichotomy or trichotomy, or neither? Explain why. What is the practical importance of this debate? For example, how does it affect our view of psychology and counseling?

5. What is your view of the origin of the soul? What is the practical importance of this debate?
6. How would you summarize the meaning of the image of God in man? What aspects are most important to you? How does the fact that man is the image of God change the way you treat other people? Think of a homeless person, an unattractive person, a person from another culture or another race, someone who is different from you.
7. What are your personal convictions regarding the origin and transmission of sin? What do you think of the Pelagian view of sin? Of the Roman Catholic view of sin? What is the practical importance of this issue?

## **MAN IN THE STATE OF SIN, pages 239-287**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **Chapter 1**

1. Describe the view of the origin of sin of each group or person.
  - Gnosticism
  - Origen
  - The Latin Church Fathers
2. What are the three biblical points that Berkhof makes regarding the origin of sin?
3. Where did the tempter come from?
4. "Adam sinned not only as the father of the human race, but also as the \_\_\_\_\_ of all his descendants."
5. Be familiar with the contents of Romans 5:12.
6. Berkhof states, "As a result of the fall the father of the human race could only pass on a \_\_\_\_\_ human nature to his offspring."
7. Why was eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil sinful?
8. According to the author, what is the best explanation of why the tree was called the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil"?
9. Why does the author think that the tempter spoke to Eve and not Adam?
10. What were the various ways in which the tempter led Adam and Eve to sin?
11. Barth and Brunner regard the narrative of man's original state and of the fall as a \_\_\_\_\_.
12. What does Berkhof believe about the serpent in the Genesis narrative? Should it be interpreted figuratively?
13. What does Berkhof say about how temptation could find a point of contact in a holy person?
14. Many liberal theologians find the doctrine of the fall incompatible with the theory of \_\_\_\_\_.

15. What were the results of the first sin?

## **Chapter 2**

1. According to Berkhof, what do many Modernists now say about the doctrine of Rousseau respecting the inherent goodness of man?

2. Explain the philosophical theories of the origin of sin. Which is closest to the biblical view?

3. According to the author, not all evil is sin. What does he mean? What other kind of evil does he mention?

4. What does Berkhof mean when he says that sin has an "absolute character"?

5. Berkhof teaches that sin always has relation to God and \_\_\_\_\_.

6. What is the great central demand of the law?

7. "Sin includes both \_\_\_\_\_ and pollution."

8. How does the author define "guilt"?

9. How does the author define "pollution," when speaking of the meaning of sin?

10. Where does sin have its seat in a person?

11. What is the "heart," as the word is used in Scripture?

12. How does Berkhof define sin?

13. What is the fundamental proposition of Pelagius regarding sin?

14. How does Pelagius understand the meaning of sin?

15. According to Pelagius, man was not created in a state of positive holiness, but in a state of moral \_\_\_\_\_.

16. According to Pelagius, was man's sinful nature passed from Adam to all humanity?

17. According to Pelagius, in what moral state are children born?

18. What argument does Berkhof give against the position that man is only held responsible for what he is able to do?

19. What are the criticisms of Berkhof against the Pelagian view of sin?

20. What is the Roman Catholic view of sin?

## **Chapter 3**

1. Was the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin universally accepted among the early Apologists?

2. What was the Scholastics' view in general of the transmission of sin?
3. What was the Reformers' view in general of the transmission of sin?
4. Does the Bible teach that all men are sinners, deserve condemnation, and need redemption in Christ?
5. Describe each theory regarding the connection between Adam's sin and the sinfulness of the human race.

The realistic theory

The doctrine of the covenant of works

The theory of mediate imputation

#### **Chapter 4**

1. True or false? Many of the early Church Fathers clearly expressed the doctrine of original sin.
2. According to Berkhof, what are the two basic elements of original sin?
3. How does the author understand "total depravity"?
3. How does the author understand "total inability"?
4. According to Berkhof, in what sense does man still have "free will" after the fall?
5. According to the author, does Barth consider the Fall of man an event we can point to in history?
6. How does Berkhof answer the objection that the doctrine of total depravity would eliminate man's moral responsibility?
7. How does Berkhof answer the objection that the doctrine of total depravity tends to remove all motives for trying to be good?
8. What is "actual sin"?
9. What is a "mortal" sin, according to Roman Catholic teaching?
10. According to Roman Catholic teaching, forgiveness for mortal sins can be obtained only by \_\_\_\_\_.
11. According to the author, does the Bible make a distinction between different degrees of guilt for different kinds of sins?
12. According to Berkhof, what is the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?
13. What does the author say about those who fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin and worry about it, and desire the prayers of others for them?

## **Chapter 5**

1. What are "natural" penalties for sin?
2. What is the purpose of divine punishment for sin?
3. What is the difference between punishment and chastisement?
4. What kind of death was the penalty for sin in the Garden of Eden?
5. "There is a profound truth in the saying of Augustine that \_\_\_\_ is also the punishment of sin."
6. Are the sufferings of life, which are the result of the entrance of sin into the world, also included in the penalty of sin?

### **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PERSONAL APPLICATION**

1. What are your personal convictions regarding the origin and transmission of sin? What do you think of the Pelagian view of sin? Of the Roman Catholic view of sin? What is the practical importance of this issue?
2. How do you understand "total depravity" or "total inability"? How can man be responsible if these doctrines are true?
3. How do you understand the meaning of man's free will? How was it affected by the Fall?
4. How do you reconcile "free will" with God's sovereignty?

### **MAN IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE, pages 288-332**

#### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

##### **Chapter 1**

1. The Hebrew word for "covenant" is always \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The Hebrew word for "covenant" probably comes from a verb meaning \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The Greek word used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word for "covenant" is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What is a covenant?

##### **Chapter 2**

1. As Berkhof explains it, what is the "covenant of redemption" (as opposed to the "covenant of grace")?
2. In what sense was the covenant of redemption a covenant of works for Christ?



### Chapter 3

1. "In the covenant of works the keeping of the law is the way of life; in the covenant of grace, it is \_\_\_\_\_."
2. According to the author, with whom did God make the covenant of grace?
3. According to Reformed theologians, are the non-elect outside the covenant in every sense of the word? Explain.
4. What is the main promise of God in the covenant of grace, the promise that includes all other promises?
5. In the covenant of grace, what is man's response supposed to be in general?
6. Were the Old Testament believers saved in the same manner as the New Testament believers?
7. What is "Limbus Patrum" according to Roman Catholic theology?
8. In what sense is the covenant of grace "conditional"?
9. "Christ is represented in Scripture as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the covenant."

### Chapter 4

1. Some theologians make a distinction between the external side of the covenant and the internal side. Dr. Vos distinguishes between the covenant "as a purely \_\_\_\_\_ relationship and the covenant as a \_\_\_\_\_."
2. According to Berkhof, the children of believers enter the covenant as a legal relationship by birth. But does this mean necessarily that they will also come to have saving faith?
4. May unregenerate people belong to the covenant in the external legal sense?
5. Is it possible for a person who is in the covenant only in the legal sense to break it?
6. Does Berkhof teach that true believers may fall away and lose their salvation?

### Chapter 5

1. Scofield teaches that there are seven "dispensations" in the Scripture, and says that each dispensation may be regarded as a "new test of the natural man, and each ends in \_\_\_\_\_..."
2. How many "dispensations" or "administrations" of the covenant of grace does Berkhof prefer to distinguish?
3. List the Old Testament periods of the covenant of grace in their proper order, as Berkhof describes them.
  - 1)
  - 2)
  - 3)
  - 4)

4. What are the differences between the New Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace and the Old Testament dispensation?

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PERSONAL APPLICATION**

1. What is the practical importance to you of the concept of the covenant?

2. Think of the differences between the Old Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace and the New Testament dispensation. What are some of the most important differences to you personally? Explain why they are important to you.