

THE FORMATION AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

Taught by Ted Wood

Session: September 30, 2011

...all desires known and from you no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Okay, Bruce asked me to take one of the articles—the Anglican 39 articles of religion that he had talked about—and to teach on that. I thought I actually would do two parts, so this, actually, this subject is not of my choosing. I'm following what Bruce has asked me to do.

Bruce, back in August, was pretty emphatic about the need to be teaching what our churches say that they stand for, our stated belief. He said on August 19th, and this is from transcript, “Your inquirer’s class ought to read the 39 Articles.” He was talking about Christ Church. “If you’re a Presbyterian, it ought to be the Westminster Confession. If you’re a Baptist, it ought to be the London Confession. You ought to know these things because that’s what your being asked to submit because that’s what your leader represent theologically. That’s what they are supposed to represent. It is the responsibility of church members to hold church leadership responsible, and that means this—that you understand what they represent. What is their basis of power? It’s not their personality. It’s not their charisma. It’s not their position in society. It what they represent theologically. Do they represent the 39 Articles if they are Anglican? Do they represent the London Confession if they are Baptist. Do they represent the Westminster Confession if they are Presbyterian? A confession is the contents of biblical truth. It is a way helping us understand the magnificence of God’s inerrant and sufficient Word.”

When I heard Bruce teach on this, I was stunned. I was unexpected of that. And then he talked about the Bishop Rogers book, and then Bishop Rogers shows up the next Friday, which I think was providential. Wasn’t it?

Dr. Rogers: Undoubtedly.

{LAUGHTER} We’ve been dealing with a lot of this the last month or so, the importance of referencing back to our roots and where our beliefs come from. In the course of that, there are folks that have spoken to me about why we are studying, or asked to study, or think about, the confessions of our faith as versus simply and only study the Bible. That’s a really good question. In my worksheet here, I put lots and lots of information in case you want to go back to it later, so this is much fuller than what Bruce normally gives. She fills it in with his words, I just fill it in all there.

Confessions answer questions about God, his creation and his purposes, by taking what the Bible states and putting it into a systematic order. None of us can avoid doing this. We all do it in some fashion. Even when a pastor gets up and preaches, he’s taking God’s Word and he’s putting it into a systematic series of logical thoughts. Either we’re going to take those systems and look at that from a biblical perspective to see if they’re faithful to the Bible and they make sense, or not. I think we can’t avoid doing this. In the end, the churches where you are, of which you are members, the churches will, in the end, do something and teach something. We can’t avoid that. The question is what are they teaching? Just to simply say, “Well they’re teaching the Bible,” to me, is not sufficient because there’s always a logical and a systematic thought that comes out of the Bible, and which ones do they adhere to.

For instance, the ways, examples, of thinking about God that I’ve pulled up in my own memory in the last couple of weeks, and so, for instance, I’m listening to Christian TV the other day, and the pastor says, “God never teaches through sickness.” I mean, that was his quote. I got it. It was so stunning to me

that I had to write it down. This is a fellow that's on the TV every night, and he said God never teaches through sickness. So, I mean, that's part of his systematic theology. That's part of his confession of faith, that God never teaches through sickness. In my class, we went through a period, in my teaching, about miracles and wonders and signs, which there were those in that class who felt that the signs and the wonders, the miracles of God, ceased at the time of the apostles. Basically, there were no signs and wonders after 100 A.D; they cease it. That was part of that person's, and those folks', confession. That's what they believed, is part of their systematic thinking.

There are those who take the words of our Lord at communion, "this is my body," and say what Jesus meant was this represents my body. So that is another way of thinking about it. We can't avoid doing it, because either we're going to believe that or we're going to believe something else.

Here's another one. God desires all people (1 Timothy 2) to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. That person believes that everyone is part of God's desire to be saved, and yet you come to this passage where Jesus said, "The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for all." No, it doesn't say that. He came for many. So many is not all. So you see what I'm saying. We're going...all of us are going to take a direction one way or the other on these, and we just can't say, "Well all we'll do is study the Bible." We need to study how we think about these things.

Initially, in your faith, you need to spend your time in the Scripture. When I was early in my faith, I was blessed to have a fellow who mentored me in my faith when I was in college. He taught me how to read the Scriptures and how to pray and how to share my faith, and these are precious things. But the more time you spend in the faith, the more you begin to dig deeply into the riches of God's Word. As you dig deeply into those riches, you begin to find that things kind of line up systematically. You can't help but avoid seeing how things, one thing relates to another relates to another relates to another relates to another.

Confessions that have been written are written to clarify what the church believes, usually in opposition to what they don't believe. Usually confessions are written, not as long, systematic theologies about all theological subjects, but they're usually written in a way to oppose something that's being taught at that time.

It's interesting, that's the first listing of church, of the official books in the Bible. The first time that the listing of what we call the canon, these are the official Word of God and they went through and they listed all the books of the Bible that they felt... The first time that was done was not by an orthodox church leader. It was done by a heretic. Marcion was the first guy in the 200's to write up a church list because he was trying to teach that the God of the New Testament was different than the God of the Old Testament, and therefore, he listed all the books in an opposition to that. Then the church said, "No, that's not the correct list. This is the correct list." And the same thing happened in what's called the Arian controversy. In the early 300's there was a British Presbyter, an elder, that was teaching that when Jesus said he was the Son of God, that did not make him equal with God, that he was less than God. In fact, the Jehovah's Witnesses hold that same position today. Jehovah's witnesses are a replay of what happened 1700 years ago with the Arians. Arius taught this. It also, when you get into who Jesus is, then if Jesus is not truly God, then Jesus cannot truly save. In essence, it relies on your good efforts. So there's a double whammy in that teaching.

So the church had to come forward and say, "No, that's not correct. This is the correct teaching." Out of that came the Nicene Creed, and that, in that creed, it makes it very clear that Jesus Christ is God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father. If Jesus is less than the Father, then he's not of the same substance with the Father; he's something else. He's some other substance. He does not hold the substance of divinity. He's less than

divine. So the church had to come against that and say, "This is what we believe." It would not have been sufficient simply to list a bunch of Bible verses because Arius was doing the same thing. He was a brilliant Bible scholar and he was pointing out, and any of you who've had a chance to have Jehovah's Witnesses come to your door and knock, they'll give you a run for your money when it comes to quoting Scripture. And you say well they're misquoting it. Well, they'll show you they're not misquoting it. And it goes back and forth.

The last time I had a conver...there was a young woman who came to my door about two years ago and wanted to talk about this. We went back and forth on it, and I finally had to say to her, "I need to warn you. What you say you believe was originated, was put forward by a man in the 1870's. You need to say...if what you believe is true, then what you're saying is that what Christians have believed for 1900 years is incorrect, and this guy got it right." The Jehovah's Witnesses are trained to have the right answer for everything. She did not have an answer for this. I said to her, "You are in serious spiritual shape if you put your trust in what a man wrote and taught in 1870 versus what the church has taught for 1,900 years up to that point."

The church has done this thing. That doesn't mean I agree with everything and every creed or confession, but I think it's, we need to spend time thinking about these things.

Now the confessions that Bruce mentioned...he talked about the 39 Articles, the Westminster Confession, the London Confessions and other confessions of that time, came out of the Protestant Reformation. In the early 1500's, there was a Augustinian monk, a Catholic monk, because at that time there were, people said, "Were they Catholics?" I say, "Well, what else was there?" Those were Catholics back then. Well, you know, okay, fine. But that's what everybody was if you weren't over in the Eastern part of Europe and into Turkey, you were then Orthodox or Eastern Christian, then you're a Western Christian, when are basically Roman Catholics at that time.

So there was a monk, an Augustinian monk by the name of Martin Luther. He had become very exercised and upset. Brilliant person. He held a doctorate. He became very upset about some of the practices and teachings of the established church, of the church of that time. He decided that he wanted to debate these issues. He wrote down 95 statements to debate. And this was very common. He was at a university, teaching at a university. He took those statements and he nailed them on the church door in the university common. He invited debate. Well, I mean, somebody took those 95 statements—they're called the 95 thesis—and they put them to print. Remember, the printing press was a relatively new invention at that time. They spread throughout Europe. There was a tremendous amount of foment and thinking about what the church, the established church, which later became known as the Roman Catholic Church, what they were teaching and what they were practicing.

Luther was very specific. He did not reject all the things that the Roman Catholic Church taught. He only rejected certain things in that teaching. That was the beginning of the this tremendous discussion and back and forth. I often think it's very similar to, remember when our founding fathers came together in the late 18th century to create the constitution, the declaration of independence. I believe that that was one of the greatest gatherings of minds and intellect that the world had ever seen. How those different characters—there was Madison and Jefferson and there was Franklin and the others—who gathered together at that constitutional convention and they were brilliant to what they thought through, the kind of government they created that we have today, it is unparalleled almost in world history. I'd have to think if there's an exception. But nonetheless, that same thing was happening in Europe in the 16th century. There was a gathering of brilliant minds, and these folks were debating back and forth and discussing it.

Out of that foment came a series of confessions, and here are some of them. The Augsburg Confession,

which was for the Lutherans in 1530. The 39 Articles of Religion—1552, and I think it was also 1563—in England for the Church of England. The Helvetic Conventions for the reformed followers in Switzerland. I put the Heidelberg Confession, it was the Heidelberg Catechism in 1563. The Westminster Confession in 1643. And of course the one that Bruce eluded to, the 2nd London Baptist Confession in 1689.

It was based on that brilliant thinking that these confessions and these statements about belief, and they were saying...and basically these confessions were in opposition to two sides of a question. One side of that question was what don't we believe that Catholics teach on one side, and what don't we believe that the radical reformers believe. This was the tension between those two.

Now the Roman Catholics on one side, but there was also the other side, called the radical reformers. The radical reformers taught that the Luther and Calvin and those reformers had not gone far enough, that they were always in search of the pure Christian church, and they, in time, became Baptists. Now, Bruce is part of that tradition. He's part of the radical reformation tradition. Radical comes from the Latin word meaning root. They wanted to get down to the root. In fact, it was in the quick comment that Bruce and I had in passing on one of the subjects, a theology subject. I said, "Well, Bruce, do you disagree with the reformer on this position? The Protestant reformers." He said, "I just don't think they went far enough," so I mean, that's Bruce. {LAUGHTER}

You have the Roman position, and then there are those of us who stopped here, and then others went here. But nonetheless, that was kind of the nature of those confessions and thinking. I take them seriously. They're brilliant work done by brilliant men who knew their Bible, who were willing to debate and argue in a way that they could come to the truth.

So that's the first part of what I want to talk about. This is the reason why we have confessions and we don't simply say, "Well, just, all we need to do is study the Bible." You need to study the Bible. Absolutely. It's the foundation document. All truth comes from that. If a confession does not support the truth in the Bible, then the confession is wrong. But based on that, we need to think also deeply about these things, and Bruce forces us to do that. He is making men here sit and think deeply about their faith and what they believe. That's why I'm here, and that's why a lot of you are here.

Let me stop right there. That's kind of the introduction, why we're even going to deal with this article that Bruce asked me to address. Any thoughts? Dr. Rogers, did I...how much did I get wrong?

Dr. Rogers: *You did fine. The only thing I'd add is the confessions try to see how it fits together. They appeal to the whole of Scripture, and they say you can't just leave this out. It has to fit together as best as we can understand it. So they're all attempts to see the whole of Scripture, not just part of Scripture.*

Right. Thank you.

Dale: *Question. In your communications with Dr. Bickel, why did he choose to study 3,000 Puritan sermons? Did he ever [UNCLEAR]...?*

No. Because I think his doctorate depended on it. {LAUGHTER} I mean, the thing is, I mean, that's what I...there are so many things I appreciate about Bruce. But one of the things I appreciate is the fact that with so much of evangelical Christianity today, and when you go into churches and you hear sermons and teaching, it sounds so, in a sense, contemporary. I want to know how Christians were thinking about things 400 years ago, or 500 years ago, or 1,000 years ago. That's why...I want to get the full spectrum, I mean, this, indeed, is the body of Christ. The body of Christ is not this gathering or the gathering in our churches. The body of Christ is all those of the elect who have found faith in Christ,

from the very first apostles until now, in fact, before that, the Old Testament saints. That's the whole body. I want to hear how they looked at things because I find that when I just look at my faith, from my contemporary 2011 perspective, I get a skewed view, because our view of our faith and how we live it and how we believe it, our view of our faith is, in a sense, contaminated by our culture. The only way to get out of that is to go to other places where...so, I mean, to read those, I mean, what was it like to be a Puritan in the 16th and 17th centuries. They were in struggle. There was warfare. They were being persecuted. They were persecuting others. I mean there's a huge dynamic of things that were going on. Bruce feels like that they got the Scripture right, and I think they, for the most part did.

Bill: *I just want to say that since you brought up the Puritans, I reminded Bruce that in Puritan America Anabaptists [UNCLEAR] free to worship their God.*

That's correct.

Bill: *Roman Catholics were not free to worship their God.*

Right. That's correct.

Tom: *The other part at least the Anglican Episcopal tradition is the Nicene Creed.*

Right. The other part of the Anglican tradition is the Nicene Creed.

Tom: *And that's a creed that was developed way before the Reformation.*

Yes.

Tom: *It seems to be a standard statement of faith. Are you going to talk about...?*

No, I just mentioned it in passing as an example of why the church had to say this is what we believe. They had to do that when the heretic Marcion was teaching that only certain books of the Bible, most of them were, none of the Old Testament and only certain books of the Bible, I think he had Luke as the only Gospel, because the other were too Jewish, because there were two different gods. You see. So the church said, "No, that's not the correct..." I mean, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are all the Gospel, not just Luke. The same thing happened when Arius taught that Jesus was less than fully God.

Tom: *But my point about the Nicene Creed is that it is a great statement of faith that seems to cover a lot of different denominations and had the key elements of what we [UNCLEAR].*

I don't believe you can really be a Christian if you disagree with the Nicene Creed. Now there may be a clause or two. It's interesting that in the Nicene Creed, that it doesn't include that Jesus died for our sins. The bloody atonement is not in the Nicene Creed, which all that says to me is that was not an open issue for debate. They were aren't arguing about it, so they didn't have to deal with it.

Don: *Doesn't it say "suffered under Pontius Pilate"?*

Yes. Suffered. Whatever that means. You see, it doesn't say.

Don: *Died?*

Yeah. Suffered and died. That does not equal that he died for our sins. You see what I'm saying? It's just a statement. That's why they spend so much time, and you know, people who first hear this are

bored to tears, “God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, being of...” and they go, “What is that all about?” Well it’s all about saying that Jesus is not light from light. The light of...he is not part of that light ultimately. He’s not truth. It was a huge debate. Actually, what happened in the Roman Empire is that they drove the Arian heretics out of the Roman Empire. Then the German, they converted the German barbarians. When the barbarians flowed into the Roman Empire, they brought this heresy back with it. So it was an ongoing fight for centuries, to establish this.

***Audience Member:** Ted, you keep saying the church. The church had to answer. The church had to do. Who are you talking about?*

I’m talking about the body of God’s elect who was [UNCLEAR] [OVERLAPPING]..

***Audience Member:** That’s what I’m trying to understand.*

That’s what I’m talking about. Yes. Right. I’m not talking about any particular group in the church.

***Audience Member:** It seems to me, and I’ve moved in different cities in my career, there seems to be a lower emphasis or less emphasis on the confessions. Most churches are going non-denomination, or a lot of churches are non-denominational, and it’s not taught, it’s not emphasized within that body or within a lot of bodies.*

Well, here the...this is a...to me, this is a huge problem because what it is, is we’ve, in a sense, dumbed down our theology. The statement that you used to hear back in the 70’s and 80’s is that, and Bruce actually referenced it, is that doctrine divides, love unites. So let’s get rid of all the doctrinal differences and just unite, rather than trying to talk them through and come to the truth. That’s the situation that we are in today.

In my class, when I was teaching, we were talking about how do you know that you are saved. One woman says, “I know because I feel it my heart.” I said, “That’s not an adequate answer.” When I was in Salt Lake City camping several decades ago with my family, I camped right next to a Mormon family. Very devout. The Mormon family said to me, “We know that Joseph Smith’s teaching, the Mormon teaching, is correct because we feel it in our hearts.” I said to this woman, “That’s not enough,” and she didn’t want to hear that because we emphasize today it’s what you feel that’s true, not what the Scripture says and what the churches understood that to mean over 2,000 years. I’m really not at liberty to disagree with the church unless it’s seriously in error. I must submit...I feel I must submit to that teaching of 2,000 years. I have to do it because I don’t know more than they do.

***Tom:** I think it all goes back to that little diagram that Bruce shows us—think, act, feel—a lot of people are going on their emotions. It’s very common to go to church and they say, “Well I could just feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.” That’s an emotion.*

Right.

***Tom:** The knowledge is the Holy Spirit is there. You don’t have the feel it. He’s there. The Word of God says so. Move on.*

Yes. Excellent.

***Stan:** I think that’s just semantics. When someone says to you, “I feel,” I think if you take an exception, it’s semantics. It’s more than a feeling. It’s a all-encompassing. You’re in quicksand and you’re sinking, and that’s what I’m trying to convey. When I’m in church and the Holy Spirit comes upon me, it’s more*

easy for me to say, "I feel" because that's one verb. Instead of going into a whole dissertation of what is happening to me at that moment, because so much is happening to me, so I simply say, "I feel." Let's not beat on these people. We seem to be constantly, you know, one denomination is attacking another denomination, I got the truth, this is the truth, you're wrong. Let's find a common good. I believe there's a reason, there's a reason why there are so many denominations, and God made it that way, because if there was only one, God realized they would be too powerful and they would be teaching their word and not his Word. It's like, in Scripture, where it says, "I'll separate these people by many tongues, so they can't get together...it's the same thing, God...I'm sorry, this is very emotional for me.

People take a lot of liberties they wouldn't with Bruce, but I appreciate that. {LAUGHTER} That's fine, Stan. The thing is, if...there was a period, after Reformation, at which Protestant faith became very cerebral, and it dried right up. That lead naturally, because people wanted to be right in terms of their doctrine, they got so obsessed with that, that in time, that lead to Unitarianism. I mean, the Unitarianism breaks out, in essence, that Jesus is not God, there's only one god and that all people are saved. That kind of dry, cerebral, intellectual faith lead to that. That was the problem then, and that's when you have such...that's when the great awakening broke out as the anecdote to that.

Johnathon Edwards and his preaching. George Whitefield and the Wesley Brothers. They followed that, and they brought great heart. Wesley talks about at his conversion at the Aldersgate Church. He says, "My heart was strangely warm." He's talking about his feelings at that point. That was an anecdote to dry, sterile faith. But that's not our problem today. Our problem is not that we're surrounded by dry, sterile faith; we're driven by the emotion of the faith and whatever we're feeling. I'm just saying...I agree with you, Stain, but I don't think, I want to strike where the problem is, and to me, that's the problem.

Here's an example. We were members of another church and I was good friends with the worship leader. The worship leader comes down after...this is a very lively, high intensity, lots of contemporary music, lots of emotion in the service. The worship leader came to me after service and said, "Boy, you could really tell that the spirit was there this Sunday," and I said, "Well we won't know for several months." She said, "What do you mean by that?" I said, "Well, we won't know until we see lives changed, I mean, if the spirit was present, lives will be changed. It's not what you felt at the moment." I've gotten weary of ginned up services. I'm not interested in ginned up services. I'm interested in getting the truth and laying it out. I understand what you're saying, Stan, but have to say that's not our problem today. We have another problem, and we need to...that's why this is...that's why Bruce's teaching is so precious because he's willing to get deep into, to think about it.

Don: *Yeah, similar to what you said. I think that the people have a reaction to what they call dead orthodoxy in that they throw out the baby with the bath water. Scripture says that we're to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength.*

And strength. Yeah. It's a balance. It's a balancing act. If we already have too much of something, I don't think it's a good idea to keep encouraging that. We need to see the areas that we're weak in, and that's what I would like...

Tom: *All I want to say is, you know, Jesus said, "Where two or three of you are gathered together there I am in the midst. I'm there." The quality of your service does not depend upon the emotions that you see because you go to worship and to serve, not to be blessed, but blessings do come.*

That's fine. Yes, that's good. Thanks a lot. Yes, Sig.

Sig: *There's one thing that I would just like to point out that I didn't learn until recently in support of*

what Stan just said [UNCLEAR]...

Don't support Stan, please! {LAUGHTER} Whatever you do, don't encourage Stan.

Sig: *Is this true that after the Reformation, that the Protestants were pretty brutal toward the Catholics? A lot of them lost their businesses, lost their property, were outcasts, [UNCLEAR]*

And vice versa and to the Baptists as well. Yes, it was. Because they were hemmed in by a mentality that says, "If you are Christian, we need a Christian nation or government, and that Christian government will be responsible for imposing the rules of the Bible." That's why some...is that pretty accurate, Dr. Rogers? Pretty close.

In terms of this Heidelberg Catechism that was written...the Elector of Saxony was trying to do, the Palatine in Germany, the rule in that part of Germany was saying, "Okay, you Lutherans and you Calvinists are arguing, so what I'm going to do, I'm going to create one teaching, so I command that everybody in my rule goes along with this teaching." Now we find that abominable today. But at that time, it was okay, I mean, it was okay to have the ruler impose what he felt was the belief.

In fact, when the Lutherans, when they made their settlement with the Catholics, they said, "Okay, how are we going to determine whether people in Germany are going to be Catholic or Lutheran?" The answer was whatever your ruler is.

Audience Member: *Like the King of England started the Anglican Church.*

Same thing. Well, now, that's an inaccurate statement. {LAUGHTER} I'm just saying that's the way...it was a faulty way of understanding the connection between the church and the state. And that's why some of us, when we see that connection coming too close, start to get nervous because we've seen in the past where the church and the state are married together and this church state becomes responsible for imposing the rules of the church.

The problem is, is that the church is made up of the elect, the spirit-filled members of the body of Christ. The state is not. The state's motive is purely carnal. It's completely fleshly. The state's modus operandi is power. The church's modus operandi is service and laying down your life. The state does not understand that. Any time the church thinks it's benefiting by getting in bed with the state, in the end, the church starts acting like the state. It's too tempting. Power is too tempting. And control is too tempting. And in time, it seduces the church every bit as much as if it were a sexual temptation or an addiction temptation.

I'm just, you know, guys, I'm rambling on. Okay. This is mildly interesting, isn't it? {LAUGHTER} I find it fascinating. I think about it. I'll wake up in the middle of the night thinking about it.

Frank: *I'll have to disagree with Stanley in saying we're still one body. We may be different denominations, but if you're not into the body, that's the most important thing.*

That's correct. Thank you. That's exactly right. The real problem is that today, back in the time of the Reformation, they were reticent to form new bodies, new denominations. They were reticent to do that. They spent a lot of time discussing and going back and forth and clarifying. I mean, in my class, when I teach my class, I often have members of the class correct me. And they're right, and I'm wrong. We need that kind of...but when we get into a situation, we say, "This is the way we believe and it can't be challenged," then you're in trouble. That's why we need the body to push us back and forth, and have a civil debate.

Rich may disagree with me. He may point out my errors, but he's not attacking me personally. He's just raising issues about what I've said, whether it's true or not, according to the Scripture. We need to keep doing that. If we don't have a church environment that encourages that kind of give and take, then we're in trouble, because it becomes one man's doctrine. It becomes the head pastor's doctrine, and that's the doctrine, and if you question it, then you're guilty of schism and disloyalty and disobedience to the pastor. That is a serious problem.

***Audience Member:** I think one of the key elements of this is what is the motivation. What is the heart of the matter? I would suggest that whatever person is having this conversation or this discussion about their beliefs, they truly believe what they're saying, and the other person that they're conversing with may both be in the body of Christ. The person truly believes in what they're saying. So what's the defining point? The defining point then has to go back to Scripture because there may be differences of opinion or differences of belief, but both of the people, in their motive and in their heart, believe what they're saying. So it's not a matter of right or wrong. It's a matter of where do we get the truth resolved, and whether it's the Catechism, the 39 Articles, or whatever that is, there were men that read and studied and debated and came up with what they believed. Being a Christian is do you believe that Christ died for you. When you're having any conversation with someone, it comes down to you're not going to convince them on your belief. It has to be their belief. It comes down to a heart matter.*

It does. Yeah, right. That's good. I agree. That's a good point. Let me just get into this. I chose one of the least controversial of all the articles because I wasn't going to get into election, predestination or the sacraments. {LAUGHTER} This is an important article, and this is article number seven, which has to do with the Old Testament. Now this article, the teaching in this article, is found in all the other confessions, so I'm just...Bruce asked me to do this, and it's based on...I'm doing this with fear and trepidation because Dr. Rogers, he wrote the book, and I'm quoting him throughout, and I'm standing in front of him today, to be corrected.

The article says, "The Old Testament," and now remember, this is written in the language that's probably 400 years old, "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers," that means the Old Testament writers, "did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth;" that means in any country, "yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral."

The purpose of this article is to say, okay, what is the place of the Old Testament in the church. Number one, and number two, if you have the Old Testament Law, are all the laws equal? Do all the laws have equal binding on the Christian? That's what this article attempts to do.

Now John Rogers, in his book, what he does is he goes through every one of these articles and he breaks it into parts. In these parts, he talks about to teaching in the article, the Scriptural foundations, the biblical foundations, and the false teachings denied.

The first point in the introduction is now that Christ has come to fulfill the Old Testament, why do we need the Old Testament? Why do we need the Old Testament? In his response, and the response of this article, is that a true understanding of the Old Testament is found only in the light of Christ. That's the key point, is to understand the Old Testament, you have to filter it through the lens of Jesus Christ. That is the only way Christians can understand the Old Testament.

The first statement he makes, under 2A is, “The unity of the Old Testament and New Testament is found in Christ who offers eternal life in both.” And these are the teachings of that article. Salvation and reception and are the same in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, Christ is the promise and Anointed One, the Messiah for which salvation will come. In the New Testament, he is the Messiah, who has come and is to come. The Old Testament believers who put their faith in God, in his Word and promises, were in effect, putting their faith in Christ. The Old Testament draws on one another, Old Testament and New Testament, draw on each other, one another, in terms of explicit prophecies and Old Testament types.

Now let me just elaborate on that just a bit. First of all, is the point that the Old Testament talks about reception of Christ, of salvation, reception as salvation [UNCLEAR] in the same way the New Testament does. They’re not two different things. People receive salvation by faith in the Messiah. Period. That’s true in the Old Testament and it’s true in the New Testament. It’s not true that in the Old Testament they have a different way of being saved from that of the New Testament. That’s the first thing this article teaches.

Also, in the Old Testament, Christ is portrayed as the promised and Anointed One, the Messiah, to whom salvation will come. In the New Testament, he is the Messiah who has come. Both the Old Testament believers who put their faith in God, in his Word and promises, were in effect, putting their faith in Christ. This is a very important statement because what it says is that those who put their trust in God’s promised deliverance were saved in the same way that Christians who put their trust in God’s deliverance today. They just did not know the name of that deliverer. Would that be fair enough, Dr. Rogers, to say? I want to be sure I’m not teaching heresy.

Dr. Rogers: *They knew it was God.*

They knew it was God.

Dr. Rogers: *But they did not know Jesus’ name.*

They did not know Jesus. But Jesus was the provision that would come in the New Testament.

Dr. Rogers: *Right.*

People will say, “Well were people from the Old Testament time, were any of them saved?” I would say absolutely true. You see it in Hebrews 11, the heroes of the faith. They put their trust in God and in his solution, and they did not understand completely what that solution would be.

Don: *Yes. It’s interesting, in Galatians and Hebrews and other books in the New Testament, it says that the Gospel was preached to Abram. The Jews in the Wilderness had the Gospel preached to them just as to us, etc. I think that’s very significant.*

Excellent. Thank you.

Tom: *Now I want to go back to James when he says these were received salvation because they believed the promises of God. I think if they had them there, I don’t know how much of the Gospel she knew, but James said she believed the promises of God. What I think is so neat is that we misunderstand so much, and God doesn’t expect us to know the whole story. He says believe what I’ve told you and go from there.*

That's good. And Bruce, that's an important point that he makes often. The biblical foundation for that part of the article is "I have not come to abolish the Law and the prophets, but fulfill them." The false teachings that have denied are that the Old Testament is contrary to the New Testament. You have the Old Testament God of wrath and anger. You have the New Testament God of love and blessing and grace. They're not. That's a false distinction. It's the same God, and that salvation in the Old Testament is by good works, and that in the New Testament by grace. That's denied as well. It's the same salvation. It's always based on faith. Salvation always, the human response is always faith.

This is totally contrary to what the world sees as the solution to salvation, getting one's salvation. They see it as performance. We see it as faith in the One that God has promised. Every world system that there is, every other belief and philosophy points to your performance. It does it in the workplace. It does it in Hinduism. It does it in Mormonism. It does it in Communism. Every other system says salvation comes, whether it's in the worker's utopia or whether ... *(Recording ended at this point.)*