

# The Doctrine of Interaction

## Lesson 11

*The Issue:* How we interact with matter and energy is one of the most critical issues of human existence. It can be done correctly or it can be done wrongly. There are of course consequences in both instances. Interaction is a province of human life that the Lord has ascribed unto Himself. Therefore we see it as less and less a uniquely human or personal province.

*Underlying Assumptions as Expressed in Everyday Terms:*

- 1) As long as we do not violate any commandment of the Lord then, how we interact with the world is purely a matter of personal choice fueled by realistic assumptions about the material world.
- 2) Interaction must of necessity be closely, if not exclusively, focused on the various ingredients of the material situation.
- 3) This allows for the beauty of human creativity to be exercised in remarkable ways—ways that do yield highly effective results.

*The Generalization* (in continuation from lesson ten): Acceptance of the Lord's correction is essential and implicit in our necessary interactions with matter and energy.

*The Scripture Passage:* Psalm 25:8-11

*The Lesson:*

- 1) Many people today make decisions not based on eternal principles but according to individual situations. We call such a judgment “ad hoc” because the reasoning applies just to that scenario. And when someone acts in a way that is motivated and seemingly “dictated” by a situation, we call such action “ad hoc.” But for a Christian, interaction with the world of matter and energy is not supposed to be ad hoc! From what the Psalm teaches us we are not free to use ad hoc reasoning, or come to ad hoc conclusions, or to take ad hoc action. However, most often human reason sees ad hoc responses to the material order as good, right, proper and often very effective.
- 2) To the contrary, David shows us that ad hoc interaction is **DISALLOWED!** Any ad hoc response is the result of a unique focus on the material situation. It is an improvised way of interacting that is presumed to be suggested by the undeniable circumstances at

hand.

3) David in 1 Samuel 17 was given ad hoc advice about his confrontation with Goliath. “Put on armor,” Saul told him. In another case in Scripture, the Israelites made some ad hoc responses to their situation while at Rephidim in Exodus 17. For us today, sometimes anger fits this description: it seems like a “natural” response to what feels like an overwhelming situation.

4) Now here is this portion of the text where we face the essential issue. That issue is the task of maintaining the INTERACTION REGIME that has been commanded by the Lord. Therefore the issue is not to secure any particular material outcome. Admittedly, such a notion would sound peculiar to a mind committed to ad hoc interactions with matter and energy.

5) Two things enter into a state of contradiction: a) on the one hand there are ad hoc responses to the real world of matter and energy, and b) on the other hand there is the interaction regime that has been revealed.

6) Without fear of error, we can state that the interaction regime that is presented in Scripture is a highly conscious way of interacting. This is not done and in fact cannot be done inadvertently nor by accident. Interaction is the product of the committed mind.

7) When the two streams of the ABSOLUTE AND THE HUMAN merge there results a highly elevated consciousness! It would be this highly elevated consciousness that would stand ready to interact with the field of matter and energy (that is, the world.)

8) Psalm 25:8-11 presents to us a structured consciousness. It could just as easily be referred to as a prepared consciousness. So, let us ask a question: what is the purpose of Bible reading, or preaching, or teaching? The answer is implicit in David’s words: It is to produce a highly elevated or structured or prepared consciousness. Prepared to do what? It is prepared to interact with matter and energy.

9) The implication is clear: A mind not prepared in this manner will not interact with matter and energy in such a way as to maintain the revealed regime of such interaction.

10) This means that an unprepared consciousness will consequently and consistently interact with matter and energy in an ad hoc way.

11) Numbers chapter 13 and 14, and Psalm 78, both make it known that ad hoc interactions can be unfaithful!

12) In consideration of Philippians 2 the Cross of Christ is a perfect symbol of this structured way of interacting with the material world. The cross was the merger between the ABSOLUTE AND THE HUMAN. The result was the death of Jesus and the resultant salvation of the human race!

13) Times of crisis have a strong tendency to scramble the revealed regime. That is to say, it is scrambled in favor of an ad hoc regime. It appears that when matter and energy are present, then the ad hoc mind responds “naturally.” This is the picture of an AD HOC INTELLIGENCE.

14) Many entities governmental and otherwise practice “war-gaming.” They do this to try and discover which ad hoc responses deliver the goods in specific situations.

15) Which do we choose? Shall we interact upon the basis of the merger between the ABSOLUTE AND THE HUMAN as previously described, or shall we interact with ad hoc intelligence?

16) This merger between a) the absolute (instruction, guidance, teaching, forgiveness) and b) the human (humility, obedience) is calculated to lift us out of an ad hoc intelligence and put us in an elevated intelligence!

17) God’s word does not produce idiots, the stupid, the foolish, nor the naïve.

18) Certainly one of the first things produced by this merger between the absolute and the human is an ELEVATED DISCOURSE about matter and energy. We are not crazy nor off the deep-end—rather, we are suing and developing an elevated discourse about the temporal world and our part in it.

19) There is a warning here: The world--the ad hoc mind-- sees this elevated intelligence and this elevated discourse as foolishness!

20) Our issue is to escape the ad hoc mind, ad hoc discourse, ad hoc thinking, and ad hoc behavior and to grow in this structured mind and intelligence.

### *Discussion Questions*

1) What relative weight should the following have in the way we react/interact with the material world? a) Personal choice b) demands of the situation c) human creativity Explain your answers.

2) Define “ad hoc.” Give an example from a secular source (such as nightly news, newspaper, book, television, etc.) of someone acting in an ad hoc manner. Is such action usually praised or condemned by the world?

3) King Saul’s ad hoc solution to the way David should fight Goliath was to advise the young man to use his royal armor. Give other examples from Scripture of ad hoc solutions to problems. (Suggestions: look at the life of Abraham, the building of the Tower of Babel, the men who reached out to steady the Ark of the Covenant, Peter’s action when Jesus was arrested.) In each case, identify:

How was the ad hoc action related to a desire for a certain outcome?

In what way did the people involved show or say that they believed their actions were required or necessitated by the situation they faced?

- 4) What do you see in Psalms 25:8-11 that demonstrates the presence of a structured (prepared) consciousness?
- 5) What difficult situation did you face this last week that evoked or stimulated in you an ad hoc response?
- 6) How would a structured or prepared consciousness have responded differently to your situation?
- 7) What steps do you think would be necessary for you to take in order to insure that the next time you face such a situation, you won't be likely to choose an ad hoc solution or response to the situation?
- 8) In Psalm 25:8-11, what elements of the absolute do we see? What elements of the human?
- 9) If you were to use what we've described as an elevated discourse about a situation you're now facing (or expecting/anticipating), how would you integrate elements of the absolute and the human in your description of this upcoming challenge?