

Catechetical Sermon, September 28th, 2025

Canons of Dort, Head 3&4:4-6: "Introduction to the doctrine of Regeneration"

Scripture Lesson: John 3:1-21

Lesson Aim	To understand the human inability to come to God outside the work of the Word and Spirit.
Steps to Learning	Read the Canons of Dort, Heads 3&4, articles 4-6 and John 3:1-21. Also discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>The Canons of Dort are responding to the Arminian error regarding human ability. What is their error?</p> <p>The Arminians believed (as some people today believe) that all people are capable of using the light of nature to come to faith in Christ. God's grace, they say, is offered to all and people can use their own faculties to receive that grace and be saved.</p> <p>But what do the Scriptures teach regarding human ability?</p> <p>In a word, the Scriptures teach that man is dead in his transgressions and sin and can't use his faculties to reach out to God. Paul teaches this clearly in Romans chapter 1. Paul argues in this chapter that all people, through natural revelation in the creation, have a general knowledge of God, his existence and their moral culpability before him. But people suppress the truth of God through their own unrighteousness. That is, people will pursue first and foremost their own evil desires ignoring God and his righteous demands.</p> <p>The light of nature and the Law cannot help us in our condition or sinfulness. Since that is the case, how can we be regenerated and then come to faith in Christ and be saved?</p> <p>Article 6 of the Canons says this: "What, therefore, neither the light of nature nor the law could do, that God performs by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the word or ministry of reconciliation; which is the gospel concerning the Messiah, by means whereof it has pleased God to save such as believe, as well under the Old as under the New Testament."</p>
Bible Reading	Revelation 10-16 (Reading through the New Testament)