Summary of Text 18: Homo Religiosus – Christianity

Text 18 provides a comprehensive theological synthesis of the foundational ideas of Christianity. Drawing on fundamental biblical concepts such as the dynamic pair 'flesh and spirit', the individualization of the covenant, the layered structure of Sheol, and the resurrection of the subtle-material and spiritual body, the text outlines the essence of the Christian faith.

1. Christian life finds its foundation in the Holy Trinity - in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who draws intimately near through persevering prayer. From Genesis 6:3 onwards, biblical thought is governed by the fundamental dynamic pair of 'flesh' versus 'spirit'. 'Spirit' represents the inexhaustible divine life force (*dunamis*), whereas 'flesh' refers to a weakened, primitive energy level, or one brought low by sin and immoral behavior. Human beings hear God's voice through their conscience and inner promptings, in which the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) constitutes the decisive ethical standard that prevents them from descending into the realm of the flesh.

The one Creator God (Elohim) is absolutely distinct from created higher beings, angels and idols. These beings are referred to as 'elements of the world' (thrones, dominions and powers), to which worldly structures are subject. Jesus Christ, as co-creator, became a participant in the flesh, died according to the flesh and rose according to the spirit in order to disarm these worldly powers. In salvation history, degeneration into the flesh - as in sexual unions with fallen angels (*Nephilim*) in the days of Noah or the brazen sodomy in Sodom in the time of Lot - leads to the withdrawal of God's spirit and destruction through the forces of nature. Those who sow in the flesh reap corruption and descend into Sheol (the underworld), whereas those who sow in the spirit receive eternal life.

2. Towards a New Covenant and individual responsibility

Fleshly existence manifests itself in demonic obstacles, pagan fertility rites (such as the worship of Baal at Shittim) and the errors of false teachers. According to Jesus in Luke 17, the history of humanity up to the coming of the Son of Man repeats the pattern of Noah and Lot, in which the majority become absorbed in worldly desires. Christ, however, descended into hell in order to proclaim the message of salvation even to the spirits from the days of Noah.

Whereas the Old Covenant relied on social and genealogical intermediaries (priests, prophets and scribes) and inherited guilt, the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31ff., Ezekiel 36:26ff., Joel 3:1) ushers in a religious revolution.

God forgives sins, writes His law directly on the human heart and pours out His Spirit upon all flesh.

Ezekiel 18 emphasizes individual responsibility: the son does not bear the guilt of the father; whoever sins shall die, but whoever repents and lives conscientiously according to the Decalogue will be preserved. Since lying spirits also exist and mislead wandering human souls (as in the case of King Ahab in 1 Kings 22), it is necessary to discern between the spirits.

3. Divine revelation, the Good Shepherd and Baptism

God reveals hidden desires of the heart and unconscious guilt through dreams, nocturnal visions, illness and encounters with messengers or prophets (Elijah, Daniel and Jesus). Suffering and trials often function as purifying interventions through which angels act as mediators to bring about restoration. In John 10, Jesus presents Himself as the Good Shepherd, whose sheep know and follow His voice, in contrast to the devil, who has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

Prayer forms the intimate dialogue in which the Holy Spirit assists human weakness ("Abba, Father"), an essential source of support in times of increasing apostasy and the rise of the Antichrist. Baptism (John 3, Romans 6) brings about the fundamental transition from biological birth in the flesh to rebirth through water and the Spirit.

4. Life, death, the Eucharist and Sheol

The mystery of Christ frees the believer from food regulations imposed by the law and from the spirits of the underworld. In the Eucharist (Luke 22, 1 Corinthians 11), Jesus makes the sacrifice of His body and blood present as the New Covenant. Worthily receiving the Eucharist bestows divine life force and eternal life, whereas receiving it unworthily leads to a corrective divine judgment in the form of illness or weakness.

The Bible analyses the layered structure of Sheol (the underworld): the uppermost layer encompasses judicial and worldly power structures, while the deepest layer (Abaddon) is characterized by total darkness and energetic exhaustion.

Earthly pride and ungodly wealth - as illustrated by the madness of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4) and the sacrilegious feast of Belshazzar (Daniel 5) - inevitably lead to a fall into this underworld. That the dead have not simply disappeared into Sheol is evident from 1 Samuel 28, where King Saul consults the medium of Endor and causes the apparition of Samuel to rise from the earth to announce the king's downfall.

5. Resurrection, subtle-material bodies and individualization

The idea of resurrection is already present in the Old Testament, but 1 Corinthians 15 clarifies that the Old Covenant knew a 'psychic' resurrection (of the soul), whereas Christ grants 'spiritual' resurrection in the Spirit. The sacred possesses a transitive, subtle-material energy that calls for protection or consecration in relation to the profane (as with the priestly garments in Ezekiel 44).

In addition to the fleshly body and the glorified spiritual body, Scripture recognizes the subtle or fine-material body. The risen body of Jesus can pass through closed doors, materialize and become subtle-material again, while healing power (*dunamis*) flows from His garment. Despite this divine power, Jesus encounters the human 'rock of unbelief'.

Finally, the New Covenant brings about the individualization of religion (Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 18 and 36, Joel 3). Intermediaries lose their exclusive role: the believer enters directly, inwardly and individually into intimacy with God.