

Introduction to Systematic Theology

Introduction

Theology comes from the Greek words *theos* meaning “God,” and *logos* meaning “word”; hence, a word or discussion about God or simply the study of God. However, theology can be understood to be the general study of Christian doctrine. It is the discovery, organization, and presentation of the truths about God.

There is an interesting pattern in Paul’s letters. He often starts with theological concepts then connects that to practice with a “therefore”. There is something important about understanding doctrine that impacts our walk with Christ. We see that maturity stands in contrast to children who are “tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:13-14) and that paying attention to doctrines of demons stands in contrast to being “nourished on the words of faith and of sound doctrine” (1 Tim 4:1-6). Advocating different doctrines shows that one is conceited and understands nothing (1 Tim 6:3, 4) and Paul exhorted Titus to show himself to be an example of good deeds with purity in doctrine (Titus 2:7).

Understanding theology not only will help us to mature as Christians, it helps us to serve others. If people are led astray by false teaching, we will be better equipped to help them. As people need to know God's Word, we will be better able to direct them toward particular passages of relevance to them. By studying theology, we are enabled to teach ourselves and others what God says, thus fulfilling the second part of the Great Commission, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

All theology matters

Often people divide Bible doctrine into two categories, what is essential and what is non-essential. Essential doctrine is usually understood to be matters related to the nature of God (trinity including the deity of Jesus), the fallen state of man, and that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Non-essential doctrine is usually understood to be matters upon which Christians disagree (e.g. the details of Christ’s return or the nature of spiritual gifts).

A popular Christian apologetic organization (Christian Research Institute) advocates the maxim, "in essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, and in all things charity." While unity, liberty, and charity are all important, the problem lies in the fact that the Bible does not describe for us which doctrines are essential and which are non-essential. God does not put some doctrine in red letters for us. So, on what basis do we decide what is truly essential?

Wayne Grudem offers the following guideline, "A major doctrine is one that has a significant impact on our thinking about other doctrines, or that has a significant impact on how we live the Christian life. A minor doctrine is one that has very little impact on how we think about other doctrines, and very little impact on how we live the Christian life." Many might agree with this. However, doctrines that have once been considered minor have major significance when ignored or denied. So "very little impact" may only be until we arrive at the point when we see the doctrine as having more relevance to our life, or when we find out the consequences that occur when the doctrine is denied. But most importantly, this guideline forces us to conclude that some of the teachings of God have very little impact on how we live the Christian life. If a teaching is important enough for God to communicate to us, it is important enough for us to take seriously.

All doctrine is essential in that we are required to accept and respond to it completely. Some doctrines may not undermine the gospel message directly, but the gospel is only part of what we are to defend. All theology matters.

Theological presuppositions

There are several presuppositions that are required if we are to adequately study theology.

1. Absolute truth exists and the only source of truth concerning God is the Bible.
2. The Bible must be approached with a plane, literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic.
3. Since the student of theology is attempting to understand what the Bible, it is necessary that the student be a Spirit led believer (1 Cor 2:10-16).
4. Since God has progressively revealed more truth about Himself and His plan through the ages, it is important to understand that the NT takes priority over the OT as the source of doctrine.

Systematic Theology is the study of theology by examining the totality of Scripture and presenting doctrines by coalescing the whole. This systematization of Bible doctrine is not found categorized in defined topics in the Bible but rather has developed over the years. In systematic theology all major doctrines can be grouped into approximately ten subcategories, though some lists may be smaller. Those subcategories being:

Bibliology – Doctrine of the Bible
Theology Proper – Doctrine of God including the Trinity and God the Father
Christology – Doctrine of Christ
Pneumatology – Doctrine of the Holy Spirit
Angelology – Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Fallen Angels
Anthropology – Doctrine of Man
Hamartiology – Doctrine of Sin
Soteriology – Doctrine of Salvation
Ecclesiology – Doctrine of the Church
Eschatology – Doctrine of Last Things

We will look at each of these doctrines briefly and provide a starting point for your own study. Our ultimate goal as we are diligent to present ourselves approved to God handling accurately His Word (2 Tim 2:15) is that we would “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Col 1:10) while guarding ourselves against arrogance (1 Cor 8:1).

Bibliology

Introduction

Bibliology is the category of systematic theology that deals with the revelation, inspiration, historical reliability, canonicity, translation, illumination, interpretation, and the authority of the Scriptures. The attack on the truth is not new, but is continually changing as the enemy changes tactics. Even in NT times, Jude contended earnestly for the faith.

³Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. ⁴For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, Jude 3-4

In more recent years the attack has been changing in flavor as John MacArthur writes below.

... In the **sixties and seventies**, the doctrine of biblical *inerrancy* came under direct attack. The Bible, it was said, was full of errors, and thus could not be trusted as historically or scientifically accurate. In the **eighties and nineties**, the *sufficiency* of Scripture was targeted. The charismatic movement (with its need for additional revelation from God) and Christian psychology (with its emphasis on neo-Freudian counseling techniques) attempted to undermine the fact that God “has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him” as revealed in Scripture (2 P et 1:3). As the **millennium** drew to a close, the attack on God’s revealed truth came in a new way. This time the *relevance* of Scripture was the point of attack. Rather than being directly maligned, church leaders for whom biblical teaching was simply not a major priority quietly discarded the Bible. “The Seeker Movement” to some degree advocated limiting the presentation of divine truth to what unbelievers are willing to tolerate.

A **new movement** is now arising in evangelical circles. Apparently, the main object of attack will be the *perspicuity* of Scripture. Influenced by postmodern notions about language, meaning, subjectivity, and truth, many younger evangelicals are questioning whether the Word of God is clear enough to justify certainty or dogmatism on points of doctrine. Ironically, this new movement to a certain extent ignores all the previous debates. Instead, its proponents are more interested in dialogue and conversation. As a result, they scorn and rebuff propositional truth (which tends to end dialogue rather than cultivate it) as an outmoded vestige of twentieth-century modernism.

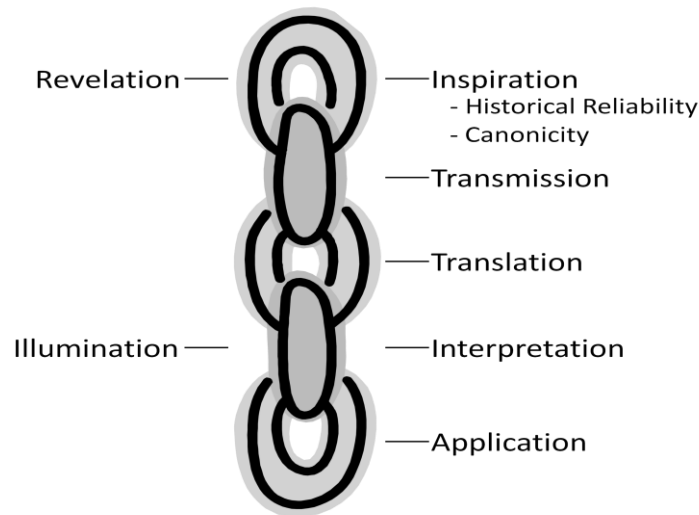
PERSPICUITY OF SCRIPTURE: THE EMERGENT APPROACH by John MacArthur in The Master’s Seminary Journal 17/2 (Fall 2006) 141-158

John McArthur has quoted a pole by sociologist Jeffrey Hayden of 10,000 **Protestant Clergyman** where 7441 responded (GC55-19 “The Work of the Word Part 2”).

The question: Are the Scriptures the inspired and inerrant Word of God?

- Episcopalians – 5%
- Methodists – 13%
- Presbyterian – 18%
- American Lutherans – 23%
- American Baptists – 33%
- Missouri Synod Lutherans – 76%
- Valley Bible Church Members – 100% (???)

During our study, we are looking at the process by which God has communicated to man. We can compare this process to a series of links forming a chain. The process begins with a desire on the part of God to communicate His truth to man and ends with the application of that truth to the heart of the hearer.



Revelation

Revelation speaks of God's truth being unveiled to mankind. If we are to know God, He must reveal Himself to us. God has revealed Himself in two ways: general revelation and specific revelation. General revelation refers to God's communication of His attributes, eternal power, and divine nature in creation (Rom 1:18-20) and in the moral code that God has written on all people's hearts (Rom 2). The universe declares the glory of God (Psa 19) and man is made in God's image (Gen 1) which communicates about God. General revelation is available to all. Non-Christians know about God through nature (Acts 14:17) and can know He is good (Matt 5:45) and wise (Acts 17:29). No one can say they did not know about God (Psa 14:1) for all know He exists. However, this general revelation is seen by man in a distorted fashion because of sin.

Specific revelation is only found in the Bible. The Bible is the only record of God's written revelation to man. General revelation is sufficient for *condemnation* (no one has an excuse, Rom 1:20), specific revelation is sufficient for *salvation*. In fact it is necessary for our life of faith and our maturity toward godliness (2 Pet 1:3).

Inspiration

As we saw in the survey of clergy, many people believe the Bible to contain the Word of God, but not to BE the Word of God. They believe that the Bible is a human book and contains historical and scientific errors and do not believe the Bible is accurate word for word. So, does the Bible simply contain the Word of God or IS it the Word of God? The testimony of Jesus and the Scripture writers is that the Bible IS the Word of God. Inspiration is the doctrine that explains the means and extent of the Bible being the Word of God. In order to be specific about what is meant by the Bible being the Word of God several terms are used.

Inspiration translates the Greek *theopneustos* which literally means "breathed out by God" or "God-Breathed". God is the source of Scripture and as such Scripture takes on His qualities (2 Tim 3:16).

Superintended describes the means by which God wrote His Word. This means that God directed (or moved), but did not dictate to the human authors so that, using their own personalities and styles, they composed and recorded without error in the original manuscripts God's specific revelation to mankind (2 Pet 1:21-22).

Infallible meaning completely incapable of error (i.e. true and trustworthy) (Titus 1:2) and Inerrant meaning completely without error (John 17:17).

Plenary meaning inspired in equal parts, including every word and Verbal meaning extending to the very words ("all" in 2 Tim 3:16 and "no" in 2 Pet 1:21-22). This is shown by the Lord Jesus' and Apostle Paul's statements, usage, and arguments. (Matt 5:18; 22:31-32; Gal 3:16)

The Bible is then the inspired, plenary, verbal, infallible, inerrant in the original manuscripts Word of God!

The result of inspiration:

- The Bible is *holy* (2 Tim 3:15). The word "holy" means "set apart" and the Bible is set apart from all other works as inspired by God. It is in this sense that it is "sacred." No other written material is inspired by God.
- The Bible is *eternal* (Matt 5:17-18; 1 Pet 1:25). The Word of God will not pass away. God has determined to protect His Word and we can have great confidence that what has been delivered to us is complete (Jude 1:3).
- The Bible is *authoritative* (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). Jesus communicated the authority of the Bible by referencing it as such during His temptations in the wilderness. The Scripture quotes or alludes itself repeatedly as an authoritative source. As such, it then can be claimed to be the standard for life, faith and the practice of faith for every person.
- The Bible accomplishes its *purpose* (Heb 4:12; Isa 55:11). It is powerful and therefore able to accomplish God's desire for it in the lives of people. The Scripture is more than words on a page. Unlike any other writing, the words of Scripture are able to perform the work their intended result (1 Thess 2:13) because the co-author, the Holy Spirit, is at work in the lives of the readers. The Word of God cannot be broken (John 10:35) and accomplishes its purpose infallibly.
- The Bible is *inerrant* (John 17:17). The Bible is completely true because God has co-authored it and God Himself is the truth (John 14:6).

An appreciation of these qualities is necessary to ensure obedience to God's Word since it represents God's will completely. It is impossible to neglect the Bible when we truly accept it as the very Word of God. It becomes our delight when we partake of it (Jer 15:16).

The Historical Reliability of the Bible

There are three tests applied to determine historical reliability of the Bible.

- 1) Bibliographic: This test examines if the documents we have today are the same as those penned by the authors. This test considers the quantity of existing manuscripts and the time between the earliest copies and the originals.
- 2) Internal (or eyewitness): This test considers the credibility of the authors and the truthfulness of what was written.
- 3) External: This test considers historical events, geography, archaeology, and cultural consistencies.

The Bible was written over 1500 years by 40 different authors in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) and yet there are no contradictions.

Divine Origin of the Bible

One of the most significant evidences for the divine origin of the Bible is prophecy. There are approximately 2500 prophecies in the Bible with ~2000 already having been fulfilled. (For examples see various works including those of Josh McDowell.) It is statistically impossible for the Bible's detailed prophecies to have been fulfilled through chance, guessing, or intent.

²¹ You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' ²² "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him." Deut 18:21-22

The logic for the divine origin of the Bible is:

1. The Bible is a reliable and trustworthy historical document.
2. Jesus claimed to be God which is demonstrated by His resurrection.
3. The resurrection is a historic event.
4. Since Jesus is God, He speaks with authority on all matters.
5. Jesus considered the OT the Word of God and promised to aid the NT writers.
6. Therefore, the OT and NT are the Word of God.

Canonicity

Canonicity refers to the process by which books of the Bible were recognized as Scripture. When considering canonicity is must first be noted that the Bible is self-authenticating and individuals or church councils have only recognized those books which are Scripture.

Some believe that all the books of the OT were first collected by Ezra around 500 BC. However, the Council of Jamnia in AD 90 is generally recognized as the occasion when the OT cannon was publicly recognized (though Esther, Eccl, and Song of Solomon were disputed).

Specific tests to consider canonicity may be recognized. Did the book indicate Divine authorship? Did it reflect God speaking through a mediator? (e.g., Ex 20:1; Josh 1:1; Isa 2:1) Was the human author a spokesman of God? Was he a prophet or did he have the prophetic gift? (e.g., Deut 31:24-26; 1 Sam 10:25; Neh 8:3) Was the book historically accurate? Did it reflect a record of actual facts? How was the book received by the Jews? The Moody Handbook of Theology by Paul P. Enns

The books of NT began to be recognized as Scripture during the Apostolic period. Paul quotes Deut 25:4 and Luke 10:7 in 1 Tim 5:18 and refers to both as Scripture. Peter recognized Paul's writings as Scripture in 2 Pet 3:15-16.

⁴"You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing. Deut 25:4

⁷"Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. Luke 10:7

¹⁸For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." 1 Tim 5:18

¹⁵and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. 2 Pet 3:15-16

During the post-apostolic era, many writers wrote referring to parts of the NT as Scripture: Clement of Rome (AD 95) recognized eight, Ignatius of Antioch (AD 115) – seven, Polycarp (AD 108) – 15, Ireneaus (AD 185) – 21, and Hippolytus (AD 170-235) – 21. The Muratorian Canon (AD 170) was a compilation of 24 books that were recognized as canonical (excluding Hebrews, James, and one epistle of John). The Council of Laodicea (AD 363), the Council of Hippo (AD 393) and the Council of Carthage (AD 397) all confirm the 27 books of the NT are the only canonical books.

(The Moody Handbook of Theology by Paul P. Enns) How did the church recognize which books were canonical? There were certain tests applied to answer that question.

- (1) *Apostolicity*. Was the author an apostle or did he have a connection with an apostle? For example, Mark wrote under Peter's authority, and Luke wrote under Paul's authority.
- (2) *Acceptance*. Was the book accepted by the church at large? The recognition given a particular book by the church was important. By this canon false books were rejected (but it also delayed recognition of some legitimate books).
- (3) *Content*. Did the book reflect consistency of doctrine with what had been accepted as orthodox teaching? The spurious "gospel of Peter" was rejected as a result of this principle.
- (4) *Inspiration*. Did the book reflect the quality of inspiration? The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha were rejected as a result of not meeting this test. The book should bear evidence of high moral and spiritual values that would reflect a work of the Holy Spirit.

Transmission

The second link in the chain is transmission. This refers to the process in which the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts (and their copies) were copied as accurately as possible.

As the church spread, more and more copies of the Bible were made. We have over 5,400 handwritten copies of parts or the whole of the Greek NT. In the 4th century, when Christianity received official sanction from the State, commercial book manufacturers hired trained scribes, Christian and non-Christian, to make mass copies of the NT. They were well paid and equipped, in contrast to those earlier copiers who served as a labor of love for God's Word. To ensure accuracy, a corrector was hired to proof read each copy.

In spite of the effort of those that loved God's Word and cared for its exact duplication and in spite of the hiring of professionals, the copiers did not make exact copies. The copies do not all agree with each other. In fact, few (if any) copies are precisely identical. Differences in NT Greek manuscripts are the result of errors in copying. While there are an estimated 10,000 places in the NT where there are textual variants, the significant variants are surprisingly few. These errors fall into two categories, unintentional and intentional.

1. Unintentional Errors

- a. One reason errors in copying occurred accidentally was that the copier mistook the words he saw. This occurred simply by missing words or omitting letters or by repeating words. An example of repetition is Matthew 27:17, which some manuscripts read as "Whom do you want me to release for you, (Jesus) Barabbas or Jesus?" Letters or words were also transposed, misspelled or abbreviated. Since the earliest copies had all the letters in capitals with no spaces between them, on occasion the words could be wrongly divided.
- b. Another cause of copying error was in hearing the text wrongly. These occurred when many copiers were together listening to a text being read and then recording what they heard.

- c. One common problem was caused by the familiarity that the copiers had with the Scripture. They would accidentally make the phrase they were copying conform to a phrase that they had remembered from another place in the Bible. This happened mostly with the Gospel accounts, where the narrative stories are similar but not identical. Another example of the error due to memory is Ephesians 5:9, which many manuscripts render "the fruit of the Spirit" rather than "the fruit of light."

⁹(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), Eph 5:9 (NASB)

⁹(for the fruit of the Spirit^[a] is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), Eph 5:9 (NKJV) Footnote: NU-Text reads *light*.

NU-Text These variations from the traditional text generally represent the Alexandrian or Egyptian type ... They are found in the Critical Text published in the twenty-seventh edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament (N) and in the United Bible Societies fourth edition (U), hence the acronym, "NU-Text."

M-Text This symbol indicates points of variation in the Majority Text from the traditional text, ... It should be noted that M stands for whatever reading is printed in the published Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, whether supported by overwhelming, strong, or only a divided majority textual tradition.

- d. Finally, there were errors of judgment. As with all handwritten material, the reader must decipher words that were written by another person. The scribe may have mistakenly assumed a word based on his judgment of the handwriting.

2. Intentional Errors – Most copiers of the Bible believed strongly in the teachings of the church. There was undoubtedly a desire on the part of some to do more than reproduce the Bible.

- a. Some changes were done to more clearly reflect orthodox beliefs. Examples of this doctrinal bias can be found in 1 John 5:7-8 (King James Version) and in John 1:18 which was copied as "only begotten son" instead of "only begotten God" (KJV and NKJV).

⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸[a]the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 1 John 5:7-8 (NASB), Footnote: A few late mss add ...in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that testify on earth, the Spirit

⁷For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. ⁸And there are three that bear witness on earth: [a]the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. 1 John 5:7-8 (NKJV), Footnote: NU-Text and M-Text omit the words from *in heaven* (verse 7) through *on earth* (verse 8). Only four or five very late manuscripts contain these words in Greek.

¹⁸No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. John 1:18 (NASB)

¹⁸No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, [a] who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*. John 1:18 (NKJV), Footnote: NU-Text reads *only begotten God*.

- b. Another problem occurred when copiers sought to harmonize passages with each other. An example of this seen in changes to the Lord's prayer in Luke 11:2-4 so that it agreed with Matt 6:9-13. Also, OT quotes were enlarged in some manuscripts to conform to the Septuagint (LXX).
- c. At other times grammatical changes were made in order to attempt to improve the text. Liturgical changes were made to cause the Scripture to conform to what was spoken in the churches. Examples of this include "Joseph and Mary" in place of "His parents" in Luke 2:41 and "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen." (Matt 6:13).

- d. The final intentional change came when two or more variants were combined into one reading. The best manuscripts of Mark 9:49 read "for everyone will be salted with fire". One manuscript reads "For every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" (cf. Lev 2:13). Many later manuscripts, and thus the King James Version, combine the two to read "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." This practice occurs so often that it has a name, "conflation." Scribes truly were very reluctant to omit any words that could be part of the original text. This is why we don't have 99% of the original text but 101%!

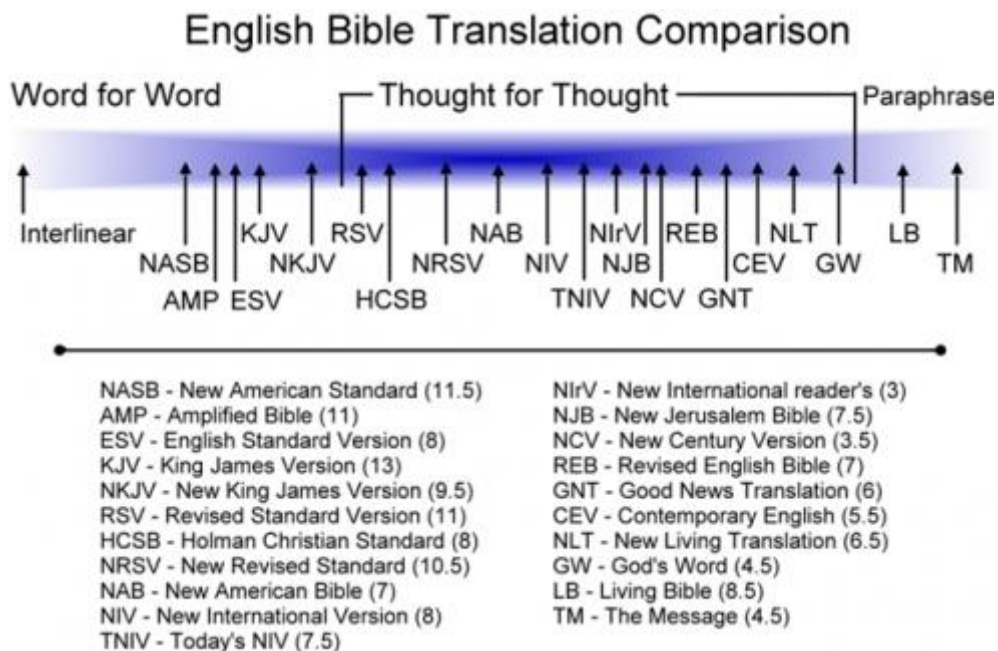
The important point to take away is that the integrity of Scripture is maintained even with these variants. The clear consensus of Greek scholars is that very little teaching is affected by the variations that resulted from scribal error.

- Brooke Foss Westcott and F. J. A. Hort considered only 1/60th of the 10,000 variants rise above "trivialities."
- Ezra Abbot considered 19/20 of the readings to be "various" rather than "rival," and 19/20 of the remaining rival readings to be of so little importance that their adoption or rejection makes no real difference in the sense of the passage.
- Philip Schaff considered only 400 variants to affect the sense of the passage, only 50 affect the sense significantly, and not one affected "an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching." A.T. Robertson suggested that the real concern of textual criticism is of a "thousandth part of the entire text."
- J. Harold Greenlee said "no Christian doctrine ... hangs on a debatable text".

Translation

In order for God's Word to reach all nations (cf. Matt 28:19) it must be translated. God validated the work of translation by using the Greek translation (the Septuagint) of the OT extensively. If the NT can quote the Greek translation of the OT then translations of the Bible are important. If people are going to understand the Word of God, then Bible translations are essential. Translation involves seeking the most accurate rendering of the original language manuscripts into our own language. However, only the original manuscripts are inspired – not translations. God has maintained the integrity of the original through sovereignly bringing about the transmission of the original through scribal copying.

The chart below shows the range of English translations from most literal to most paraphrased. (from <http://defendingcontending.com/2009/08/31/bible-translation-comparison-chart>)



Illumination and Clarity

Illumination refers to the Holy Spirit's ministry as He works in the believer to bring spiritual understanding, enabling us to perceive spiritual truth, and heart application of Scripture (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). Because of illumination, any believer, by depending on the Holy Spirit and using the proper rules of interpretation, can study the scriptures for his own growth and edification, and lead others to salvation in Christ.

¹⁰For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. ¹⁴But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. 1 Cor 2:7-15

Akin to the doctrine of illumination is the doctrine that the Scriptures are clear. Without clarity, God through Paul could not have been able to exhort Timothy and us to:

¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 2 Tim 2:15

The basic doctrine means that the Bible can be understood by people through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and that people need to search the Scripture and judge for themselves what it means. Scripture itself attests its own perspicuity, but not to the point that it cannot be misunderstood or is in every point equally simple and clear. The doctrine does not rule out the need for interpretation, explanation, and exposition of the Bible by qualified leaders. The doctrine does mean that Scripture is ... THE PERSPICUITY OF SCRIPTURE by Larry D. Pettegrew in The Master's Seminary Journal TMSJ 15/2 (Fall 2004) 209-225.

The Scriptures are:

1) clear enough for the simplest person

^{7b}The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. Psa19:7b

2) deep enough for those of the highest intellectual ability

³³Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! Rom 11:33

3) clear in essential matters

4) obscure in some places to people because of their sinfulness

"Have you not read..." Matt 12:3,5; 19:4; 21:6; 22:31; Mar 2:25; 12:10, 26; Luke 6:3

5) understandable through ordinary means

6) understandable by an unsaved person on an external level

7) understandable in its significance by a saved person through the illumination of the Holy Spirit,

¹⁴But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 1 Cor 2:14

8) and available to every believer whose faith must rest on the Scriptures. Each believer is responsible to read and study the Scriptures for themselves and not depend solely on other individuals or an institution (Acts 17:11)

What does all this have to do with biblical clarity? Simply this: In Scripture, the person of God and the Word of God are everywhere interrelated, so much so that whatever is true about the character of God is true about the nature of God's Word. Thus, to deny the clarity of Scripture is to call into question God's ability to communicate clearly. But by affirming the fact that the Bible's message is inherently understandable, the doctrine of perspicuity rightly acknowledges that the Spirit of God has revealed divine truth in a comprehensible form. PERSPICUITY OF SCRIPTURE: THE EMERGENT APPROACH by John MacArthur in *The Master's Seminary Journal* 17/2 (Fall 2006) 141-158

Interpretation

Interpretation has to do with discovering what the Scriptures say. It refers to how we understand what Scripture says by applying hermeneutics – or the art and science of Biblical interpretation. There are three general types of hermeneutical systems: Allegorical, Semi-Allegorical/Semi-Literal, and Literal (or Plain or Normal). Allegorical hermeneutics assigns symbolic senses to words which results in a different meaning to the text which the author never intended to convey. Literal (Plain or Normal) hermeneutics takes the plain literal sense while understanding the historical, immediate, and wider contexts, and the uses of figures of speech. This is also called the plain, literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation. This is the correct method of interpretation.

As we read through and understand the chronology of the Bible, we see that God did not provide all information about Himself at a single time, but progressively added more revelation concerning Himself and His plan. This is the idea of progressive revelation.

Remember one important thing: Just because the OT was progressive does not mean that it is wrong in any way. There is simply development. For example, the standards of morality established in the OT were totally refined in Jesus. God gave man a progressive revelation. The distinction is not in the nature of the truth; it's in the amount and time of it. Children are first taught letters; then they worry about the words and the sentences. God gave His revelation in the same way. His spelling book began with types, ceremonies, and prophecies and progressed to final completion in Christ. *The Superiority of Christ*; Introduction to Hebrews by John MacArthur; Hebrews 1:1-2 Tape GC 1600

Also, dispensationalism is a framework for interpreting the Bible that recognizes that God has dealt with people differently through the ages or dispensations. Up to eight dispensations can be identified:

- 1) creation to the fall being the **dispensation of innocence**,
- 2) the fall to Noah being the **dispensation of conscience**,
- 3) Noah to Abraham being the **dispensation of human government**,
- 4) Abraham to the Law of Moses, being the **dispensation of covenant/promise**,
- 5) the Law of Moses to Christ being the **dispensation of the law**,
- 6) Christ to the tribulation (church age) being the **dispensation of grace**,
- 7) the **tribulation period being a dispensation**,
- 8) the Millennium to the eternal state being the **dispensation of the fullness of times**.

Yet God has maintained the same way to enter into a relationship with Himself in all dispensations – faith. The distinctives of dispensationalism are 1) maintaining a consistently literal interpretation of Scripture, 2) maintaining a distinction between Israel and the church, and 3) maintaining that the glory of God as God's ultimate purpose in the world.

Application and the Sufficiency of Scripture

The last link in our chain is application, the bringing of truth to bear on our experience so that transformation results. This step is frequently left out. When it is, the chain is broken, and the communication process is short-circuited!

²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. James 1:22-24

This final link emphasizes that truth should affect how we think and act. This should occur because the Scriptures are authoritative and constitute the believer's only source of faith and practice (Matt 5:18; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20-21). Only Scripture is perfectly adequate for all matters of faith and conduct – for salvation *and* sanctification. It is all-sufficient in regards to the soul of man, in our relationship to God, and in our relationship to others.

So, does the Bible answer every question you might have? A popular movie is quoted as saying concerning the Bible, "This book doesn't have any answers." (Homer Simpson in "The Simpsons Movie") Yet, nothing is farther from the truth. Only Scripture is perfectly adequate for all matters of faith and conduct – for salvation and sanctification. Only Scripture is able to meet all the spiritual needs of God's people. Scripture is all-sufficient in regards to the soul of man, in our relationship to God, and in our relationship to others. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks. (2 Pet 1:3; Matt 4:4; Heb 4:12; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 1 Pet 2:2; Psa 19:7-13; 119:9, 11; 119:24)

The sufficiency of Scripture from Psalm 119.

- Blessed (joy and contentment) who keep (Psa 119:1-2)
- Produces thankfulness (Psa 119:7, 170-171)
- Keeps from sin (Psa 119:9, 11, 133; 165)
- Produces joy (Psa 119:14, 111, 162)
- Counsels the believer (Psa 119:24)
- Revives (Psa 119:25)
- Strengthens from grief (Psa 119:28, 143)
- Produces reverence for God (Psa 119:38, 120)
- Source of hope (Psa 119:49, 92)
- Comforts in affliction (Psa 119:50)
- Affliction causes the learning of Word (Psa 119:71)
- Makes wise (Psa 119:98-100)
- Gives understanding (Psa 119:104, 130)
- Produces peace (Psa 119:165)

In spite of the clear teaching that Scripture is solely sufficient for all matters faith and conduct, many still deny its sufficiency (Introduction to Biblical Counseling, page 11).

Theology Proper

Theology Proper is the category of systematic theology that deals with nature and character of God Himself – arguments for His existence, His attributes, His names, His decree, the Trinity, and God the Father. The pursuit of the knowledge of God is the highest pursuit.

²³Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; ²⁴but let him who boasts boast of this, that he **understands and knows Me**, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD. Jer 9:23-24

Additionally, our understanding of God and what we think about him affects us deeply. Tozer said...

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." "The Knowledge of the Holy"

Arguments for the Existence of God

There are naturalistic and Biblical arguments for the existence of God. The main naturalistic arguments are:

1. Cosmological (*cosmos*, "world"). The universe is an effect that requires an adequate cause, and the only sufficient cause is God (Psa 19:1).
2. Teleological (*telos*, "end"). The universe not only proves a maker but also a designer (Rom 1:18-20). There is observable purpose in the universe that argues for the existence of God as its designer.
3. Anthropological (*anthropos*, "man"). Since man is a moral and intellectual being, he must have had a maker who is also a moral and intelligent being (Acts 17:29). Man's moral nature, religious instincts, conscience, and emotional nature argue for existence of God.
4. Ontological (*on*, "being"). Man has the idea of the Most Perfect Being. This idea includes the idea of existence, since a being, otherwise perfect, who did not exist would not be as perfect as a perfect being who did exist. Therefore, since the idea of existence is contained in the idea of the Most Perfect Being, the Most Perfect Being must exist.

Biblically, we see the arguments from general revelation: His glory and power in creating the universe (Psa 19:1), His supremacy and divine nature (Rom 1:20), His providential control of nature (Acts 14:17), His goodness (Matt 5:45), and His intelligence and living existence (Acts 17:24-29).

God's Attributes

An attribute of God is either something that the Bible says is true about God or what the Bible shows is true about God. The attributes of God can be categorized multiple ways. God is transcendent over all (1 Kings 8:27; Isa 40:21-25) and immanent in the world (Psa 139 see v7-10). Theologians often discuss the attributes of God by dividing them into two categories, those that deal with God's transcendency and belong to Him alone (absolute or incommunicable or divine) and those deal with His immanency and are in some way found in man (relative or communicable or personal). None of God's attributes are completely communicable to us. We can never become like God.

Divine attributes:

1. Simplicity – God is not a composite or compound being in essence, He is spirit only (John 4:24).
2. Self-existence – God is independent from everything; His being is in no way dependent upon anything outside Himself and exists forever in Himself alone (Ex 3:14; Psa 90:2; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16-17).
3. Unity – God is one in number, indivisible, and unique (Deut 6:4).
4. Infinity – God has no bounds or limits. He is not limited by time-space. He is transcendent (1 Kings 8:27; Acts 17:28).

5. Eternity – Free from succession of time. He exists endlessly from eternity past to eternity future. All past, present, and future events are equally vivid to Him (Gen 21:33; Psa 90:2).
6. Immutability – God is unchanging and unchangeable. He is never inconsistent or growing or developing (James 1:17).

Heresy: Process Theology says that God improves or grows with time, He is continually changing. (Systematic Theology, Grudem Page 166)

7. Omnipresence – God is everywhere (Psa 139:7-12).
8. Sovereignty – God is the supreme ruler. He is in control of all events (Eph 1).
9. Omniscience – God knows all actual and possible things (Matt 11:21).

God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all being and every being, all creaturehood and all creatures, every plurality and all pluralities, all law and every law, all relations, all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feeling, all desires, every unuttered secret, all thrones and dominions, all personalities, all things visible and invisible in heaven and in earth, motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven, and hell. A. W. TOZER

10. Omnipotence – God is all powerful and able to accomplish anything consistent with His nature (Rev 19:6).

Personal Attributes:

1. Justice – Moral equity, “no respect of persons” (Acts 17:31; Col 3:25)
2. Love – God seeking the highest good of displaying His own will (Eph 2:4-5, 1 John 4:8; John 3:16; 14:23; 16:27; Rom 5:8; 8:37; 9:13)
3. Truth – Agreement to and consistency with all that is represented by God Himself (John 17:3, Titus 1:2, Rom 3:4, Heb 6:18)
4. Freedom – Independence from His creatures (Isa 40:13-14)
5. Holiness – Pure and separate from sin (1 John 1:5)
6. Lovingkindness – Benevolent goodness (Psa 6:4; 51:1; Isa 54:8-10; Rom 2:4; Col 3:12)
7. Compassion – Goodness to those in difficulty (2 Sam 24:14; Neh 9:19; Lam 3:22; Psa 103:13; Eph 2:4; 2 Cor 1:3)
8. Grace – Goodness applied to undeserving people (John 1:14; Rom 5:15; Eph 2:8; 1 Pet 5:10)
9. Longsuffering – Patience toward those who deserve to be punished (Rom 3:25; 9:22; 1 Tim 1:16; 2 Pet 3:9, 15)
10. Wrath – Holiness and the application of justice (Ex 20:5; 34:14; Deut 32:3-4)

God’s Names

The names of God in Scripture provide additional revelation concerning His character, works, and relationship to us. A name in Bible times revealed some characteristic of a person.

⁹O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth! Psa 8:9

1. Yahweh (YHWH) or Jehovah – Meaning “Self-existent One” (Ex 3:14) emphasizes God’s holiness, hatred of sin, and love of sinners. Hebrew does not have vowels, it depends on vowel markings that have been lost. Therefore, the proper pronunciation of YHWH has been lost. Yahweh is the preferred rendering of the Hebrew consonants YHWH. “Jehovah” came about by interspersing the vowel markings of Adonai with YHWH.
 - a. Yahweh Jireh – Meaning “the Lord will provide” (Gen 22:13-14)
 - b. Yahweh Nissi – Meaning “the Lord my banner” (Ex 17:15)
 - c. Yahweh Shalom – Meaning “the Lord is peace” (Judg 6:24)
 - d. Yahweh Sabaoth – Meaning “the Lord of hosts” (1 Sam 1:3)
 - e. Yahweh Maccaddeshcem – Meaning “the Lord your Sanctifier” (Ex 31:13)

- f. Yahweh Roi – Meaning “the Lord is my Shepherd” (Psa 23:1)
 - g. Yahweh Tsidkenu – Meaning “the Lord our righteousness” (Jer 23:6)
 - h. Yahweh El Gmolah – Meaning “the Lord God of recompense” (Jer 51:56)
 - i. Yahweh Nakeh – Meaning “the Lord who smites” (Ezek 7:9)
 - j. Yahweh Shammah – Meaning “the Lord who is present” (Ezek 48:35)
 - k. Yahweh Elohim Israel – Meaning “the Lord the God of Israel” (Judg 5:3, Isa 17:6)
2. Elohim – Meaning “Strong One”, it is an OT plural word allowing for the NT revelation of the Trinity (Gen 1:26).
 - a. El Elyon – Meaning “Most High” (Isa 14:13-14)
 - b. El Roi – Meaning “the Strong One who sees” (Gen 16:13)
 - c. El Shaddai – Meaning “Almighty God” (Gen 17:1-2)
 - d. El Olam – Meaning “Everlasting God” (Isa 40:28)
 3. Adonai – Meaning “Lord” (Isa 6:8-11).
 4. God (Theos) – The most common designation in the NT (Titus 2:13).
 5. Lord (Kurios) – Emphasizing authority and supremacy (John 20:28).
 6. Master (Despotes) – Emphasizes the idea of ownership (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Rev 6:10; 2 Pet 2:1)
 7. Father – Particularly used in the NT, emphasizing closeness of relationship (Eph 1:2)

God’s Decrees

The decree of God refers to His sovereign purpose – His comprehensive plan that includes all events that will ever occur. The Westminster Shorter Confession states: “The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.” (Isa 25:1; 46:11; Eph 1:11) Grudem states that the decrees of God are His “...eternal plans whereby, before the creation of the world, He determined to bring about everything that happens.”

This is a particular work of the Father within the Trinity. The Father sovereignly plans and brings about all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psa 145:8-9; 1 Cor 8:6). He is sovereign in providence and salvation (Psa 103:19; Rom 11:36). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chron 29:11). In His sovereignty, He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Hab 1:13; John 8:38-47). His sovereignty does not absolve people of their responsibility; people are still accountable (1 Pet 1:17).

1. God’s plan encompasses all things – He is sovereign over all things.
2. God’s plan was formed in eternity past (Eph 1:4, 2 Tim 1:9, 1 Pet 1:20).
3. God’s plan is wise, perfect, and beyond our full comprehension (Rom 11:33-36, Psa 104:24, Prov 3:19).
4. God’s plan is according to His will (Dan 4:35, Eph 1:11).
5. God’s plan encompasses His directive will (Isa 45:18, Dan 4:35, Dan 2:21, Eph 1:4) and His permissive will through which He brings things about through secondary means (such as the free will sinful acts of men).
6. The purpose of God’s plan is His glory (Psa 19:1; Eph 1:4-6, 11-12; Rom 9:23; Rev 4:11).
7. God’s plan encompasses all things, yet man is responsible for his sin (Rom 3:23).
8. God, in some cases, uses man to carry out the plan (e.g. election and evangelism) (Acts 10:1-5).

The Trinity

The doctrine of God as Three-in-One is unique to Christianity. It is admittedly difficult to grasp the truth of God as a Triune Being, yet it should not surprise us to find aspects of God that are beyond our full and complete comprehension (Isa 55:8-9; Rom 11:33). The doctrine's difficulty does not diminish its importance – the issue of whom we worship is of profound significance in life. The Trinity results from an understanding of God derived from a systemization of teachings from His Word. Apart from the NT, we could not have conceived of God in the manner He has presented Himself to us. Because the Trinity accurately reflects the being of God, if we love God we are compelled to seek to understand it and study it. Our passion for God moves us to glorify Him as we ought, giving proper adoration to His Being as revealed to us. Therefore, while difficult, the doctrine of the Trinity is far from merely academic.

The Trinity Defined

The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that there is only one God who exists in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity is co-equal and co-eternal in one united nature as Divine. Each person of the Godhead has the same attributes and are equally worthy of adoration, worship, and faith. Yet each person has particular works He accomplishes.

The Trinity Discerned

Since the word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible, its truth is seen by bringing a series of truths together into a complete whole. The Trinity is deduced through an abundance of clear teaching of the Bible concerning four fundamental points:

1. God is One.
2. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct persons.
3. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are described in the Bible as God.
4. God is unchangeable.

If God is One and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each individually God and immutable, then the Trinity is the necessary conclusion.

The Oneness of God

The description of the Trinity begins with the unity of God. There is only one God. The OT affirms the oneness of God (Deut 6:4; Jer 10:10; Isa 43:10-13). The NT also affirms the oneness of God (1 Cor 8:4-6; James 2:19). The oneness of God is beyond His unity. God is united in being. Unity is not only a description of God, it is His essence. God is indivisible.

The Threeness of God

The one God exists eternally as three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The very first hint of the plurality of Persons within the Godhead comes as early as the first chapter of the Bible where God speaks of Himself in a plural sense (Gen 1:26-27 cf. Gen 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8). In context, the plural name for God, Elohim, speaks of God's supremacy more than the Trinity. However, while the plural is for magnification it opens the door for plurality. Also, the plural sense in Hebrew is three or more, further implying the Trinity.

The threeness of God is developed in the NT as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all recognized as God. This observation of the Deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is foundation to Trinitarianism. Importantly, the threeness of God does not contradict the oneness of God because the threeness is in respect to *persons* and oneness is in respect to *essence*. Christianity does not claim that God is one person and three people, or one nature and three natures. This would be contradictory. The term "person" is somewhat inadequate because it connotes some things that are true of God and some things that are not. By using the term "person," Christians do not mean that God has a physical body or that there are three distinct beings. We have only known one person as equaling one being. The concept of three persons in one being is unfamiliar to us.

The Distinction of Persons

In the OT, God the Father is distinguished within the Godhead in several ways.

- God is set apart from the Lord (Gen 19:24; Hos 1:7).
- The Lord is set apart from the Redeemer (Isa 59:20).
- The Lord is set apart from the Spirit (Isa 48:16; 59:21; 63:9-10).
- The Lord is set apart from the Angel of the Lord (Gen 16:7-13; Mal 3:1).

In the NT, God the Father is distinguished from the Son in that they relate with each other (Matt 17:5; 27:46). Also, the Son and the Spirit are distinct from each other (John 16:13-14).

The Relationship of Persons

Jesus Christ is uniquely described as God's "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). He is also described as "the only begotten God" in John 1:18. The Holy Spirit is uniquely described as "proceeding from the Father" in John 15:26. The Father sent the Son (John 5:36-37; 6:44; 1 John 4:14) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 1 Peter 1:12) in Christ's name. Due to the eternity of Jesus Christ, "begotten" must be understood in the sense of generation not creation. From this we can deduce that the Father begat the Son and the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father. The difference between "begat" and "proceed" is a fine point indeed. The more common word "sent" is perhaps the safest place to focus the relationship within the members of the Trinity.

There is clearly an initiating role that God the Father has in the Trinity. The Father sent the Son with authority (Matt 28:20; John 5:26-27, 30) and also sent the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). The Son clearly has the initiating role with the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). Whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Son was one of the reasons for the "Great Schism" in 1054 AD, when the Eastern and Western church split, dividing the organized church. The Eastern church (Orthodox Church) taught that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. The Western church (Roman Catholic Church) taught that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. In light of John 15:26 and 16:7 saying that the Son will send the Holy Spirit, the Western Church has the weight of the Scripture on its side.

The relationship within the Trinity never describes the Father in a subordinate role and never describes the Holy Spirit in an initiating role. While there is a functional order within the Trinity, this does not lead us to conclude there is a subordinate nature. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in nature as God. We can see an analogy with mankind where all have an equal humanness but function differently in our roles. The nature of God's immutability lead us to believe, with historical Christianity, that the ordering of the relationships within the Trinity is eternal.

As there is a functional order within the roles of the Trinity, there is an order of emphasis that the Father, Son and, Holy Spirit serving in relation to creation. For example, in salvation we find the Father in the role of electing (1 Pet 1:2), the Son in the role of redeeming (1 Pet 1:18), and the Holy Spirit in the role of regenerating (Titus 3:5).

The limitations of analogies

Many analogies have been suggested to illustrate the Trinity over the past two millenniums. Some of the more notable include: The analogies of time (past, present, future), matter (solid, liquid, gas), the sun (itself, its light and its heat), and space (height, width, depth) distort a fair representation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Each of these analogies lead toward the heresy of modalism – one God who acts in different roles (or modes) as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Analogies from mathematics have represented God as $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$ or as one cubed (1^3). A very common geometric illustration is a triangle, with the Father at the top of the triangle. Several variations exist of the triangle illustration, showing all three as God but yet distinct from each other. All illustrations necessarily fall short of communicating God. What illustration can be created to fully represent a single human, much less God Himself? It is impossible to look at what is created and see anything more than a image of certain aspects of God. To describe God in words is difficult enough without confusing Him by using flawed analogies.

The major corruptions of the Trinity

Since the early church there have always been groups that have deviated from Trinitarian doctrine. While the groups change, the deviations are similar and can be listed. The development of the Trinity has come as a result of its denial. Those opposing the Trinity have forced God's people to understand the Scripture more clearly in this matter.

1. Arianism – Arius was a 4th century church leader from North Africa who led a large movement opposing the Deity of Christ. Arianism taught that God was One and that Christ was the first of God's created order. Arius was vigorously opposed and the focus of the Council of Nicaea in 325. This council produced the famous Nicene Creed. Arianism survives today most notably in the Jehovah's Witnesses.

"We believe in one God, the Father All Governing, creator of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father as only begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created, of the same essence as the Father, through whom all things came into being, both in heaven and in earth; Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, becoming human. He suffered and the third day He rose, and ascended into the heavens. And He will come to judge both the living and the dead. And [we believe] in the Holy Spirit. But, those who say, Once He was not, or He was not before His generation, or He came to be out of nothing, or who assert that He, the Son of God, is of a different hypostasis or ousia, or that He is a creature, or changeable, or mutable, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them."

2. Modalism – Taught that One God manifested Himself in three separate appearances at points in time, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit while ignoring the distinction between the Persons of the Trinity. It is found most commonly today in Oneness Pentecostalism, the largest organization being the United Pentecostal Church. T. D. Jakes is a well known tele-preacher who teaches modalism.
3. Adoptionism – Also known as dynamic monarchianism, saw Jesus as a human endowed with unusual power by the Holy Spirit. The idea of the Holy Spirit as an empowering force can be found today in the original Worldwide Church of God and in Christadelphianism.

The importance of the Trinity

Christians consider the Trinity to be an essential doctrine of the faith because it is God's being. To worship apart from Trinitarianism is to worship another God. To deny the Trinity necessarily results in grave results to essential truths. For example, if Jesus is not fully God, then He could not justly suffer for our sins as the perfect sacrifice. Our sin is first and foremost against God Himself. It is because of the Trinity that Jesus was worthy to pay the penalty for our sin.

This impact of a distorted view of the Trinity on the gospel can be observed by the strong correlation between a flawed view of the Trinity and a flawed view of grace. Every group that distorts the Trinity has a corresponding distortion of the gospel of God's grace. The Trinity is essential to the gospel theologically and in practice.

Also, we will not worship God the Son if we do not consider Him to be Divine. Our worship of God should grow according to our understanding of Him. Those who distort God by denying the Trinity lead to robbing God of worship. They not only are failing to worship the Son for themselves, they are leading others astray in worship. These things strike at the heart of what it means to be a Christian.

In addition, the imbalances we find in worship today come from wrong emphasis in our view of God. People who have exalted the role of the Spirit in worship become lost in a search for experiences with God. Yet if we diminish the truth that those who worship must do so in Spirit and truth (John 4:24), we can lose the joy and power of true worship. Can a person become a Christian without a proper understanding of the Trinity? Yes, for several reasons. First, our salvation is not dependent upon our ability to understand God. Salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ, not through our doctrinal study. Second, how much doctrine can we expect a new Christian to understand? How many in the early church could accurately explain the Trinity? While a person can believe in Jesus Christ apart from an accurate understanding of the Trinity, a person cannot deny the Trinity and believe in Christ. To reject and oppose the Trinity is a serious matter indeed. The ancient church rightfully declared these false teachers as enemies of God.

Trinitarian Formulas in the New Testament

There are several places in the NT where the Trinity is referenced in one passage. Baptism is to be done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Great Commission of Matthew 28 is the best Trinitarian text because it not only includes the three Persons in one reference but it unites them as one being. The word "name" is singular, signifying a unity of Being with authority.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in **the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit**" Matt 28:19:

Several other Trinitarian references in the NT show the relationship of the three Persons of the Trinity together in one passage. Unlike Matthew 28:19, these Trinitarian references do not prove the Trinity, but they nevertheless suggest that God is Three-in-One.

And after being baptized, **Jesus** went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending as a dove, and coming upon **Him**, and behold, **a voice out of the heavens**, saying, "This is My beloved **Son**, in whom **I** am well-pleased." Matt 3:16-17

"**I** will ask the **Father**, and **He** will give you another **Helper**, that **He** may be with you forever." John 14:16

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. 1 Cor 12:4-6:

The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit**, be with you all. 2 Cor 13:14

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. Eph 4:4-6:

who are chosen according to the foreknowledge **of God the Father**, by the sanctifying work of the **Spirit**, that you may **obey Jesus Christ** and be sprinkled with His blood. 1 Pet 1:1-2

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the **Holy Spirit**; keep yourselves in the love of **God**, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our **Lord Jesus Christ** to eternal life. Jude 20-21

Evidence of Christ as God from Jesus Himself

The pivotal proof of the Trinity in Scripture is the Deity of Christ. While not necessarily so, in practice, once the Deity of Christ is accepted, the doctrine of the Trinity follows.

1. Jesus accepts the title of God (John 20:28; Matt 16:16) – Jesus would be greatly remiss in allowing Thomas in John 20:28 to stand uncorrected in assigning Him the name of God. If Jesus were not God, He should have done what Peter did in Acts 10:25-26 and distinguish Himself as only a man. Rather, Jesus confirms Thomas' exaltation of Him.
2. Jesus claims to do what only God can do (Mark 2:5-7; John 5:25). The scribes were correct in asking "who can forgive sins but God alone?"
3. Jesus claims attributes that only God has. By ascribing these attributes to Himself, Jesus equated Himself to God.
 - Eternality (John 8:58; John 17:5)
 - Omnipresence (Matt 18:20; 28:20)
 - Omniscience (Matt 16:21; Luke 6:8; 11:17; John 4:29)
 - Omnipotence (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 5:11-15; John 11:38-44)
4. Jesus claims to be the "I am" John 8:58. God declared Himself to be eternally pre-existing in the OT (Ex 3:14; Deut 32:39; Isa 41:4; 43:10). Jesus uses the same term to claim to be also eternally existing. By doing so, Jesus does more than ascribes eternity to Himself, He assumes a name of God for Himself.

5. Jesus identifies Himself with God (John 10:30; 17:5). Jesus is one with God in more than simply a sense of cooperation, such as believers in Christ are one. Jesus is one with God in essence. Thus He is glorified with God (John 17:5) and this is why the Jews, understanding this claim, attempted to stone Him for making Himself out to be God (John 10:32). Jesus' words, "I and the Father are one" brings together the distinction of persons with the unity of being. One does not mean one in person for the word "one" is in the neuter form, not in the masculine. It speaks of essence.
6. Jesus accepts worship (John 5:23; John 9:38; Matt 28:9). Worship of any created thing is condemned in the Scripture (Rom 1:25). By accepting worship Jesus separated Himself as the Creator and co-equal with God.

Evidence of Christ as God from Other New Testament Passages

Many other NT references explicitly call Jesus "God" or describe Him as God. Each of these stand alone in the proof of the Deity of Christ, but taken together they are overwhelming evidence.

- The word [Jesus] was God: John 1:1
- Jesus is God with us: Matt 1:23 (cf. Isa 7:14)
- The church of God: Acts 20:28
- Jesus is God over all: Rom 9:5
- Jesus is the Creator: Col 1:15-18
- Jesus has the fullness of Deity: Col 2:9
- Jesus is our great God and Savior: Titus 2:13; 2 Pet 1:1
- Jesus is worshipped: Heb 1:6; Phil 2:10 (cf. Rev. 19:10)
- Jesus is called "God" by the Father: Heb 1:8
- Jesus is the True God and Eternal Life: 1 John 5:20
- Jesus is the Alpha and Omega: Rev 22:13....1:8, 1:17. 2:8; 21:8 (cf. Isa 41:4; 44:6)

Evidence that God in the Old Testament is Jesus in the New Testament

Many times the NT describes Christ through quotations or allusions to the OT. In many cases, those references in the OT are speaking of God. This is very compelling evidence that equates Jesus in the NT with God in the OT.

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|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Eternal Creator: | Psa 102:25-27 | Heb 1:10-12 |
| • Creator: | Isa 40:28 | John 1:3 |
| • Savior: | Isa 45:22; 43:11 | John 4:42 |
| • Raises the dead: | 1 Sam 2:6 | John 5:21 |
| • Means of salvation: | Joel 2:32 | Rom 10:13 |
| • Judge: | Joel 3:12 | John 5:27; cf. Matt 25:31ff. |
| • Light: | Isa 60:19-20 | John 8:12 |
| • I AM: | Ex 3:14 | John 8:58; cf. John 18:5-6 |
| • Shepherd: | Psa 23:1 | John 10:11 |
| • Glory of God: | Isa 42:8 | John 17:1, 5 |
| • First and Last: | Isa 41:4; 44:6 | Rev 1:17; 2:8 |
| • Redeemer: | Hosea 13:14 | Rev 5:9 |
| • Bridegroom: | Isa 62:5; cf. Hosea 2:16 | Rev 21:2 |
| • Rock: | Psa 18:2 | 1 Cor 10:4 |
| • Forgiver of sins: | Jer 31:34 | Mark 2:7, 10 |
| • Creator of angels: | Psa 148:5 | Col 1:16 |
| • Confessed as Lord: | Isa 45:23 | Phil 2:10 |
| • Jesus is the Mighty God: | Isa 9:6 | John 3:16 |

The term "Lord" in the OT refers to God and it is used in the NT to refer to Jesus. One occurrence is Matthew 3:3, quoting Isaiah 40:3, which clearly refers to Jesus as the Lord as God in the OT.

Evidence of the Holy Spirit as God

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. Once the Deity of Christ is accepted, the Deity of the Holy Spirit appeared to follow. Yet some who deny Christ's Deity have taught that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force used by God. However, the Holy Spirit, known also as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is credited with the attributes of God in the Scripture. In more than 90 places, the Bible calls the Spirit of God the "Holy Spirit." Holiness is a basic characteristic of the Spirit. Insulting the Spirit is as sinful as trampling the Son of God under foot (Heb 10:29). The Spirit is inherently holy in His essence, rather than being assigned holiness as with the tabernacle or the temple.

The Spirit also has the infinite attributes of God:

- **Eternality:** The Spirit is "eternal" (John 14:16; Heb 9:14).
- **Omnipresence:** The Holy Spirit is omnipresent according to Psalm 139:7-8, being in heaven and in Sheol (139:8). God's Spirit fills many people at the same time (1 Cor 6:19).
- **Omniscience:** The Spirit of God is omniscient and "knows the thoughts of God" (1 Cor 2:11). The Spirit knows all things and is able to teach all things (John 14:26).
- **Omnipotence:** The works of God, such as creation, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit (Job 33:4; Psa 104:30). Also, the miracles of Jesus Christ were done "by the Spirit" (Matt 12:28). In Paul's ministry, the work that Christ accomplished was "through the power of the Spirit" (Rom 15:18-19).

Holiness, eternity, omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence are incommunicable attributes of God's essence, showing the Holy Spirit has the basic nature of God.

In Acts 5:3, Peter rebukes to Ananias for lying to the Holy Spirit. In the next verse, Peter describes the lie as being not to men but to God. This passage teaches that the Holy Spirit is both a Person and is equal to God. No one lies to a force and the Holy Spirit is more than representative of God. According to Acts 5:3-4, the Holy Spirit is God. This type of interchange of the Holy Spirit and God is also found with 1 Corinthians 3:16 (temple of the God) and 1 Corinthians 6:19 (temple of the Holy Spirit). Again, in Hebrews 10:15-17 the Spirit is described as saying what the Lord said. The equating of the Holy Spirit with God is also found in Acts 13:2 and in Hebrews 3:7-11.

That the Holy Spirit is a Person, not a force, can be found in the masculine references to Him. The Greek word for "spirit" (PNEUMA) is a neuter word, yet there are places where it is changed to a masculine word when the word is used to refer to the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14). Furthermore, there are many references to the Holy Spirit involved in personal activities, such as speaking (Acts 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 21:11; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 3:7), being grieved (Eph 4:30), teaching (John 14:26), bearing witness (15:26), convicting (16:8), and guiding (16:13).

Trinity Conclusion

Because God is uniquely three Persons in one Being, there are no analogies that can completely communicate the Trinity. Because the concept of three Persons dwelling in one Divine Being is unfamiliar to mankind, it is difficult to communicate this doctrine. The difficulty of man's understanding does not negate the importance of the Trinity. God is complex and what more important undertaking exists than to focus our attention on God's Being? The practical importance of the doctrine of the Trinity is that it requires us to pay equal attention, and give equal honor, to all three persons.

God the Father

God the Father is the First Person of the Trinity. The Father is Father over all creation (Acts 17:29), Father of Israel (Ex 4:23), Father of the Lord Jesus (Matt 3:17), and Father of believers (Gal 3:26). The works of the Father, in general, center on being the author of the decree (plan) (Psa 2:7-9).

Relation in the Godhead

God the Father is revealed in the Bible as the first person of the Trinity, three persons in one Being - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The relation of the Father to the Trinity is one of equality in essence but supremacy in role. There is an irreversible order of relationship within the Trinity as the Father sending and commissioning the Son (John 20:21) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16), just as the Son sends and commissions the Holy Spirit. It is this role as the initiator that brings the Father to be properly designated the first person of the Trinity. In addition, the interaction of Jesus with the Father is different than Christ's interaction with the Holy Spirit. Christ clearly saw Himself as being submissive to the Father (Luke 22:42). The Father is preeminent in relation to the Son and the Spirit, yet is united in being and equal in person.

The Father of Creation

All three persons of the Trinity participated in the creation, yet God the Father is in a special way the Father of all. Eph 3:14-15 shows that every created being in heaven and earth make up a family with the Father as the head. Mal 2:10, 1 Cor 8:6 and Heb 12:9 seem to echo this view of God as the Father of all beings, angels and mankind.

Christians are often regarded as the sons of God in the Scripture, but non-Christians are also in a sense the offspring of God. Paul describes those he is seeking to convert to Christ as the offspring of God along with him in Acts 17:29. Job 38:7 refers to angels as the sons of God (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1). This universal fatherhood of God is derived specifically from the First Person of the Trinity being the Creator with all beings owing the origin and existence to Him. All in this strict sense share a brotherhood. Yet this truth rests alongside the sharp differentiation between the saved and the lost.

The Father of the Lord Jesus Christ

The description of relationship of the Jesus Christ to the First Person of the Trinity as Father and Son is extensive in the NT (e.g. John 17:1; Eph 1:3). It was the term that Jesus used to address God (e.g. John 17:25) and Christ meant this in more than an example for people for He often used in personal sense, "My Father" (e.g. Matt 10:33; 26:39). The title "Father" communicates much about the relationship between Christ and God, but as with any analogy, it has its limitations. While the term "Father" clarifies the subordinate role of the Son, it cannot be taken in a chronological sense, for the Son co-existed with the Father from the beginning (cf. John 1:1).

The Father of Israel

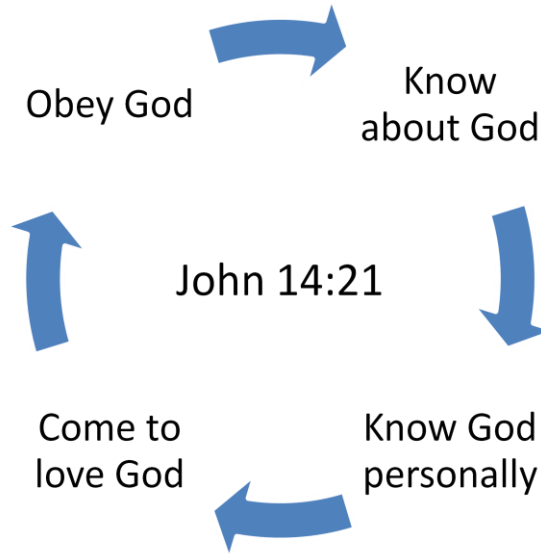
The OT uses the concept of father and son to describe Israel's relationship to God. Exodus 4:22 finds God declaring Israel to be "My son, My firstborn." This was beyond God's role as Creator of all in that He gives Israel a special relationship to Him. Yet this Fatherhood of God is less than saying Israel was regenerate because not all of Israel has spiritual life (Rom 9:6-8). God's role as the Father of Israel is represented in His commitment to Solomon as the King of Israel as the heir to the house of David (2 Sam 7:14).

The Father of believers in Christ

The Fatherhood of God over His people is a NT emphasis. The term "Father" is used of God 245 times in the NT, as opposed to only 15 in the OT. This is part of the development of NT revelation regarding God's relationship with man. Those who have believed in Jesus Christ have become children of God (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-2) and those who are not children of God are "sons of disobedience" and "children of wrath" (Eph 2:2-3; 5:6; cf. John 8:42-44). The Scripture emphasizes that believers become the sons of God through faith (Gal 3:23-26).

Conclusion

The more we know about God, the more we can come to know Him personally. The more we come to know Him personally, the more we can come to love Him. The more we come to love God, the more we will obey Him. The more obedient we are to God's will, the more we will know about Him, for understanding does not only precede obedience, it follows obedience (John 14:21 cf. Psa 119:100; Matt 21:23-27). The knowledge of God is absolutely critical to our ability to live the godly life we have been called to live.



Christology

Christology is the category of systematic theology that deals with Jesus Christ – His preexistence, incarnation, humanity and earthly life, deity, kenosis, hypostatic union, impeccability, death, resurrection, present ministry, and future ministry.

Preexistence

When looking at the doctrine of Christ chronologically, the natural place to begin is a study of the pre-incarnate Christ. *Pre-incarnate* simply means existence prior to the incarnation i.e. His existence as the Second Person of the Godhead prior to His incarnation at the virgin birth.

Positively Stated: In His essential being Jesus Christ never began to be; He existed from eternity as the Second Person of the Triune Godhead.

Negatively Stated: In His essential being, Jesus Christ did not begin to exist when He was conceived in the womb of His mother, Mary.

Practically Stated: The Second Person of the Triune Godhead made a conscious and gracious decision to lay aside the glories and reputation of deity to take upon Himself the nature of man and the form of a servant (Phil 2:5-11).

Christ's preexistence is shown in passages in the NT (John 1:1; 1:14; 3:13; 3:31; 6:33; 6:35; 6:41; 6:62; 8:23; 8:58; 17:5; Heb 1:8; Col 1:17) as well as the OT (Mic 5:2, Isa 9:6). Jesus was active prior to His incarnation primarily as Creator and the Angel of the Lord.

Creator: The Scriptures are clear that one of the activities of the Pre-incarnate Christ is Creator. The Scriptures teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were intimately involved in bringing the universe into being. Many passages speak of creation being the work of God (Gen 1:1; Psa 96:5; Isa 37:16; 44:24; 45:12; Jer 10:11-12), while others attribute it specifically to the Father (Psa 102:25; 1 Cor 8:6), to the Son (Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:2, 1:10; John 1:1-3), or to the Holy Spirit (Job 26:13; 33:4; Psa 104:30; Isa 40:12-13). So how do we see creation being the activity of the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity? Many have concluded that while the Father may be considered Creator in a broad, general sense, the Son is the agent or mediating cause of creation. Through the Son all things came into being.

Angel of the Lord: Our Lord's first appearance on earth was not when He was born of His virgin mother in Bethlehem. It appears that He has made many visual appearances on the earth during OT times in the form of The Angel of the Lord. These appearances recorded in the OT are called "theophanies." This word comes from two Greek words: THEOS ("God") and PHAINO ("to appear"). This is an appearance of God, usually in visible, bodily form. It is necessary to note that a theophany (the appearances of The Angel of the Lord) is different in nature from a visions.

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar (Gen 16:7-14; Gen 21:17-18), Abraham (Gen 22:11-13), Balaam (Num 22:22-35), Gideon (Judg 6:11-22), and Manoah and his wife (Judg 13:3-22). He was present at the judgment on Israel after David's numbering of the people (2 Sam 24:16) and He was the agent of destruction to Sennacherib's army (2 Kings 19:35-36; Isa 37:36-37). In a vision, Zechariah saw Him as judging between Joshua the high priest of Israel and Satan their accuser (Zech 3:1) and as the One who intervened on behalf of Israel's restoration after their seventy years of captivity (Zech 1:12). The Psalmist referred to Him as the deliverer of His people and the antagonist of their enemies (Psa 34:7; 35:5-6).

Other designations of the Angel of the Lord are "The Angel of God" (Gen 31:11), "My Angel" (Ex 23:23; 32:34), and "the Angel of His presence" (Isa 63:9), all doubtless referring to the same divine being. The testimony of Scripture is that these appearances of the Angel of the Lord are appearances of God very God (Ex 3:2-22; Gen 16:7-14; Judg 6:22; 13:17, 22; Gen 22:11-12; Gen 21:18). The question arises regarding which person of the Trinity is the Angel of the Lord? The only sensible explanation is that the appearances of the Angel of the Lord were actually pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity. This conclusion can be based on the following considerations:

- 1) The Second Person of the Trinity is the only member of the Trinity to manifest Himself in visible, bodily form. Neither the Father nor the Spirit characteristically manifest themselves in visible bodily form. Although at Jesus' baptism, the Father's voice is heard and the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove (Matt 3:16-17), the Scripture is very definite that God the Father has never made a temporary descent into visibility (John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:16) and the Holy Spirit is also described as invisible. Jesus said as much in His Upper Room Discourse (John 14:17). Jesus Christ is the full manifestation of God in visible, bodily form (John 1:14; cf. Col 2:9). According to the above factors, it would seem logical and consistent that it is the role of the Second Person of the Trinity to appear visibly in both Testaments.
- 2) Christ in the NT and the Angel of the Lord in the OT were sent by the Father (cf. Judg 13:8-9; John 3:17).
- 3) The Angel of the Lord never appears again after the incarnation.

The above considerations strongly support the idea that the appearances of the Angel of the Lord are indeed appearances of the Pre-incarnate Christ.

Incarnation

Incarnation means "in flesh". It describes the act where the eternal Son of God was born of a virgin (as predicted in Isa 7:14 and fulfilled in Matt 1:16) and took on the additional nature of sinless humanity. Christ came to:

- 1) reveal God to men (John 1:18)
- 2) provide an example for living (1 Pet 2:21)
- 3) provide the sacrifice for sin (Heb 10:1-10)
- 4) destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8)
- 5) be a merciful High Priest (Heb 5:1-2)
- 6) fulfill the Davidic covenant (Luke 1:31-33)
- 7) be highly exalted (Phil 2:9).

Jesus Christ is unblemished deity and perfect (sinless) humanity united in one Person forever (cf. John 1:14; Phil 2:7-8; 1 Tim 3:6).

Humanity

In His humanity Jesus had a literal physical body (Gal 4:4; Luke 2:52; 1 John 1:1; Matt 26:12) and a human soul and spirit (Matt 26:38; Luke 23:46; Acts 2:27). He grew hungry (Matt 4:2), thirsty (John 19:28), and tired (John 4:6) and experienced emotions like grief (John 11:33-35), anger (Matt 21:12-13), compassion (Matt 9:36), and love (John 13:1).

It is because Jesus took upon Himself the nature of man that He can function as the Redeemer of man (Heb 2:14). It is because Jesus lived His earthly life within the limitations and restrictions of (un-fallen) humanity that He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb 4:15).

The outline of Jesus' life is patterned after John 16:28.

²⁸I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.
John 16:28

²⁸I came forth from the Father ...

Jesus is the pre-existence Second Person of the Trinity (covered above).

... and have come into the world; ...

This section encompasses Jesus birth up to the passion week.

1. Jesus' birth, infancy, and boyhood.
2. Jesus emerges into public life with His baptism by John; temptation for 40 days in the wilderness; gathering His first disciples; and working a miracle in Cana.
3. Jesus gains attention in Judea and Samaria. This phase of Jesus' ministry lasted about six months, but it is recorded only by John. It was because of opposition generated during this time that Jesus left Judea and ministered in Galilee.
4. Jesus' 18-month ministry in Galilee is characterized by open announcement of His Messiahship; miraculous proof of His claim to Messiahship and deity; and ever increasing public amazement and official hatred. During this time Jesus traveled to Judea once for a feast, but most of the time was spent traveling throughout Galilee offering Himself as Messiah to the Jews which was ultimately rejected.
5. The training of the twelve occurs during the first 6 months of the last year of His public ministry. Jesus will soon be taken and put to death. Thus, He begins to prepare His disciples for that event.
6. The final six months before the passion week and primarily in and around Jerusalem. The events of this period are best understood in relation to three trips to Jerusalem made during this time.
TRIP #1 – to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2-10:21). After the Feast, Jesus remained in Judea, though He avoided Jerusalem.
TRIP #2 – to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-39). After this feast, Jesus journeyed to Perea, that area beyond the Jordan River.
TRIP #3 – to Bethany (2 miles from Jerusalem) in order to raise Lazarus from the dead. After this miracle, Jesus finds seclusion in Ephraim, a little town north of Jerusalem some miles. Here He remains with His disciples, hidden from His enemies until He goes for the final time to Jerusalem for the Passover season (John 11:54).

... I am leaving the world again ...

This period involves the passion week – Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem, His arrest and trials, His crucifixion, and burial.

Sun	The triumphal entry.
Mon/Tues	The fig tree is cursed, the second cleansing of the Temple, Temple preaching.
Wed	A silent day in the Gospels.
Thurs	Passover preparation; the last supper; the upper room discourse; the betrayal; arrest.
Fri	A series of trials of Jesus; the crucifixion; burial in a borrowed.
Sat	Jesus' body lays in the tomb; the Sabbath is observed.

... and going to the Father.

This section presents the resurrection of Jesus; His 40-day post-resurrection ministry; and ascension to the Father.

Deity

Christ's deity is shown by:

- 1) The names attributed to Him of God (Heb 1:8), Son of God (Matt 16:16; 26:61-64a), Lord (Matt 22:43-45), and King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16).
- 2) His attributes of omnipotence (Matt 28:18), omniscience (John 1:48), omnipresence (Matt 18:20), life (John 1:4), truth (John 14:6), and immutability (Heb 13:8).
- 3) His works of creating (John 1:3), sustaining (Col 1:17), forgiving sin (Luke 7:48), raising the dead (John 5:25), judging (John 5:27) and sending the Holy Spirit (John 15:26).
- 4) By being worshiped by angels (Heb 1:6), men (Matt 14:33), and one day all (Phil 2:10).
- 5) His equality in the Trinity, showing that He is God – with the Father (John 14:23; 10:30) and with the Father and the Spirit (Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14).

Kenosis

The kenosis (literally “emptying”) is the doctrine from Phil 2:5-8 where Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity (the independent exercise of His divine attributes) but nothing of the divine essence during the incarnation. He was always God during the incarnation. During the period between His physical conception and His ascension to the Father, Jesus voluntarily surrendered the independent exercise of His divine attributes. Of special note:

- 1) Jesus did not surrender any attributes of deity of any time.
- 2) The self-emptying of Jesus was voluntary (Phil 2:7).
- 3) Jesus maintained His divine self-consciousness (He knew who He was) (John 8:14; 19:7).
- 4) In His incarnation, Jesus became totally subservient to the will of the Father; He became a perfect Servant, living to do the Father's will (John 8:28-29; 12:49). In submitting Himself to the Father, Jesus acquiesced entirely to the guidance, control, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2; Luke 3:21-22; Acts 10:38; John 3:34). He did not surrender the divine attributes themselves; He surrendered the independent exercise of those attributes (Isa 11:2; 61:1).

Hypostatic Union

The hypostatic union is the doctrine that explains how Jesus is 100% God and 100% man. Christ now possesses both fully human and divine natures. The concept of the Hypostatic Union (the union of the divine and human natures in the one person of Christ) is one of the most difficult concepts to comprehend in theology. The Hypostatic Union is the unique combination of true humanity and undiminished deity that has existed since the incarnation. These two natures (divine and human) existed without confusion or loss of separate identity and they were inseparably united without transfer of attributes. The Second Person of the Trinity, the pre-incarnate Christ came and took to Himself a human nature and remains forever undiminished deity and perfect humanity united in one person forever.

When Christ came, He took on an additional nature, a human nature; He did not simply dwell in a human person. The result of the union of the two natures is the theanthropic Person (the God-man, Jesus Christ). The two natures of Christ are inseparably united without mixture or loss of separate identity. He remains forever the God-man, fully God and fully man, two distinct natures in the one Person forever. Though Christ sometimes operated in the sphere of His humanity and in other cases in the sphere of His deity, in all cases what He did and what He was could be attributed to His one Person. Even though it is evident that there were two natures in Christ, he is never considered a dual personality. A summary of these elements:

- 1) Christ has two distinct natures: humanity and deity.
- 2) There is no mixture or intermingling of the two natures.
- 3) In Christ, the one Person, the two natures are inseparably united without confusion.
- 4) This unity of the two natures is permanent.
- 5) Although He has two natures, Christ is one Person.

Impeccability

The impeccability of Christ means that He was not able to sin. It does not mean that He was able not to sin (peccability).

Remember the Hypostatic Union – the preincarnate Christ and took to Himself a human nature and remains forever undiminished Deity and true humanity united in one person forever. Christ’s person cannot be divided. Jesus did not have a sin nature. Since Jesus was a divine Person with both a human and divine natures, he could not have sinned because Christ was immutable. This means that in His divine nature He could never change. Since, his divine nature cannot be divorced from His human nature He could not have sinned (Heb 4:15).

Although Christ was repeatedly “tempted” during His ministry (cf. Luke 4:13, 22:28; Mark 8:11), His great temptation (Matt 4:1 and parallels) ... was a testing for demonstration of His purity and sinlessness (Heb 4:15) without any possibility of enticement to evil (James 1:13). The Moody Handbook of Theology, Paul P. Enns

Death

Christ’s death is described as a:

- 1) ransom –the price of the penalty for sin is paid (Matt 20:28; 1 Tim 2:6).
- 2) reconciliation – it is possible to have peace with God (2 Cor 5:18-19).
- 3) propitiation – it fully satisfied all the righteous demands of God toward the sinner (1 John 2:2).
- 4) substitution – Christ died in the place of the sinner (2 Cor 5:21).
- 5) proof – of the love of God (Rom 5:8).

Resurrection

The Scriptures present the proofs of the resurrection beginning with the empty tomb and ending with the dramatic change in the disciples. The significance of the resurrection is that:

- 1) It proved Christ to be the Son of God (Rom 1:4).
- 2) It confirmed the truth of all Christ said (Matt 28:6).
- 3) It makes certain the resurrection of all (1 Cor 15:20-22).
- 4) It makes certain the coming judgment (Acts 17:31).
- 5) It gives believers the assurance of acceptance with God (Rom 4:25).
- 6) It guarantees believers’ power for service (Eph 1:19-22).
- 7) It designates Christ as Head of the church (Eph 1:19-22).
- 8) It guarantees the believer’s resurrection (2 Cor 4:14).
- 9) It means a sympathetic High Priest in heaven (Heb 4:14-16).

Present Ministry

Christ’s ascended to heaven and His present ministry is as Head of the body, His Church (Col 1:18; Eph 1:20-23; 5:23-24, 29-30) and as our Advocate and High Priest (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

Future Ministry

In Christ’s future ministry, He will return for the church at the rapture and will return with His church in glory to establish His millennial kingdom on earth at the end of the Tribulation (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Rev 20). Christ will be the One through whom God will judge the world (John 5:22-23), believers (1 Cor 3:10-15; 2 Cor 5:10), living inhabitants of the earth at His return (Matt 25:31-46), and the unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Rev 20:11-15).

Pneumatology

Pneumatology is the category of systematic theology that deals with the Holy Spirit – His deity, procession, and works. This doctrine is important because it concerns the personality and ministry of one of the members of our Triune God. It is also important because of the Spirit's role in our sanctification (our Christian growth and walk). It is necessary for us to have an accurate and Biblical understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit so that we might more effectively walk by the Spirit.

Deity of the Holy Spirit

The Scriptures portray the Holy Spirit as having personality – He is not an impersonal force (Matt 10:20; 12:31; Luke 12:12; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8; 16:13-14; Acts 5:3; 5:32; 7:51; 8:29; 10:19; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; Rom 8:14; 8:16; 8:26-27; 1 Cor 2:10-13; 12:11; Eph 4:30; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 10:15; 10:29). The Spirit is also presented as having equality within the Trinity (Matt 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor 6:11; 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2). Finally, the Spirit possesses attributes of deity: omniscience (John 14:26; 1 Cor 2:10-11), omnipresence (Psa 139:7-8), omnipotence (Gen 1:2), sovereignty (1 Cor 12:11), eternity (John 14:16; Heb 9:14), truth (1 John 5:6), holiness (Luke 11:13), life (Rom 8:2), love (Rom 15:30), wisdom (Isa 11:2; 40:13). The Scriptures very clearly reveal that the Spirit is divine.

The Procession of the Holy Spirit (Covered under the Trinity)

The doctrine of procession attempts to describe the eternal relationship between the members of the Trinity. The doctrine has to do with the being and eternity of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son. Procession means that the Holy Spirit came forth from both the Father and the Son without any dividing or change in God's nature (John 15:26, Psa 104:30). The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (1 Cor 2:12); the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son (John 16:7); the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26); and the Holy Spirit proceeds from heaven (1 Pet 1:12).

Jesus Christ is uniquely described as God's "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). He is also described as "the only begotten God" in John 1:18. The Holy Spirit is uniquely described as "proceeding from the Father" in John 15:26. The Father sent the Son (John 5:36-37; 6:44; 1 John 4:14) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 1 Peter 1:12) in Christ's name. From this we can deduce that the Father begat the Son and the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father. The difference between "begat" and "proceed" is a fine point indeed. The more common word "sent" is perhaps the safest place to focus the relationship within the members of the Trinity.

There is clearly an initiating role that God the Father has in the Trinity. The Father sent the Son with authority (Matt 28:20; John 5:26-27, 30) and also sent the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). The Son clearly has the initiating role with the Holy Spirit (John 16:7).

Whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Son was one of the reasons for the "Great Schism" in 1054 AD, when the Eastern and Western church split, dividing the organized church. The Eastern church (Orthodox Church) taught that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. The Western church (Roman Catholic Church) taught that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. In light of John 15:26 and 16:7 saying that the Son will send the Holy Spirit, the Western Church has the weight of the Scripture on its side.

The relationship within the Trinity never describes the Father in a subordinate role and never describes the Holy Spirit in an initiating role. While there is a functional order within the Trinity, this does not lead us to conclude there is a subordinate nature. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in nature as God. The nature of God's immutability lead us to believe, with historical Christianity, that the ordering of the relationships within the Trinity is eternal.

The Works of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

The particular works of the Spirit in the OT include: participating in creation (Psa 104:30; Job 33:4) and selective indwelling for particular service (Gen 41:38; Ex 31:3; Num 27:18; Judg 6:34; 3:10; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6; 1 Sam 10:9-10; 16:13; 35:31; Psa 51:11; Dan 5:11-14; 6:3).

The General Works of the Holy Spirit

The general works of the Spirit include:

1. being the author of revelation (disclosure) and inspiration (superintending) (2 Pet 1:20-21; cf. 2 Sam 23:2; Ezek 2:2; Mic 3:8; Matt 22:43; Acts 1:16-17; 4:25-26; 28:25-27; John 14:26; 2 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 1:10-11; Zech 7:12; Neh 9:30; 2 Sam 23:1-2; Amos 3:7).

Revelation is the revealing of truth from God to mankind and inspiration is the original recording of that truth. It is the giving of God's truth (special revelation) in a variety of forms (i.e. dreams, visions, audible voice, an angel, theophanies, etc.). Inspiration has to do with that truth being recorded by man. Inspiration simply defined is the Holy Spirit's superintendence of the human authors of Scripture, the result of which was that those writers wrote exactly what God sovereignly decreed for them to write. The Holy Spirit superintended these human authors by using their own individual personalities, so that they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs. Inspiration applies only to the original autographs of Scripture.

The Holy Spirit guided the NT writers of Scripture in the following ways: [Enns, p259]:

1. He helped the writers remember the facts of Christ's teaching.
2. He enabled them to understand theologically what they were writing. At the time that Jesus spoke to them they did not grasp the significance of His impending death and resurrection.
3. He guaranteed the completion of the entire NT. The "all things" of John 14:26 has reference to all spiritual truth necessary for man and implies the completion of the NT canon.

2. teaching (John 16:12-15; 1 John 2:27)

Before Jesus departed from the disciples He encouraged them by telling them that He would send them "another helper" (John 14:16). The Greek term [ALLOS] "another" stresses that the Holy Spirit would be a helper of the same kind as Christ. Just as Jesus had taught the disciples (Matt 5:2; John 8:2), so the Holy Spirit would teach them. The Holy Spirit would perform and carry on the same kind of teaching ministry as Christ did. The Holy Spirit would cause them to remember the things Christ had previously taught them, confirming Christ's teaching.

The Holy Spirit was the instrument in teaching the disciples what to say when they faced opposition from Jewish leaders (Luke 12:12). The Holy Spirit was sent to teach the disciples all things and reminding them of everything that Jesus taught them (John 14:26) and guide them into all truth and disclose to them the future (John 16:13).

The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit has to do with the foundational stages of the church. The book of Acts clearly records the Holy Spirit's role in the foundation of the church. The Holy Spirit was instrumental in the giving of revelation and in using the human authors to record the very Word of God. Today, the Holy Spirit teaches us through the Revealed and Inspired Word of God. He illuminates our minds to understand the teaching of Scripture. So it is through the teaching of the Scripture that the Holy Spirit is able to lead and give instruction to believers today.

3. illuminating

Illumination refers to the Holy Spirit's ministry as He works in the believer to bring spiritual understanding, enabling us to perceive spiritual truth, and heart application of Scripture (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:10-15; 1 John 2:20). Because of Illumination, any believer, by depending on the Holy Spirit and using the proper rules of interpretation, can study the scriptures for his own growth and edification, and lead others to salvation in Christ.

Because the Bible is God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16) it is necessary that people receive God-given help in understanding it. Paul emphasizes this in 1 Cor 2:11, in that we can only *completely* understand God's Word through the Holy Spirit. Anyone who is devoid of the Spirit is incapable of accepting, understanding and evaluating the Word of God accurately (1 Cor 2:14). Since only God knows the things of God, and since the Holy Spirit is God very God, then it is essential that we look to the Spirit of God to instruct us and make things clear for us. The Spirit functions in a teaching role so that we may know what God wants us to know.

The ministry of illumination was foretold by Christ on the night of His arrest (John 14:26) and He taught that the Holy Spirit's role is to teach, guide, and disclose truth to believers (John 16:13). John also taught that the Spirit teaches all things (1 John 2:27) where John is not speaking about some emotional or ecstatic experience. The anointing to which he refers is none other than the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit resides in believers and teaches them about all things through God's Word.

4. convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11).

In this passage, Jesus highlights the Holy Spirit's work of conviction directed at the unbelieving world. The word *convict* has two meanings: 1) the judicial act of conviction with a view toward sentencing; or 2) the act of convincing. In this context is best understood as the later since the purpose of the Holy Spirit is not condemnation, but convincing of the need for a Savior.

... concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; ...

The term *sin* is in the singular indicating a specific sin is in view. That specific sin is most probably the sin of unbelief as indicated by the phrase, "*because they do not believe in Me.*"

This is the only sin, ultimately, that damns people to hell. Though all men are depraved, cursed by their violation of God's law and sinful by nature, what ultimately damns them to hell is their unwillingness to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior." The MacArthur Study Bible p1617

The Holy Spirit is at work convincing people of their sin of unbelief and their need for a savior. An example of this is at Pentecost (Acts 2:36-37).

The Holy Spirit used the words of Peter's message to pierce the heart of his listeners, so that they might turn in faith to Christ. Just as in the early church, the Holy Spirit is convincing people in the world of their unbelief in Christ and their need to turn to Him in faith.

... and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; ...

The second area in which the Holy Spirit convicts the world is righteousness. The Holy Spirit enforces the absolute standard of God's character, to which one's thought and action must be compared. Apart from a standard of righteousness, there can be no recognition of sin. There must be an awareness of the holiness and righteousness of God before a person will realize his own sinful deficiency. There is an infinite gap between the righteousness of God and the sinful state of man that man himself cannot bridge.

When Jesus was on the earth He continually revealed the holiness and righteousness of God and exposed the darkness of the hearts of the people, especially those who were self-righteous such as the Jewish leaders. But, because of His death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus was now going to be with the Father in heaven and the disciples (and the world) would no longer behold Him. Therefore the role of the Spirit would be the same as Christ to reveal the holiness and righteousness of God and expose the darkness of the hearts of people; expose the inadequacies of their righteousness. With Jesus gone, the Spirit continues this role of convicting the world of its righteousness (or the lack there of when compared to God's righteous standard).

... and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

Just as the Holy Spirit convicts the world of its sin and its righteousness (or lack thereof), He is also involved in convicting the world of its judgment. Those who reject Christ in unbelief fail to meet God's righteous standard and will face certain judgment.

Satan, the ruler of this world (cf. John 14:30; Eph 2:1-3) who as the god of this world, turned people from believing in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God (2 Cor 4:4), was defeated at the cross. While Christ's death looked like Satan's greatest victory, it actually was Satan's destruction (cf. Col 2:15; Heb 2:14; Rev 20:10). The MacArthur Study Bible p1617

Those who follow Satan; who unite themselves with him through sin and unbelief will certainly share his doom (cf. Matt 25:41; Rev 20:7-15); they will face certain judgment.

5. regenerating (Titus 3:5) which imparts a new nature (2 Cor 5:17) and new life (1 John 2:29)

One work of the Holy Spirit in relation to our salvation is that of regeneration. Regeneration is the impartation of eternal life to the believer. The Greek word *regeneration* [palingenesia] only appears twice in the NT. It is used eschatologically in Matt 19:28 for the renewing of the earth in the time of the Millennium (cf. Rev 20:1-15). It is used soteriologically in Titus 3:5 to speak of the rebirth of a redeemed person. Regeneration simply means, "to impart life" and specifically speaks of the act in which God imparts spiritual life to the one who believes.

There are verses that speak of regeneration as being a work of God accomplished by His own power (John 1:12-13; 2 Cor 5:17-18; Eph 2:4-5; James 1:18). There are verses that speak of regeneration as being linked with Christ (John 5:21; 2 Cor 5:17; 1 John 5:12). There are verses that ascribe the work of regeneration to the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5; Gal 3:3). The results of the Spirit's work in regeneration include:

1) The impartation of a new nature.

- The believer has become a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4). We are sharing in God's nature by the possession of His eternal life and will one day receive a glorified body like His.
- The believer is spoken of as receiving a new self, a capacity for righteous living (Eph 4:24).
- The believer has become a new creature (2 Cor 5:17). Those who have been regenerated have a new spiritual perception. The old value systems, priorities, and beliefs are replaced with an eternal perspective, striving to live in a manner worthy of and pleasing to God.

2) The impartation of life; a new life; a spiritual life; eternal life.

- The believer has received a new mind that he may know God (1 Cor 2:16). We have received the mind of Christ so that we may be better able to know and understand God.
- The believer has received a new heart that he may love God (Rom 5:5). The idea here is that our hearts are now capable of loving God because of the work of the Holy Spirit.
- The believer has received a new will that he may obey God (Rom 6:3). The idea here is that since we have been made alive from the dead (regeneration), we now have the capability; the will to obey God and live in righteousness.

6. indwelling (1 Cor 6:19) which is permanent (John 14:16).

Another work of the Holy Spirit at our salvation is that of indwelling. The indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit is the act by which the Holy Spirit permanently takes up residence in every believer. This presence or abiding of the Holy Spirit within each individual believer is permanent.

This ministry of the Holy Spirit dwelling within believers is frequently mentioned in the NT. Jesus predicted the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers (John 7:39; John 14:16-17). Paul taught regarding the Holy Spirit's indwelling of believers (Rom 5:5; 8:9-11; 1 Cor 6:19; Eph 1:13-14). James mentions the Holy Spirit's indwelling of believers (James 4:5). John speaks of the Holy Spirit's indwelling of believers (1 John 2:27).

Some observations regarding the indwelling ministry of the Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit is given by Christ as a gift to indwell believers (John 7:39; 14:16-17; Eph 1:14).
- The Holy Spirit is given at the point of salvation (Eph 1:13-14; cf. Gal 3:2).
- The Holy Spirit only indwells believers, certainly not unbelievers (Rom 8:9; cf. Jude 1:19).
- The Holy Spirit is said to still be indwelling believers even if they are in sin (context of 1 Cor 6:19; cf. 1 Cor 3:1-2)
- The Holy Spirit indwells believers permanently (John 14:16-17; Eph 1:13-14).
- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit should move us toward righteous living, because we are not our own (Rom 8:9-11; 1 Cor 6:19; cf. Rom 8:4; Gal 5:16).
- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is truly an amazing spiritual blessing. When we place our faith in Christ as our Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells us. He functions as our helper, seeking to teach us and guide us in our spiritual growth toward righteousness. What a comfort and encouragement this is for the believer in Christ.

7. baptizing (1 Cor 12:13) which happens only once and is the act where the believer is united with Christ in His death (Rom 6:3-5) and into union with other believers in the body of Christ.

Another work of the Holy Spirit in relation to our salvation is that of Spirit Baptism. Unfortunately, there exists a great deal of confusion regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit. First, there are many who confuse this work of the Spirit with water baptism. This group confuses passages such as Rom 6:4 and Gal 3:27 that speak of Spirit baptism and suggest that they speak of water baptism.

A second group understands the baptism of the Spirit to be some kind of second blessing. They teach that the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit is a secondary work of the Spirit occurring sometime after salvation and empowers the believer for service. In addition, they believe that this baptism of the Spirit is accompanied by some sort of manifestation of the Spirit such as speaking in tongues. In so doing, they misunderstand the teaching of Acts 2 regarding the birth of the church and insist that this should be repeated throughout the church age.

The baptism of the Spirit is best be defined as the work whereby the Holy Spirit places the believer into union with Christ and into union with other believers in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13).

There are several distinctives of this work of the Holy Spirit.

- 1) The baptism of the Holy Spirit is unique to the church age. The Baptizing work of the Spirit is not mentioned in the OT in regards to the salvation of OT saints. However, it is mentioned quite frequently in the NT in regards to salvation in Christ. Very clearly, this baptizing work of the Spirit begins in Acts chapter 2 at Pentecost: Acts 1:5 makes it quite clear that this work of the Spirit is still future and Acts 11:15-16 indicates that this work of the Spirit had already begun. This baptizing work of the Holy Spirit includes all believers of the church age (1 Cor 12:13 with Rom 6:3, 5).

2) The baptism of the Holy Spirit includes a union with Christ. The apostle Paul makes this clear in Romans 6:3-5. The idea is that those who were baptized into Christ (baptism of the Spirit) according to verse 3 are also united with Him according to verse 5.

3) The baptism of the Holy Spirit includes a union with other Christians. This is made clear in 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:27-28.

4) The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not accompanied by charismatic signs. Unfortunately, in the last century many from the Charismatic churches have misapplied Acts 2 and have taught that the gift of speaking in tongues or some other experiential sign must accompany the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They have deemed that the absence of such signs suggest that one has not truly been baptized by the Spirit. As this has played out the Charismatic position sees this as a secondary work of the Spirit in relation to salvation. In other words, they see it as subsequent to salvation and it can happen any time after salvation and in some cases may not happen at all. It is viewed by this group as an empowering ministry rather than having anything to do with salvation. However, if one accurately views Acts 2 as a foundational ministry of the Holy Spirit in starting the church and the church age then the conclusion above is unwarranted. The giving of speaking and serving gifts were for the edification of the body of Christ, but the sign gifts were given to authenticate the early messengers of Scripture as being from God (Cf. 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:2-3).

8. sealing (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30) at conversion which guarantees the believer belongs to God.

Another aspect of the Holy Spirit's work in relation to our salvation is the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit. The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit is mentioned in three different passages, all written by the Apostle Paul (2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:13; Eph 4:30).

In Paul's day, an official document would be sealed with wax. An impression would be made in the hot wax with the signet ring of the king or another high ranking official. The seal would signify that the document was official. The Spirit of God is our seal. Let's look at four things that the sealing of the Spirit signifies.

1) Security: In ancient times the seal of a king, prince, or noble represented security and inviolability (cf. Dan 6:6-7). When we became a Christian, God put His Holy Spirit in us. He stamped us with His signet ring, thus declaring us secure.

2) Authenticity: In ancient times the seal signified authenticity. The seal served as the Kings authentic signature (i.e. 1 Kings 21:6-16). When God gave us His Holy Spirit, He declared us to be authentic children of the King.

3) Ownership: In ancient times the seal also served as a completion of a transaction noting final ownership. When the Holy Spirit seals believers. He marks them as God's divine possession and declares the transaction of salvation as official and final.

4) Authority: In ancient times the seal emphasized the absolute authority of the decrees represented by the seal. Those who possessed the sealed decree had the Kings delegated authority (cf. Esther 8:8-12). When Christians are sealed with the Holy Spirit, we are delegated to proclaim, teach, and defend God's Word and His Gospel with His authority!

When God gave the Holy Spirit, He gave the only guarantee we will ever need. The role of the Holy Spirit in sealing believers provides the believer with eternal-security and assurance of salvation. God will certainly fulfill His promises to His children, whom He has sealed with the Holy Spirit.

9. bestowing spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:11); not natural talents, but special Spirit-given abilities for service. Every believer has a gift or gifts (1 Pet 4:10). Some gifts were for the founding of the church (Eph 2:20) and the authentication of the Apostle’s message (Heb 2:3-4). The gifts are found in Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30; Eph 4:11.

There has been much discussion on the subject of spiritual gifts in recent years, particularly on the topic of cessation versus non-cessation of the sign gifts. The Scriptures present clear teachings (see the key passages in Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12-14; Eph 4:11; and 1 Pet 4:10) on spiritual gifts that are important for us to understand if we are to function properly within the body of Christ, the church.

Teaching on spiritual gifts is extremely popular in churches today. Yet, most teachings on spiritual gifts is confused and abused as well. There are seminars, videos lectures, guest speakers, and surveys offered in many churches to teach about the gifts and to help you discover what gifts you have. Many churches get so carried away that teaching on spiritual gifts is overemphasized and the pursuit of holiness in one's life is ignored.

There are several Greek terms used in 1 Corinthians 12:1-7 that seem to speak of spiritual gifts:

1. spiritual gifts [pneumatikon] – The term here means, “things pertaining to the Spirit” and speaks of the spiritual ability/giftedness given to believers.
2. gifts [charisma] – This term means, “grace gifts”. It is simply translated “gifts” but is built off the Greek term for “grace”. If it is a grace gift, then it is something that cannot be earned or deserved, just freely bestowed.
3. ministries [diakonia] – The root of this term speaks of service. It is the same basic Greek term as serve, servant, and deacon (one who serves). In this context, it would give the idea of a service-oriented gift.
4. effects [energeima] – This term literally means, “what is worked out or energized”. It emphasizes that the one who gives the gifts provides the energy or power to make the gift effective.
5. manifestation [phanerosis] – This term has the basic idea of making known, making clear or evident. So spiritual gifts are not hidden or private. Rather they are a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. They put Him on display as He works through the believer's life.

Spiritual gifts are a NT phenomenon that have been given to each believer since Pentecost (see Eph 4:7-8) and are not related to Spirit empowerment for a specific task in the OT (see for example Ex 35:30-36:2). A spiritual gift is a freely bestowed spiritual ability given to us by the power of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of service to the body of Christ. Spiritual gifts are not natural talents, but are special Spirit empowered abilities for service to the body of Christ. Talents are abilities that God has given each person as a result of general grace poured out on humanity (c.f. Matt 5:45). Talents may or may not be used to serve the body, but are not Spirit empowered. Ryrie in *Basic Theology* compares talents and spiritual gifts.

Talents	Spiritual Gifts
Given by God through our parents	Given by God independent of parents
Given at birth	Given at spiritual birth
To benefit mankind generally	To benefit the body (church)

A spiritual gift is a God-given capacity through which the Holy Spirit supernaturally ministers to the body. ... Your spiritual gift is not cooking -- there are good cooks who don't even know God. It is a human ability. Your gift is not being a violin virtuoso. It is a terrific ability, but not a spiritual gift energized by the Holy Spirit. Your spiritual gift is a unique capacity to minister to the body of Christ through the channel of the Spirit of God, who supernaturally touches the lives of other people. *Spiritual Gifts – The Source of Spiritual Gifts* by John MacArthur, Tape GC 1850

A spiritual gift, then, is any ability and accompanying spiritual ministry and effect that God, through Christ, enables a believer to use, or motivates him to use, for His glory, in the body of Christ, through the energizing work of the Spirit. Spiritual Gifts: Definitions and Kinds by Stitzinger, TMSJ 14/2 (Fall 2003) 143-176

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts supernaturally and sovereignly (1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:3-4) distributes spiritual gifts to each believer (Rom 8:9) individually just as He wills. Each believer is given at least one permanent (Rom 11:29) spiritual gift (1 Cor 12:7) which is to be employed to serve other believers as a good steward of God's grace (1 Pet 4:10). Spiritual gifts are given for the advantage of all (1 Cor 12:7), the edification of the church (1 Cor 14:26), the equipping of the saints (Eph 4:7, 12), and the glory of God (1 Pet 4:10-11).

There is no direct statement that tells us when spiritual gifts are given. However, since they are only given to believers and there seems to be some link with the baptism of the Spirit being mentioned within the context of Spiritual gifts, then the best conclusion is that just as we are baptized with the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit and sealed by the Spirit, so also are we gifted by the Spirit at salvation (1 Cor 12:11-13).

There are three passages that provide lists of spiritual gifts.

⁶Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Rom 12:6-8

⁸For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. 1 Cor 12:8-10

¹⁰As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Pet 4:10-11

There are three categories of gifts: speaking gifts and serving gifts (1 Pet 4:10-11); and sign gifts.

Temporary sign gifts

Sign gifts were temporary gifts during the foundational stage of the church. Once Scripture was completed there was no longer any need for the miraculous sign gifts (Cf. 1 Cor 13:8-10). Our goal for this study is not to study the Scriptural basis for the cessation of the sign gifts. We simply state that temporary gifts were given during the apostolic era in order to confirm the apostle's message (1 Cor 12:8-10; 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:3-4). With the NT complete there was no need to confirm the message that was once and all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

- healing (1 Cor 12:9): the ability to directly and immediately heal with touch or word as Jesus, the apostles, and those closely related to the apostles did.
- miracles/powers (1 Cor 12:10): the ability to intrude into the natural world in a supernatural way outside of natural laws.
- tongues/languages (1 Cor 12:10): the ability to speak in a language that has not been learned.
- interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:10): the ability to understand a language that has not been learned.
- revelatory prophecy (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11): the ability to speak directly the utterances of God as new revelation.

The speaking and serving gifts were given for the purpose of equipping the saints, edifying the body, and serving one another.

Speaking Gifts

- non-revelatory prophecy (1 Cor 12:10) **: the ability to proclaim clearly and effectively the testimony of Christ (Rev 19:10).
- word of wisdom (1 Cor 12:8) *: the ability to make skillful and practical application of Biblical truth to life's situations.
- word of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8) *: the ability to study, discover, and interpret, and explain the truths of Scripture.
- teacher (Rom 12:7) **: the ability to pass on truth in a manner that allows it to be receive and implanted in the hearer.
- exhortation/encouragement (Rom 12:8) **: the ability to provide comfort, courage, help, and strength to someone who needs; the ability to get alongside someone who has a problem, and build them, encourage them, strengthen them, and bear their load.

Serving Gifts

- administration/governing/leading (Rom 12:8; 1 Cor 12:28) **: the ability to make decisions and determine direction, to mobilize a group to reach an objective.
- ministry/helps/service (Rom 12:7) **: the ability to take lovingly support someone, to take a burden off of someone else and place it on yourself.
- giving (Rom 12:8) **: the ability to super give – beyond the normal.
- showing mercy (Rom 12:8) **: is the ability to sympathize with a suffering person – to come alongside the poor, the sick, the destitute, the orphan, the widowed, and those in prison, and minister.
- faith (1 Cor 12:9) *: an intense ability to trust God in difficult and demanding ways, often expressed through prayer.
- discerning of spirits (1 Cor 12:10) *: the ability to recognize lying spirits.
- evangelist (Eph 4:11): the ability to proclaim the gospel in a powerful way to those that have not heard before.
- pastors-teachers (Eph 4:11): the ability to shepherd (protect and feed) the people of God.

* the definition is from *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 1 Corinthians*

** the definition is from *Spiritual Gifts Study Guide* by John MacArthur

The way to discover our spiritual gift(s) is to be Spirit filled (Eph 5:18+) since it is the Spirit who energizes the use of spiritual gifts and to obey and serve (1 Pet 4:10). We must actively serve in the church and through that service we will discover what our spiritual gift is.

10. filling (Eph 5:18) meaning being controlled by the Spirit. We are commanded to allow the Spirit to fill us (Eph 5:18) and it can be repeated. Filling is equivalent to letting the word of Christ to richly dwell in us (Col 3:16) and produces Christ-like words, reactions, and relationships (Eph 5:18-6:9 and Col 3:16-22 cf Gal 5:22-23).

The Spirit's works of regenerating, indwelling, baptizing, sealing, and bestowing of gifts are onetime events that happen at the moment one repents of their sins and transfers their trust completely to Jesus for their forgiveness of sin – receiving Him as their Lord and Savior. Only the Spirit's work of filling is something that believers are commanded to do.

Paul describes the battle which rages in the Christian against the flesh (Rom 7:22-23). Paul also describes that it is the indwelling Holy Spirit that provides the power to wage war with the flesh (Gal 5:17). Paul goes on to state that the key to living a life that is pleasing to God is to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal 5:16). "Walking in the Spirit" is also described as "being filled with the Spirit."

"Ephesians 5:18-20 describes the Spirit-filled life. It is one of the most important aspects of the Christian walk. Without the constant control of the Spirit of God, the believer cannot live by God's standard." *Living in the Spirit: Be Not Drunk with Wine--Part 1* by John MacArthur Tape GC 1936

¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for this is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; ²⁰always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; ²¹and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ... (²²Wives..., ²⁵Husbands..., ^{6:1}Children..., ⁴Fathers..., ⁵Slaves..., ⁹Masters...) Eph 5:18-6:9

The contrast between being drunk and being filled with the Spirit is clear. Someone who is drunk is under the influence of alcohol – they have surrendered control of themselves to alcohol. Believers should only be controlled by the Holy Spirit. The Greek statement here (pleroo) is a passive, present tense imperative (something that we are commanded to let happen to us on a continuous basis). It is literally *let yourselves be kept being filled with the Spirit*.

Used of the wind filling a sail and thereby carrying the ship along. To be filled with the Spirit is to be moved along in our Christian life by God Himself... MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

...carries the idea of permeation, and was used of salt's permeating meat in order to flavor and preserve it. God wants His Holy Spirit to so permeate the lives of His children that everything they think, say, and do will reflect His divine presence. MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

...the connotation of total control... To be filled in this sense is to be totally dominated and controlled, and it is the most important sense for believers. MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

The implication is that the usual, expected position of the believer is to be filled with the Spirit. The believer in a right relationship with God will be filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is the surrendering of every area of our life to God so that the Holy Spirit is controlling our words, worship, reactions, and relationships.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is brought about by:

1. Repent of any known sin – An attitude of the heart that is willing to always come under the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin and genuinely repent (Eph 4:30).
2. Yield to God in every area of life – An attitude of the heart that yields to God's Word (1 Thess 5:19).
3. Immersion in the Word – Comparing Eph 5:18-21 and Col 3:16-4:1
 - The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to produce the will of God in a believer's life.
 - The Word in the heart and mind is the handle by which the Spirit turns the will. The two (being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word dwell richly in us) are the same spiritual reality viewed from two different sides. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by His Word. To have the Word dwelling richly is to be controlled by the Spirit. The MacArthur NT Commentary - Colossians and Philemon

	Ephesians 5:18-21	Colossians 3:16-4:1
Command	And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit	Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you
Words	speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs	with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms <i>and</i> hymns <i>and</i> spiritual songs
Worship	singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord	singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God
Reactions	always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father	Whatever you do in word or deed, <i>do</i> all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
Relationships	and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ... (Wives..., Husbands..., Children..., Fathers..., Slaves..., Masters...)	Wives..., Husbands..., Children..., Fathers..., Slaves..., Masters...

The results of being filled:

1. Edifying words (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16)
 2. Pure worship (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16)
 3. Godly reactions (Eph 5:20; Col 3:17)
 4. Righteous relationships (Eph 5:21; Col 3:18-4:1)
 5. Christ-like character (Gal 5:22-23)
 6. Abundant fruitfulness (John 15:1-5)
 7. Illumination and teaching (John 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:9-13; 1 John 2:27)
 8. Prayer (Rom 8:26-27) and answered prayer (John 15:7)
 9. Assurance of salvation (Rom 8:16)
 10. Effective witness (Acts 2)
11. sanctifying meaning positionally set apart for God (2 Thess 2:13; Heb 10:10); experientially it is the process to more and more die unto sin, and live unto righteousness (2 Cor 3:18)

2 Thess 2:13 says, "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." In that context "sanctification" means we have been set apart from sin and eternal death. That is a positional sanctification resulting from our standing as believers in Christ. Our practical or experiential sanctification comes as the Spirit does His transforming work within us day by day (2 Cor 3:18). This practical sanctification should increase as we die more and more to sin and live unto righteousness. This growth in sanctification depends on our union with Christ. John 15:4-11 details how abiding in Christ helps us obey Him (v10), through whom we are spiritually productive (v5), successful in prayer (v7), and full of joy (v11).

The Spirit empowers believers in their walk (Acts 1:8). After Christ's resurrection, prior to His ascension into heaven, Jesus informed His disciples that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit, which will move them to be witnesses for Christ. Certainly, this is what the book of Acts describes in the foundation of the early church. The Holy Spirit indwelt the early believers at Pentecost and then moved them to proclaim the gospel first in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria and eventually throughout the known world of that time.

Ephesians 3:16 says that we are “strengthened with power through His Spirit.” The term *strengthened* in the Greek is the opposite of *discouraged* in Ephesians 3:13. The source of this strength is the Holy Spirit. God sent the Holy Spirit to comfort us, to guide us in the truth, and to help us. The Holy Spirit provides power for our new lives in Christ.

The Spirit also fights the believer's sin nature (Rom 8:13; Gal 5:17). The “deeds of the body” is a reference to the sinful desires and ways of the flesh. The indwelling Holy Spirit will fight against that sin nature and aid us in putting off sin and putting on righteousness (cf. Col 3:1-17). The Holy Spirit is at odds with our sinful nature and therefore fights against it in order to help us live according to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us to strive for righteousness and strive against sin.

The Spirit produces fruit in the believer's life (Gal 5:22-23). A result of the indwelling Holy Spirit is that He produces fruit in the believer's life. Fruit here is singular and indicates one kind of fruit that manifests itself as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are not fruits, but a fruit. This is the evidence that the Holy Spirit indwells you. It is the evidence that you are a genuine believer in Christ. Jesus said in Matt 7:16, “*You will know them by their fruits...*”, indicating that you can identify believers by their works. One of those identifying marks is the fruit of the Holy Spirit recorded for us in Gal 5:22-23.

12. leading (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18) meaning guidance.

Both of these verses refer to the Holy Spirit's role in leading believers. The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to lead believers today. We will not be recipients of direct revelation from the Holy Spirit. We will not have some form of emotional experience. Emotions are influenceable by circumstances. God's Spirit leads us in our lives today, by illuminating the Word so that we understand it and He moves us to obey it.

13. assuring (Rom 8:16) meaning confirmation in our hearts that we are God's children.

The indwelling Holy Spirit is constantly present in the believer's life to provide inner testimony of our faith in Christ. The indwelling Holy Spirit gives evidence that we are truly children of God; that we are truly believers in Christ. And as such, we are given assurance of our own salvation.

14. praying (Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 6:18) meaning making up for our weaknesses in prayer.

Believers are to pray in the Spirit (Eph 6:18; Jude 20). To be in the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit (cf. Eph 5:18) and not walking according to the flesh, or according to the ways of the world, but according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The emphasis is on being controlled by the Spirit of God so that when we do go before God in prayer our prayers will be in the Spirit.

Paul makes it clear that we have an inability to pray as we should (Rom 8:26-27).

“Because of our imperfect perspectives, finite minds, human frailties, and spiritual limitations, we are not able to pray in absolute consistency with God's will. Many times we are not even aware that spiritual needs exist...” The MacArthur New Testament Commentary on Romans 1-8, p466

It is clear from this passage that the Holy Spirit is not merely an influence that moves us to pray, not merely an illumination that teaches us how to pray, but a person who Himself prays in and through us. [Torrey, p. 17]

The Holy Spirit's intercession is described as “*groanings too deep for words.*” These groans are not audible; they are not utterances; they are inexpressible in words. They are infinitely beyond our understanding as the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf.

15. assisting believers in worship

The indwelling Holy Spirit generates true worship (Phil 3:3). The word, “worship” [latreuo] refers to religious service offered to God and is not limited to just praise and thanksgiving. This verse is not just speaking of singing in church, but really emphasizing a worshipful way of life. All of our lives should render worship to God and it is the indwelling Holy Spirit, who moves us to worship. That is why true believers are those who worship “in the Spirit.”

16. guaranteeing future blessing for believers

The Holy Spirit guarantees our future inheritance in Christ (Eph 1:13-14). He is the pledge of our future inheritance. The term *pledge*, [arrabon] a word borrowed from the commercial world originally referred to a down payment on a purchase. In later times it came to refer to any kind of pledge in general and it eventually came to be used for an engagement ring. The Holy Spirit is a divine pledge of our inheritance. He is given as a down payment guaranteeing our future inheritance. He is given to the church, Christ's bride as a divine engagement ring.

Angelology

Angelology is the category of systematic theology that deals with the holy angels, Satan, and fallen angels or demons.

Holy Angels

Angels are mentioned some 275 times in 34 books of the Bible (17 in each Testament). In the OT, the word used for “angel” is “*malek*” meaning messenger. Additional OT names for angels include “cherubim”, “saraphim”, “men”, and sometimes “sons of God”. In the NT, the word “angel” comes from the Greek word “*angelos*” also meaning messenger. “Angel” can be used of men or heavenly beings that are charged by God with a commission.

Angels are spirit beings (Heb 1:14) created (Psa 148:2-5; Col 1:16) holy before the creation of the world (Job 38:6-7). The innumerable “myriads” of angels (Heb 12:22, Rev 5:11) were all created simultaneously (Col 1:16) by Jesus. Unlike Adam, there is no indication that angels were created from previously created matter (like Adam from dust in Gen 2:7). Their number does not change since they cannot reproduce (Matt 22:30) and are not subject to death (Luke 20:36). Angels had, and some still have, access to God (Job 1:6, 12; 2:1, 7; Matt 18:10).

Angels have intellect (Matt 28:5; Luke 1:13-16; 1 Pet 1:12; Rev 10:5-6). They know more than man. They have lived much longer than man and have learned much more than man. Angels may perceive the intentions of man through observation, but there is no indication in Scripture that they can read the thoughts or hear the silent prayers of man. They know Jesus Christ and God’s plan of redemption as it has been revealed to them, but they do not know the details. Angels know less than God, they are not omniscient. Angels show emotion (Job 38:7; Luke 2:13; Luke 15:10), have a will or self-determination (Jude 6), and have great power (2 Pet 2:11).

Angels are not omnipresent. They are always somewhere at a given moment (Dan 9:21-23; 10:11-12). Angels are always at some place in time, but they are not limited to the confines of material places. They are not limited in the amount of space they can inhabit (Luke 8:30). They are immaterial and incorporeal (Luke 2:9-15). Angels can move through walls, for example, but they cannot be in two houses at the same time. Angels exist and act in time; they are one-way immortal.

Angels live in heaven (Matt 22:30; Gal 1:8; Isa 6:1-2; Rev 4:6) and the “heavenly places” (Eph 3:8-10; 6:12). Angels have appeared to people in Scripture in different modes such as dreams (Matt 1), visions (2 Kings 6), men (Gen 18; 19), man-like beings (Dan 10; Matt 28), and living creatures (Rev 4:7; Ezek 1).

Angels are a higher order of creation than man (Heb 2:7; 1 Cor 6:2-3) and have greater wisdom and power (Matt 28:2; Acts 5:19; 2 Pet 2:11) than man, but both are limited (Matt 24:36; Dan 10:13). Angels can impact the natural world and the affairs of men so long as God allows it (Matt 28:2; Acts 12:6-11; Dan 10:10-21). They are great in might and power, but do not use that power to punish other angels – that is God’s prerogative (2 Pet 2:10-11; Jude 9).

Angels are organized (Psa 89:5-7; Rev 12:7; Eph 3:10). Apparently, there is only one archangel (Jude 9; 1 Thess 4:16). There are high ranking angels (chief princes) (Dan 10:13), ruling angels (Eph 3:10), cherubim (Gen 3:24; Ex 25:17-22; 1 King 6:23-29; Ezek 1:1-4; 10:15-20; 41:18-20), and seraphim (Isa 6:2-7).

Cherubim (cherub) are angelic or supernatural beings created with powers and beauty beyond the capabilities of the human mind to describe or understand. The mention of cherubim is almost exclusively in the OT (Gen 3:24; Ex 25; 26:1, 31; Num 7:89; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; Ezek 1; 10:4; 18-22), Heb 9:5 being their only mention in the NT. Though they are supernatural beings, cherubim are never referred to as angels in Scripture because they do not exercise the duties of a messenger in any of their appearances. The purpose of cherubim is to be “proclaimers and protectors of God’s glorious presence, His sovereignty, and His holiness” (Dickason in “Angels”), keeping away anything that is unholy. The presence of cherubim designates the presence of God, as God is enthroned above them (Psa 80:1; 99:1).

Seraphim (seraph) is from the Hebrew meaning “burning one.” Seraphim are another special class of angels, and as with cherubim, seraphim are also associated with the glory of God (Isa 6:1-7). Some have speculated that their name (burning ones) addresses their consuming devotion to God and not their outward ministry. The distinct ministry of seraphim is to perform a priestly type of service to God. We see them declaring that man must be cleansed of sin’s moral defilement before they can stand in front of God and be of service to Him. Seraphim “praise and proclaim the perfect holiness of God” (Dickason in “Angels”).

Michael meaning “who is like God?” is an angel called by name in Scripture (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev 12:7-8). Gabriel meaning “mighty one of God” is another holy angel called by name (Dan 8:16; 9:20-21; Luke 1:19; 26-27). Other angels with names and responsibilities are: the “Fire” angel (Rev 14:18), the “Water” angel (Rev 16:5), the “Abyss” angel who binds Satan (Rev 20:1-3), a “star from heaven which had fallen” angel (Rev 9:1), and Apollyon which means destroyer (Rev 9:11).

Holy angels worship and praise God (Heb 1:6; Rev 4:8; 5:11-12; Psa 148:1-2; Isa 6:3; Luke 2:9-14), render service to believers (Heb 1:14; Matt 4:11), announce and administer God’s judgment (Gen 19:10-14; Rev 14:6-7; 19:17-18; Acts 12:23; Rev 16:1), and influence world affairs (Dan 4:17; 10:21; 12:1).

Satan

Satan is the name given to the leader of the fallen angels (Matt 12:26). The name comes from the Hebrew word “*sātān*” which means “an adversary, one who resists.” It is clear from the Scriptures that Satan exists – it is taught in seven OT books (Gen 3:1; 1 Chron 21:1; Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-7; Zech 3:1-2, etc.) and by every NT writer including Christ (Matt 13:39; Luke 10:18; 11:18). Since Satan is a created being he does not possess the divine attributes like omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty, etc.

Satan’s pre-fall state was that of perfection-full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, he had a privileged place with God, he is a cherub, he was blameless (Ezek 28:11-15). Then he sinned (Ezek 28:15-18; Isa 14:12-14), unrighteousness was found in him, and was cast from the mountain of God. The time of Satan’s fall is unspecified, but probably came after the creation and before Adam’s fall (Job 38:6-7). His pre-fall name is Lucifer (son of the morning in Isa 14:12), but is thereafter referred to as Satan (Matt 4:10), Devil (Matt 4:1), Evil one (John 17:15), Great red dragon (Rev 12:3, 7), Serpent of old (Rev 12:9), Adversary (1 Pet 5:8), Beelzebul (Lord of the fly in Matt 12:24), Belial (Worthless in 2 Cor 6:15), God of this world (2 Cor 4:4), Ruler of this world (John 12:31), Prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), Enemy (Matt 13:28), Tempter (Matt 4:3), Murderer (John 8:44), Liar (John 8:44), and Accuser (Rev 12:10).

Satan is a murderer and liar (John 8:44) and the accuser (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5; Zech 3:1; Rev 12:10) and adversary of the brethren (1 Pet 5:8). He attempted to thwart God’s plan of redemption through Christ (Matt 4:1-11; Matt 2:16; John 8:44; Matt 16:23; John 13:27), he blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor 4:4) snatching the word from their hearts (Luke 8:12), he tempts believers (Acts 5:3; 1 Cor 7:5) working to defeat them (1 Thess 2:18; Eph 6:11-12; Matt 13:38-39; Rev 2:10), and may masquerade as an angel of light to deceive people (2 Cor 11:14).

Satan was initially judged at his fall where he lost his fellowship with God, was corrupted so he lost the uncorrupted nature he had since his creation, and lost whatever authority over elect angels he might have had before he sinned. Satan was also judged at the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:14-15). The serpent was cursed and God established His plan for Christ to defeat Satan. Satan was also judged at the cross (John 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:14-15), where Christ openly triumphed over the principalities and powers. The result of this judgment is that Satan has lost and Christ is victorious. Satan will be judged in the Tribulation (Rev 12:7-12) where he will be cast out of heaven with his angels by God’s elect angels.

Satan will lose all access to the throne of God at this point – he and his angels will be exiled from their natural sphere. Satan will also be judged at the Second Coming (Rev 20:1-3) when he will be cast down to the Abyss for one thousand years, during the Millennial Kingdom reign of Christ on earth. Satan’s final judgment (Rev 20:10) will come after when he will be cast into the Lake of Fire, and there he will be tormented day and night for all eternity.

Demons

Demons are evil or fallen angels who followed Satan in his revolt against God (Matt 25:41; Rev 12:3-4) and who are ruled by Satan (Matt 12:24; 25:41; 12:17). The existence of demons is shown in the OT (e.g. Deut 32:17; Psa 106:37; Lev 17:7; Psa 96:5) and NT (e.g. Matt 8:31; John 8:48-49; Luke 10:17-20). There are two groups of demons. One group is free and is actively opposing God's plan (Eph 6:11-12). The other group is currently confined (Luke 8:31) – some temporarily (Rev 9:1-15) others permanently (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). Some are perhaps confined because of the sin of Gen 6:1-4.

Demons are Satan's tool for influencing creation. They extend satanic influence over men (Eph 2:1-2), nations (Dan 10), the world, and the heavenly places (Eph 6:11-12). Demons can cause disease (Luke 13:11; Matt 9:32-33; Matt 12:22; 17:15-18) with God's permission (Job 1:12; 2:6; cf. 2 Cor 12:7-10), influence the mind of unbelievers (2 Cor 4:4) and deceive people (1 Thess 3:5) and nations (Rev 16:14). They tempt believers by enticement through the Satan's world system of deception and wickedness that leaves God out and is opposed to Him (**James 1:13-14; 2 Cor 11:3; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 4:4; John 16:11; 1 John 2:15-17; James 3:15**). Satan's aim is to make the values of this godless system seem attractive; appealing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life to entice us to sin.

¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. James 1:13-14

³But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. 2 Cor 11:3

³But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? ⁴"While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." Acts 5:3-4

⁴in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Cor 4:4

¹¹and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. John 16:11

¹⁵Do not love the world nor the things in the world If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. 1 John 2:15-17

Demons can also possess unbelievers (Matt 4:24; Luke 8:27-29; Mark 9:22). Some of the characteristics of demonic possession include (Mark 5:3-13): great strength (5:3); fits of rage (5:4); split personality (5:6-7); resistance to spiritual things (5:7); yet spiritual insight (5:7); and altered voice (5:9).

Demon possession means a demon residing in a person, exerting direct control and influence over that person, with certain derangement of mind and/or body. Demon possession is to be distinguished from demon influence or demon activity in relation to a person. The work of the demon in the latter is from the outside; in demon possession it is from within. By this definition a Christian cannot be possessed by a demon since he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, a believer can be the target of demonic activity to such an extent that he may give the appearance of demon possession. Ryrie Study Bible NASB

Eventually all demons including Satan will be cast into the lake of fire (Matt 25:41).

The Believer's Battle

The Apostle Paul described Christians as soldiers (2 Tim 2:3) implying that we are at war. Every Christian is in the middle of a battle whether they know it or not. Some are fully aware of the battle that rages – fully engaged. Others, due to callousness or insensitivity are oblivious to the battle.

¹²For our **struggle** is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not **war** according to the flesh, 2 Cor 10:3

But what is the nature of this battle? Is it war at the cosmic level or is it much closer to home? The Scriptures are clear that there are events happening on a spiritual plane of which we are not aware (Dan 10:12-13). While there are global (cosmic really) events happening in this war, the battle that is brought to believers is in the form of a three-prong attack: the devil, the world, and the flesh.

The devil

Satan is a created being and therefore does not possess any of God's incommunicable attributes (omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty, etc.). Satan is a murderer, a liar, the father of lies (John 8:44), the tempter of believers (Matt 4:1-11; Acts 5:3; 1 Cor 7:5) working to defeat them (1 Thess 2:18; Eph 6:11-12; Matt 13:38-39; Rev 2:10), and the accuser (Rev 12:10) and adversary of the brethren (1 Pet 5:8). Satan may masquerade as an angel of light to deceive people (2 Cor 11:14). Satan uses the world system to propagate his lies and to entice people to sin.

Paul says that he knew the tactics of the enemy and that Satan was unable to take advantage of him (2 Cor 2:11). So, what are Satan's schemes?

The world

Satan's worldwide system (2 Cor 4:4; John 16:11; 1 John 2:15-17) of deception and wickedness that leaves God out and is opposed to Him. The wisdom of this world is demonic (James 3:15). Satan's aim is to make the values of this godless system seem attractive, appealing to all that is in the world (the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life) to entice us to sin.

We are all constantly bombarded by non-biblical worldview ideas from television, film, music, newspapers, magazines, books, advertisements and secular academia. Because of our intrinsic sinfulness, these ideas seductively appeal to our sinful nature and we often incorporate them into our personal worldview, often without even knowing it. ... Most people go through life not recognizing that their personal worldview has been deeply affected by the world. The secular humanistic view of the world affects our thinking more than we realize. We then are taken "*captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ*" (Col. 2: 8). Steven C. Riser - What's the Big Deal About Worldview?

The flesh

The sinful nature, inherited from Adam, that results in the complete corruption and depravity of our will, conscience, and intellect. At salvation we are born again (John 3:3-8), the power of the sinful nature over us is broken (Rom 6:15-23), and a new nature is imparted (2 Peter 1:4). The sinful nature is not eradicated at salvation. The flesh and the new nature are now opposed to one another and are at war. We battle the flesh so that we are not carried away by our own lust (James 1:14) as we are bombarded with and tempted by the lies of Satan that he presents in his world system.

The battle is for our mind.

⁴I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument. ... ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. Col 2:4, 8

“Our children today face unprecedented pressure. They are exposed to sexual temptation, school violence, alcohol, illegal drugs, and a variety of influences that threaten to undo all that we teach them. And while we need to fear what our kids could be tempted to do, we need to be more concerned with what our kids are led to believe.

You see, the way our kids behave comes *from* something. Their attitudes and actions spring from their value system, and their values system is based on what they believe.” Josh McDowell in “Beyond Belief to Convictions”

Some Statistics (from the Barna Research Group Website)

Barna Research Group: Biblical Worldview was defined as believing that absolute moral truths exist; that such truth is defined by the Bible; and firm belief in six specific religious views: 1) Jesus Christ lived a sinless life; 2) God is the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe and He stills rules it today; 3) salvation is a gift from God and cannot be earned; 4) Satan is real; 5) a Christian has a responsibility to share their faith in Christ with other people; and 6) the Bible is accurate in all of its teachings.

Who has a biblical worldview?

- Catholics (< 0.5%)
- Mainline Protestant churches (2%)
- Baptist churches (8%)
- Pentecostal churches (10%)
- Non-denominational Protestant churches (13%)

Behavior	Non-Biblical Worldview	Biblical Worldview	Relative Likelihood
Adultery	44% OK	4% OK	11 times less
Profanity	37% OK	3% OK	12 times less
Homosexuality	31% OK	2% OK	15 times less
Drunkenness	36% OK	2% OK	18 times less
Fornication	62% OK	2% OK	31 times less
Pornography	39% OK	0.5% OK	78 times less
Abortion	46% OK	0.5% OK	92 times less

³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵We are **destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,** 2 Cor 10:3-5

²Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. Col 3:2

Our thoughts must be brought into submission to the “word of truth.”

¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. John 17:17

²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Rom 12:2

The transformed and renewed mind is the mind saturated with and controlled by the Word of God. It is the mind that spends as little time as possible even with the necessary things of earthly living and as much time as possible with the things of God. It is the mind that is set “on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Col. 3:2). Whether good or bad, when anything happens in our lives, our immediate, almost reflexive response should be biblical. ... Only the mind that is constantly being renewed by God’s Spirit working through God’s Word is pleasing to God. Only such a mind is able to make our lives “a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is [our] spiritual service of worship.” MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Romans 9-16

God commands us to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be **able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.** ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that **you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.** ¹⁴Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ¹⁵and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; ¹⁶in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, Eph 6:10-18

Whether confronting Satan’s efforts to distrust God, forsaking obedience, producing doctrinal confusion and falsehood, hindering service to God, bring division, serving God in the flesh, living hypocritically, being worldly, or in any other way reject biblical obedience, this armor is our defense. MacArthur Study Bible page 1815

The belt of truth – The Roman soldier wore a tunic, an outer garment, which served as his primary clothing. It was draped loosely over the body. Before a battle it was carefully cinched up and tucked into the heavy leather belt. This is the idea of tucking away everything that can hinder us in the battle under the truth (Heb 12:1).

Breastplate of righteousness – The Roman soldier wore a breastplate, which was a tough, sleeveless piece of armor that covered his full torso. The purpose of the breastplate was to protect the vital organs. Righteousness here, is to be taken and wrapped around our whole being just as Roman soldiers wrapped themselves with the breastplate of armor. This is the righteousness that comes from a deep and abiding walk with Christ (Heb 5:14).

Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace – A good pair of sandals allowed the Roman soldier to stand unflinching, have firm footing, take his stand, never slip, never slide, never fall under attack. This is the peace and security we have in God because we have been brought into personal relationship with Him – we are on His side in the battle (Rom 5:1).

Shield of faith – The Roman soldier carried a large shield that protected the whole body. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). This means a total dependence on God and a commitment to do His will.

Helmet of salvation – The helmet protected the Roman soldier's head. This is the assurance of our salvation (see 1 Thess 5:8 – the hope of salvation) which believers can begin to doubt as they are attacked by Satan.

Sword of the Spirit – The Roman soldier carried a 6-18 inch long sword used in hand-to-hand combat. This sword is used to defend against attack (Jesus in Matt 4:3-10) and as an offensive weapon in our battle with sin (Heb 4:12).

The Scriptures promise that if we resist the devil he will flee from us.

⁷Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7

The believer is in a war. We are being attacked by the devil, the world system, and the flesh. Yet, God has given us everything we need to be victorious in the battle.

Anthropology

Anthropology is the category of systematic theology that deals man – his origin, makeup, and fall.

God has spoken in His Word and has spoken in a way that His will is clear to His church. If we love the Lord then we will seek to be obedient to His commands (John 14:15, 23). Knowing and doing what God has said is important. When being diligent to handle accurately God's Word, we will apply a plain, literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic. This method takes the plain literal sense while understanding the historical, immediate, and wider contexts and the uses of figures of speech.

Origin of the Universe

In terms of origins, there are two primary beliefs: evolution and creation. Within the creation belief system there are various theories.

Day-Age Theory

The day-age theory (also called progressive creationism) teaches that the six days of God's creation (Gen 1-3) are not literal 24 hour days, but instead are geological ages. Verses to support this theory are passages like Psa 90:4 and 2 Pet 3:8. This theory assumes science is correct and attempts to correlate Scripture to science. Exodus 20:8-11 shows that the days of the creation week are literal 24 hour periods as does the account itself which computes a day based on morning and evening (Gen 1).

⁴For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it passes by, Or as a watch in the night. Psa 90:4

⁸But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 2 Pet 3:8

⁸"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. ¹¹"For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. Ex 20:8-11

And there was evening and there was morning, ... day. Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31

Theistic Evolution

This view holds that God began an evolutionary process millions (or billions) of years ago which He has moved throughout the millennia to bring about the current state of the universe. This view does not hold to any Scripture as it's basis.

Gap Theory

The gap theory holds that there is a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 which is billions of years long. The heavens and earth were originally created, then Satan sinned and as a result the original earth was destroyed and recreated millions (or billions) of years later. The gap theory is an attempt to reconcile the Scripture's literal 24 hour, six day creation with an evolutionary billions of year old earth. This view is not supported with other Scriptural evidence nor the grammar of Gen 1:1-2.

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Gen 1:1-2

Biblical View

The universe was created by God in six literal 24 hour days (Gen 1-3) with man being the culmination of His creative work.

Origin of Man

God created man in His image and likeness – sinless, with intelligence, self-consciousness, and self-determination (Gen 2:7; 15-25; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9). The difference between mankind and animals is that people have souls, animals do not.

⁷Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Gen 2:7

Man was created to glorify God (i.e. to display His character and goodness in our lives and therefore bring Him honor).

⁷Everyone who is called by My name, And **whom I have created for My glory**, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made." Isa 43:7

⁸There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, Nor are there any works like Yours. ⁹All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And **they shall glorify Your name**. ¹⁰For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God. . . . ¹²I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And **will glorify Your name forever**. Psa 86:8-10; 12

¹¹"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to **receive glory and honor and power**; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." Rev 4:11

³¹Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God**. 1 Cor 10:31

Gender Roles

The role of women in the church and home can be one of the most emotionally charged controversies in the church. Though salvation does not hinge on this belief it is important in the life of individuals, the family, and the church.

Two Major Views

Among evangelicals there are two main positions concerning gender and roles in the church:

1) The complementarian view, also called the traditional view or hierarchical view (by opponents) is the non-feminist position.

The complementarian view teaches that God created men and women as equals with distinctive gender-defined roles. The term *complementarian* was chosen in order to emphasize both the equality of the sexes and the complementary differences between men and women. This view teaches that God created men and women equally in His image so that they are fully equal in personhood, dignity, and worth (Gen 1:26-28).

Complementarians further believe that all Christians--whether male or female--are baptized, Spirit-gifted, believer-priests and are full members of the body of Christ. They should, therefore, use their spiritual gifts to their fullest potential in ministry to others and grow into full spiritual maturity.

They believe that God created men and women to be different and to fulfill distinct gender roles. God designed the man to be the husband, father, provider, protector, and leader. He is to be the loving head of the home and to provide godly leadership in the church. God designed the woman to be the wife, mother, nurturer, and helper. She is to submit to the man's leadership in church and home.

The correct view of the Bible's teaching on gender according to complementarians is one that holds both truths--equality and role differences. These truths are to be maintained in balanced tension as part of God's original intent prior to the fall into sin. Complementarians believe this view best represents the plain, straightforward teaching of Scripture on gender and that as such represents God's infallible truth and wise design for the good of His people and magnification of His glory. "The Role of Women in the Church" by D. M. Lorenzini at www.frontlinemin.org/women.asp

2) The egalitarian view is also called evangelical feminism, biblical feminism, or biblical equality.

Egalitarians believe that God created man and woman fully equal and that true equality demands equal ministry opportunities in the church and equal marital roles in the home. They believe that equal-yet-different, as taught by complementarians, is a contradiction in terms. Egalitarians believe that men and women share mutual submission and responsibility in both marriage and the church. Leadership and teaching in the church are to be determined by spiritual giftedness and not by gender.

Egalitarians emphasize the Bible's statements concerning the equality of men and women (Gen. 1:26-28; Gal. 3:28) and believe that the Bible's statements on headship and submission have been seriously misinterpreted. They believe that simplistic, literal, traditional interpretations of the Bible misrepresents what the Bible teaches on gender. They further believe that male domination of women is the result of the entrance of sin, as recorded in Genesis 3. "The Role of Women in the Church" by D. M. Lorenzini at www.frontlinemin.org/women.asp

Gender Equality

The Scriptures declare that male and female are equal in nature, personhood, dignity, and worth.

²⁶Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷**God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.** ²⁸God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Gen 1:26-28

In addition, the Scriptures are clear (Gal 3:26-29) that in terms of salvation men and women have equal access to salvation and in terms of their position in Christ are equal.

²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, **there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. Gal 3:26-29

Egalitarians use this passage as their proof text for gender equality and "... assert that equality of soteriological *position* in Christ must receive an appropriate outworking in the *practice* of the church (and in society as well)." Stanley J. Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 101.

Throughout the Bible women are equal in the nature of their ministry. Examples include Deborah, who was a judge of Israel (Judg 4:4), Huldah and Anna who were prophetesses (2 Chron 34:22; Luke 2:36), Priscilla who was active in evangelism (Acts 18:26) and Pheobe who was a deaconess (Rom 16:1). Indeed, women played a prominent role in the ministry of Jesus and ministry to Jesus (Matt 28:1-10; Luke 8:3; 23:49; John 11:1-46; 12:1-8). No spiritual gift is limited to men in the lists in the NT (1 Cor 12:27-31; Rom 12:3-8; 1 Pet 4:8-11) and women were commanded to edify the body of Christ, which included teaching (Titus 2:4) and prophecy (Acts 2:17-18; 21:9; 1 Cor 11:5).

Gender Distinctives

Jesus (Matt 19:3-8) and Paul (1 Tim 2:11-15) both reference the creation account as the foundation for their teaching on gender distinctives. In order to understand the NT teaching of gender roles in the church we must first visit the creation account since gender roles are a part of God's original design.

1. Adam was created first then Eve. (Gen 2:7, cf. 1 Tim 2:12-13)

⁷Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Gen 2:7

¹³For it was Adam who was first created, {and} then Eve. 1 Tim 2:13

2. God created Adam directly from the dust, He formed the woman out of the man. (Gen 2:21-23, cf. 1 Cor 11:3-8)
²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²²The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." Gen 2:21-23
³But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. ... ⁷For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. ⁸For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; 1 Cor 11:3;7-8
3. God created the woman for the man. (Gen 2:18, cf. 1 Cor 11:9)
¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Gen 2:18
⁹for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake. 1 Cor 11:9
4. God gave commands to Adam not Eve. (Gen 2:16-17)
¹⁶The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." Gen 2:16-17
5. God named Adam and Adam exercised his God-given leadership in naming Eve. (Gen 2:23; 3:20)
²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." Gen 2:23
²⁰Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all {the} living. Gen 3:20
6. The gender roles were reversed when Adam followed Eve into sin. (Gen 3:1-6)
¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" ²The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" ⁴The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!" ⁵"For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make {one} wise, **she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.** Gen 3:1-6
7. After the fall God called out to Adam, not Eve (even though it was Eve who ate first). (Gen 3:8-9, cf. Rom 5:12)
⁸They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" Gen 3:8-9
¹²Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- Rom 5:12
8. The curse highlighted the new struggle with the original order that men and women would have – male oppression and female rebellion. (Gen 3:16, cf. Gen 4:7)
¹⁶To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you." Gen 3:16
⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷"If you do well, will not {your countenance} be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." Gen 4:6-7

“... it is seen that the distinctions between men and women exist as part of God's original design from creation. The Fall has certainly complicated matters, but distinctions continue nonetheless.” “The Role of Women in the Church” by D. M. Lorenzini at www.frontlinemin.org/women.asp

Roles in the Home

The three main passages on the husband/wife relationship (1 Pet 3:1-7; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19) each affirm the leadership of the husband and submission (subordination) of the wife.

1. 1 Pet 3:1-7

Wives are to

- be submissive to their own husbands
- have chaste and respectful behavior
- have a gentle and quite spirit
- be obedient

Husbands are to

- live with their wives in an understanding way (with knowledge)
- view her as valuable and precious
- show he honor

2. Eph 5:21-33

Wives are to

- be subject to their husbands
- respect their husbands

Husbands are to

- have sacrificial servant love for the wife
- lead in sanctification
- nourish and cherish the wife

3. Colossians 3:18-19

Wives are to

- be subject to their husbands

Husbands are to

- love their wives
- do not be embittered against their wives

Roles in the Church

Though men and women have an identical standing before God and though both serve the Lord in significant ways, we should not conclude that God has intended men and women to function in the same capacity in the church. There are many examples of people who are equal in essence being subordinate in their function, most notably God Himself in the Trinity. Other examples are seen in the family, the government, the work place and even the church, with elders and church members.

Male Leadership: While women served a vital role in the church from the beginning, men were assigned the role of church leadership. The apostles were all men, the churches were started by men, the Scripture was written by men, and the churches were led by men. More important than the practice of the apostolic church, instructions are given to us that necessarily give men the role of church leadership. One of the qualifications for being an elder of a church is that the person is a man (1 Tim 3:1; Titus 1:6).

Female Subordination: 1 Tim 2:12 specifically prohibits women from exercising authority over a man in the church. In addition, Paul makes it clear that this is not a cultural limitation by resting his statement upon the order of creation (1 Tim 2:13). He uses Adam's priority in creation to demonstrate God's design that men are to be the leaders and teachers in the church. Paul's prohibition is permanent and universally binding.

¹¹A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. ¹²But I do **not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man**, but to remain quiet. ¹³For it was Adam who was first created, {and} then Eve.

¹⁴And {it was} not Adam {who} was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 1 Tim 2:11-14

The following should be noted when understanding 1 Tim 2:11-14:

1. Paul never mentioned any problems with women specifically in the church at Ephesus
2. Paul wrote to provide a standard of conduct in the church (1 Tim 3:15)
3. 1 Tim 2:11-14 is consistent with what he wrote earlier to the church at Ephesus (Eph 5:22-23) in regards to gender roles
4. 1 Tim teaches more on church leaders than any other epistle and in it women are told not to exercise authority over men.

The context of Paul's prohibition is within the church. This means that women are restricted in teaching or exercising authority over men in the context of the church only. 1 Timothy does not preclude women from occupations that require instruction of or authority over men, as long as these occupations are not in the church.

Teaching in the Bible is more than simply a transfer of information. It is with the expectation of acceptance and a change of life. Teaching today usually comes from an expert whose instruction is free to be ignored. Biblical teaching carries direction and an exercising of authority (cf. 1 Tim 4:11; 4:16; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Titus 2:15; 3:8). Teaching should be a careful, accurate explanation of the biblical text for the purpose of transforming the life of the hearer and women are restricted in performing this ministry to men in the church.

Women are nevertheless free to teach in many ways. Outside the church, women instruct men in many ways, such as in a profession. Also, believing women are commanded to explain the gospel to all, including lost men (cf. Acts 18:26). Within the church, women may teach other women and children. With men in the church, women should discuss spiritual matters in a manner that informs, but should not instruct men in a manner that carries the expectation of application. This does not mean that a man cannot learn from a woman's conduct or from a conversation with a woman and apply what he learns to his life; instead what it means is that the woman's purpose in talking with a man is not to instruct him in this way. The limitation that 1 Timothy 2:12 places upon the ministry of women is not a limitation of either the nature or the significance of their ministry. They are called to minister in the same basic way as men are called to minister and the significance placed upon their ministry is in no way diminished. It is only the *sphere* of ministry in which women are limited in their authority. Women are not to teach men or exercise authority over men, either corporately in formal church leadership or personally in informal church relationships. Women may communicate information to men, but in regard to spiritual matters women must not teach believing men in a way that directs or demands a response.

Immaterial Part of Man

There are two prevailing views concerning the origin of man's immaterial part.

1. Traducianism holds that man's immaterial part is generated at conception (Psa 51:5; Rom 5:12; Heb 7:10) with the sin nature being transmitted through the father.
... traducianism could explain how the sins of the parents can be passed on to the children without making God directly responsible for the creation of a soul that is sinful or has a disposition that would tend toward sin. Grudem p484
2. Creationism holds that God creates a new soul for each person and sends it to that person's body sometime between conception and birth (Psa 139:13; Zech 12:1). This is the prevailing view in Roman Catholicism.

There are two prevailing views concerning the makeup of the immaterial part of man.

1. The dichotomous view holds man has two parts and that "spirit" and "soul" are synonymous.
2. The trichotomous view holds that man is made up of three parts: body, soul, and spirit.

The Fall

The account of Genesis 3 is an historical account (Matt 19:3-5, Rom 5:12-21) of how sin entered the human race – called “the fall” from sinlessness. It does not describe the origin of sin since that was with Satan. Adam’s disobedience was to the revealed will of God (Gen 2:16-17; 3:1-19). The results of sin were judgments on:

1. the serpent (Gen 3:14) with an altered form and shape that now caused it to crawl on the ground.
2. Satan (Gen 3:15) with enmity between Satan’s seed and the seed of the woman and a painful wound would be given to the woman’s seed, but Satan would be given a fatal blow
3. Eve (Gen 3:16) with childbirth and a desire to master (cf Gen 4:7) her husband
4. Adam (Gen 3:17-19) with a cursing of the ground and the need to toil for food
5. the race (Gen 3:19-24) with physical death (cf Rom 5:12)
6. creation (Gen 3:17:18; Rom 8:19-21)

Hamartiology

Hamartiology is the category of systematic theology that deals with sin – its origin and definition, original sin or the sin nature, imputed sin, and the Christian and sin.

The origin of sin appears to be with Satan (Ezek 28:15), but originated with man in Eden (Gen 3).

Sin can be defined as anything contrary to the character of God (Rom 3:23) either by commission or omission transgressing God's word (Rom 5:15), lawlessness or rebellion (1 John 3:4), and missing the mark of perfect righteousness (Matt 5:48).

A disposition of the heart that 1) thinks evil; 2) speaks evil; 3) acts evil; and 4) omits good. MacArthur disposition of the heart

⁹"The **heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick**; Who can understand it? Jer 17:9

³This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, **the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives**. Afterwards they {go} to the dead. Ecc 9:3

²⁰And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. ²¹"For from within, out **of the heart of men, proceed** the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²²deeds of coveting {and} wickedness, {as well} {as} deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride {and} foolishness. ²³"All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." Mark 7:20-23

1) thinks evil

⁵Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that **every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**. Gen 6:5

2) speaks evil

⁶And **the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity**; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. James 3:6

3) acts evil (Rom 1:18-32)

... ²⁴**Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, ...** ²⁶For this reason **God gave them over to degrading passions**; ... ²⁸And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, **God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper**, ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; ³²and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. Rom 1:18-32

4) and omits good

²⁰**Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who {continually} does good and who never sins. Ecc 7:20**

Sin is wrong, not because of what it does to me, or my spouse, or child, or neighbor, but because it is an act of rebellion against the infinitely holy and majestic God. Jerry Bridges

Original sin also called inherited sin or the sin nature. It is the sinful state that man is born in. We inherit the sin nature from Adam (Rom 5:12). The sin nature is the corruption of our whole nature and is that which inclines us to sin. The result of the sin nature is "total depravity" – where the corruption of sin extends to every aspect of our being (Rom. 1:18–3:20) including intellect (2 Cor. 4:4), conscience (1 Tim. 4:2), will (Rom. 1:28), and heart (Eph. 4:18). The idea of Total Depravity is not that man displays as much evil as he possibly could, nor that he cannot do any good, or even feign a love for God, but that his entire nature is affected by sin. As such he is totally incapable of moving on his own toward God.

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Imputed sin is that sin which is charged to every person's account and resulted from each person being "in" Adam and participating in Adam's sin (Rom 5:12; Heb 7:9-10). Therefore, all humanity is guilty and the punishment of death has been given to each of us.

All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12). The MacArthur Study Bible NKJV by John MacArthur

The Believer and Sin

At salvation we are born again (John 3:3-8), the power of the sinful nature over us is broken (Rom 6:15-23), and a new nature is imparted (2 Pet 1:4). The sinful nature is not eradicated at salvation. The flesh and the new nature are now opposed to one another and are at war. We battle the flesh so that we are not carried away and enticed by our own lust (James 1:14) as we are bombarded with and tempted by the lies of Satan that he presents in his world system.

The result of sin in the believer's life is loss of fellowship (1 John 1:6); church discipline (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:4-5); the Lord's discipline (Heb 12:6); and sometimes physical death (1 Cor 11:30).

The believer has the Word (2 Tim 3:16-17; Psa 119:9-16; Eph 5:26; John 15:7; 17:17), the intercession of Christ (1 John 2:1; Heb 7:25; John 17), and the indwelling Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39; Rom 8:9; 1 John 2:20; Eph 1:13; 4:30; Acts 1:8; Eph 5:18; Gal 6:16) as the provision in the battle against sin. The remedy for sin when it occurs in the believer's life is repentance and confession (Heb 6:1; 1 John 1:9)

Soteriology

Soteriology is the category of systematic theology that deals with salvation – including topics such as election, substitution, redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, regeneration, forgiveness, justification, and eternal security.

Salvation

Salvation is the work of God whereby he saves individuals from the penalty, power, and one day the very presence of sin. It is completely by God and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Eph 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet 1:18-19)

According to the largest meaning as used in the Scripture, the word “salvation” represents the whole work of God by which He rescues man from the eternal ruin and doom of sin and bestows on him the riches of His grace, including eternal life now and eternal glory in heaven. Major Bible Themes by Lewis Sperry Chafer

Election

Election is God’s unconditioned choice before the foundation of the world of those individuals whom He would save (Matt 22:1-14; Rom 3:10-13; 8:27-30; 9:6-24; 1 Cor 1:18-19; Eph 1:3-11; 2:8-9; 2; Acts 13:48; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:1-2; 2 Pet 1:10; 2:13;). All whom the Father appoints to eternal life (Acts 13:48) He will call to Himself (Rom 8:30) by sovereign causing the gospel to be told to them (Acts 10; Rom 10:8-17). God’s choice is required because all people are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1) – dead people cannot chose to come alive.

...the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Eph 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet 1:2). TMS Website

The two main theological viewpoints concerning election are Calvinism and Arminianism.

John Calvin (1509 - 1564) was a profound systematic theologian who integrated the beliefs of prior reformers. In 1536 Calvin published his landmark *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He strongly defended salvation by grace alone. He defended the Scripture as the basis for God’s revelation and apart from what God has revealed we are strictly limited in our knowledge of Him. He was in awe that sinful humans had been reckoned to be righteous in Christ for God’s glory.

Jacobus Arminius (1559 - 1609) was a Dutch theologian who challenged Calvinist Reformed theology. After studying at the Geneva Academy, then headed by Calvin’s successor, Theodore Beza, Arminius became a minister in Amsterdam in 1588. Arminius reconsidered the theology of his teachers and began teaching against Calvinism. After the death of Arminius, his followers issued the Remonstrance of 1610, written to outline Arminianism. Its major points of departure from Calvinism were:

- a. **Free Will or Human Ability:** Man inherited weakness from Adam and although is far removed from perfect righteousness is still free to do spiritual good.
- b. **Conditional Election:** God looked forward and saw those that would choose Him then elected those that He saw would want to be saved of their own free will.
- c. **Universal Redemption or General Atonement:** The atonement of Christ is intended for everyone and is applied by the power of the Holy Spirit in response to the will of the sinner.
- d. **Resistible Grace:** The Holy Spirit can be effectually resisted and His purposes frustrated and cannot impart life unless the sinner is willing to have this life imparted.
- e. **Falling From Grace:** Perseverance is dependent on obedience. A saved man can fall from salvation – if man takes the initiative in salvation, he retains responsibility for the final outcome.

Those adhering to Arminius' teachings were known as "Remonstrants" and the movement the "Remonstrance." The Remonstrance provoked the Contra-Remonstrance, setting forth the orthodox Calvinist position. As the controversy flared, Calvinists sought a national synod to decide the issue. The Synod of Dort was held from November 13, 1618 to May 9, 1619 which concluded that Arminianism was not orthodox. Canons were written to summarize the orthodox position affirming the following forming the familiar acrostic TULIP:

- a. **Total Depravity:** After the fall, man cannot choose to serve God.
- b. **Unconditional Election:** God's choice of the elect is not conditioned upon any action by them.
- c. **Limited Atonement:** Christ died for the elect only, since those He died for are saved.
- d. **Irresistible Grace:** Divine grace cannot be rejected by the elect.
- e. **Perseverance of the Saints:** An elect person is always elect and will persevere to the end.

Point 1: Total Depravity (Total Inability / Total Corruption)

In studying the doctrine of salvation, it should be clear that a correct understanding of a person's condition is important. A defective understanding of a disease will lead to a defective understanding of the cure. The Scriptures clearly speak of the condition of man as being in a fallen – sinful state.

Each person has inherited the sin nature from Adam (Rom 5:12). The sin nature is the corruption of our whole nature and is that which inclines us to sin. The result of the sin nature is "Total Depravity" – where the corruption of sin extends to every aspect of our being (Rom. 1:18–3:20) including intellect (2 Cor. 4:4), conscience (1 Tim. 4:2), will (Rom. 1:28), and heart (Eph. 4:18). The idea of Total Depravity is not that man displays as much evil as he possibly could, nor that he cannot do any good, or even feign a love for God, but that his entire nature is affected by sin. As such he is totally incapable of moving on his own toward God.

All are sinful:

⁵Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. Psa 51:5

¹⁰as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ¹¹THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ¹²ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." ¹³"THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; ¹⁴"WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; ¹⁵"THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, ¹⁶DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, ¹⁷AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN." ¹⁸"THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES." Rom 3:10-18

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Rom 3:23

The unregenerate man's heart is wicked:

⁵Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Gen 6:5

⁹"The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? Jer 17:9

The unregenerate man is dead in his sins:

¹And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. Eph 2:1-3

The unregenerate man loves the darkness and hates the Light:

¹⁹"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰"For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. John 3:19-20

The unregenerate man will not come to Christ of his own volition:

⁴⁴"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. John 6:44

⁶⁵And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." John 6:65

The unregenerate man is a slave to sin:

³³Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. John 8:33

Point 2 – Unconditional Election

The second point of Calvinism flows as a logical conclusion (as well as being clearly taught in Scripture) of the doctrine of Total Depravity. Unconditional Election is God's unconditioned choice before the foundation of the world of those individuals whom He would save (Matt 22:1-14; Rom 3:10-13; 8:27-30; 9:6-24; 1 Cor 1:18-19; Eph 1:3-11; 2:8-9; 2; Acts 13:48; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:1-2; 2 Pet 1:10; 2:13;). Since man is dead, blind, held captive, etc., the remedy must come from outside himself. The dead cannot cause themselves to be alive. The Scriptures declare that we have been "made alive" (Eph 2:4-6) and "born again" (1 Pet 1:3) by God (from outside ourselves):

⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our transgressions, **made us alive** together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph 2:4-6

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Pet 1:3

On the other hand, for those that are not "made alive", we conclude that it is because God has not caused that to be. If man is unable to save himself because he is totally depraved, and if God alone can save, and if all are not saved, then the conclusion must be that God has not chosen to save all. All whom the Father appoints to eternal life (Acts 13:48) He will call to Himself (Rom 8:30) by sovereignly causing the gospel to be told to them (Acts 10; Rom 10:8-17).

God is sovereign and will do as He wills:

⁹"Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; ¹¹Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it. Isa 46:9-10

³⁵"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' Dan 4:35

God's sovereignty extends to the salvation of individuals:

¹⁵For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." ¹⁶So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. ¹⁷For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." ¹⁸So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. ¹⁹You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" ²⁰On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? ²¹Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? ²²What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? ²³And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, Rom 9:15-23

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. Eph 1:4-6

⁹who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, 2 Tim 1:9

⁴knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; ⁵for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. 1 Thess 1:4-5

¹³But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess 2:13-14

⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

¹⁶"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. John 15:16

Point 3 – Limited Atonement (Definite Atonement / Particular Redemption)

"Limited Atonement" or "Particular Redemption" deals with the issue of whose punishment did Christ bear. Historic Calvinism teaches limited atonement – Christ died only for the elect. The thought process can be found in John 10:

1. Jesus lays down his life for the sheep. (John 10:14-15)

¹⁴"I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. John 10:14-15

2. Jesus will lose none of his sheep. (John 10:28)

²⁷"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. John 10:27-28

3. Many people will not receive eternal life (for example Matt 7:13-14). Therefore, Jesus did not die for everyone but only for those who will ultimately be saved.

Many Scriptures indicate that Christ died for a particular people. (e.g. Eph 5:25; Matt 1:21; John 17:9)

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, Gal 1:3-4

²and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. Eph 5:2

²⁸"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. Acts 20:28

That is what theologians have called "particular redemption." They claim Christ did not die for the whole world--He died only for those who are or who will be redeemed. They fear that if Christ died for the whole world, but the whole world doesn't believe, then Christ died in futility. So to save Christ from a futile act, they particularize redemption. Unity in Action - Building Up One Another Without Offending--Part 2 by John MacArthur Tape GC 45-111

Other Scriptures say that Jesus died for the sins of the world.

²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

¹⁶"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. John 3:16-17

²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. 1 John 2:2

¹⁴We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. 1 John 4:14

"He provides a universal redemption that is particularized only by those who put their faith in Him." Unity in Action - Building Up One Another Without Offending--Part 2 by John MacArthur

"Limited atonement is a theology that teaches Jesus only died for those who are elect or the saved. He effectually only died for those but His blood, His death, covered the sins potentially of all mankind." Dale Whitehead – VBC – Sermon Transcript "The Conduct of False Teachers 2 Peter 2:1-3"

I do not accept this point fully, however, it is clear that Christ's sacrifice is not applied to everyone. At the same time, the Scriptures seem to indicate that He died for everyone (potentially). Perhaps a way to look at it is: His sacrifice was "big" enough to cover the sins of the whole world, but is only applied to those that have been chosen to salvation.

Point 4 – Irresistible Grace (Efficacious Grace)

The doctrine of "Irresistible Grace" means that the call of God in the heart of His elect cannot be rejected. It is clear that people resist the gospel message. This is not resisting God's call, but simply doing what their nature demands. Some influence greater than our totally depraved natures must be brought to bear upon our souls in order to respond to the gospel. Once that "Efficacious Grace" is brought to bear it will not be resisted.

³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. Rom 8:30

³⁷"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. John 6:37

⁴⁴"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. John 6:44 (Draw means to draw, drag off; metaphorically to draw by inward power, lead, impel)

⁴⁵"It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. John 6:45

¹⁴A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. Acts 16:14

Point 5 – Perseverance of the Saints (Eternal Security)

The doctrine of the “Perseverance of the Saints” is sometimes called “Eternal Security” or “Once saved, always saved”. A true believer cannot lose their salvation for the Scriptures declare that nothing can separate the believer from Christ (Rom 8:28-39). All true believers once saved are kept by God’s power and are always saved (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Cor 1:4-8; Eph 4:30; Heb 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 24).

²⁴“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. John 5:24

³⁷“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ³⁸“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹“This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. John 6:37-39

²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹“My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. John 10:28-29

¹Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Rom 8:1

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8:38-39

⁵who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Pet 1:5

This doctrine also includes the teaching that the true believer is changed and will therefore bring about fruits in their life in keeping with repentance.

⁶For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1:6

¹⁷Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 2 Cor 5:17

The saved sinner loves Jesus.

⁸and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. 1 Pet 1:8-9

The true believer will seek to keep Jesus’ commands.

¹⁵“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. John 14:15

The Purpose of the Atonement

The meaning or purpose of the death of Christ can be boiled down into some basic doctrines. One should not be emphasized over the others, but all melded together to form a rich view of the atonement.

1. Substitution for sinners (or vicarious – in the place of) – Jesus died in the place of sinners (Rom 5:8; 1 Pet 3:18). He bore the punishment that was rightly ours. He was made sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), He bore our sins in His body on the cross (1 Pet 2:24), He was offered to bear the sins of many (Heb 9:28), He suffered greatly in our place (Isa 53).

⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:8

¹⁸For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 1 Pet 3:18

2. Redemption from slavery to sin – The believer has been “purchased from the marketplace of sin”. The purchase price was the death of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev 5:9; 14:3-4)
¹⁷If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; ¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 1 Pet 1:17-19
3. Reconciliation between God and man – The hostility between God and man can be exchanged with peace and harmony. Man's sin has caused a barrier between God and man (Isa 59:1-2; Col 1:21, 22; James 4:4) and we are at enmity with God (Rom 5:10). The death of Christ has made it possible to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:18-19).
¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 2 Cor 5:18-19
4. Propitiation (satisfying the righteous demands) of God toward the sinner. God is holy. He is too pure to approve evil (Hab 1:3), with Him no evil dwells (Psa 5:4), He will not leave the guilty unpunished (Nah 1:3), and He hates all who do iniquity (Psa 5:5). Therefore, because God is holy and just he must punish sin. The death of Jesus satisfied God's wrath (Rom 1:18) toward sin (Heb 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Rom 3:25).
¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10
5. Regeneration – the act of God that brings new life to the one who believes (John 3:3; Titus 3:5). God regenerates (John 1:13) instantaneously at the moment of salvation as he wills (James 1:18) by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5). A truly regenerated person will bear fruit in keeping with the new life (1 Cor 6:19-20; Eph 2:10).
⁵He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, Titus 3:5
6. Forgiveness – God has dealt with our sin through Jesus and removed the charges that were held against us. It is a cancellation of the debt of the punishment for our sin (Rom 3:25; Col 2:13).
¹³When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Col 2:13-14
7. Justification – The work of God (Rom 8:33) where the believing sinner is declare righteous (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom 2:4; Isa 55:6-7). Our sins are place on Jesus (Col 2:14; 1 Pet 2:24) and Jesus' righteousness is placed on us (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21).
²¹He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor 5:21

Blessings of Salvation

Ryrie (Ryrie Study Bible NASB) details the blessings of salvation in four categories: acceptance, position, inheritance, and enablement.

1) acceptance

a. redeemed (Rom 3:24)

²⁴being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; Rom 3:24

b. reconciled (2 Cor 5:19-21)

¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor 5:19-21

c. forgiven (Rom 3:25)

²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; Rom 3:25

d. delivered (Col 1:13)

¹³For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, Col 1:13

e. accepted (Rom 15:7)

Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. Rom 15:7

f. justified (Rom 3:24)

²⁴being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; Rom 3:24

g. glorified (Rom 8:30)

³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. Rom 8:30

2) position

a. citizen of heaven (Phil 3:20)

²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Phil 3:20

b. member of a holy and royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:5, 9)

⁵you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ... ⁹But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 1 Pet 2:5, 9

c. member of the family of God (Eph 2:19)

¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, Eph 2:19

d. adopted (Gal 4:5)

⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Gal 4:5

e. God's own possession (1 Pet 2:9)

⁹But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 1 Pet 2:9

3) inheritance

a. complete in Christ (Col 2:9-10)

⁹For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, ¹⁰and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; Col 2:9-10

b. possess every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3)

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, Eph 1:3

c. an heir of heaven (1 Pet 1:4)

⁴to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 1 Pet 1:4

4) enablement

a. because under grace (Rom 6:14)

¹⁴For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. Rom 6:14

b. because freed from the law (Rom 6:20-22)

²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. ²²But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. Rom 6:20-22

c. because indwelt by the Persons of the Godhead (Gal 2:20; 1 Cor 6:19)

²⁰"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. Gal 2:20

¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 1 Cor 6:19

The Steps in the Salvation Process

The following are the steps in the salvation process or *ordo salutis* (order of salvation). Some of these steps occur simultaneously, but are ordered here for understanding.

1. Election – God’s unconditioned choice before the foundation of the world (eternity past) of those individuals whom He would save (Matt 22:1-14; Rom 3:10-13; 8:27-30; 9:6-24; 1 Cor 1:18-19; Eph 1:3-11; 2:8-9; 2; Acts 13:48; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:1-2; 2 Pet 1:10; 2:13;). All whom the Father appoints to eternal life (Acts 13:48) He will call to Himself (Rom 8:30) by sovereign causing the gospel to be told to them (Acts 10; Rom 10:8-17). God’s choice is required because all people are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1) – dead people cannot chose to come alive.
2. The Gospel Call – When God causes the gospel to be shared with the elect (Acts 10).
3. Regeneration – the act of God that brings new life (born again) (2 Cor 5:17) to the one who believes (John 3:3; Titus 3:5). God regenerates (John 1:13) instantaneously at the moment of salvation as he wills (James 1:18) by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5). A truly regenerated person will bear fruit in keeping with the new life (1 Cor 6:19-20; Eph 2:10).
4. Conversion – when a person responds to the gospel with faith and repentance.
 - 4a. Justification – the work of God (Rom 8:33) where the believing sinner is declare righteous (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 7:10; Isa 55:6-7). Our sins are placed on Jesus (Col 2:14; 1 Pet 2:24) and Jesus’ righteousness is placed on us (2 Cor 5:21).
 - 4b. Adoption – making us a part of God’s family, His children and the brothers and sisters of Christ (John 1:12; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5; Heb 12:5-9).
 - 4c. Indwelling (1 Cor 6:19) – the act by which the Holy Spirit permanently (John 14:16) takes up residence in every believer.
 - 4d. Baptizing – the act where the believer is united with Christ in His death (Rom 6:3-5) and into union with other believers in the body of Christ(1 Cor 12:13).
 - 4e. Sealing – the guarantee that the believer belongs to God (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30); providing the believer with eternal-security and assurance of salvation.
 - 4f. Bestowing spiritual gifts – the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts supernaturally and sovereignly (1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:3-4) distributes spiritual gifts to each believer (Rom 8:9) individually just as He wills. Each believer is given at least one permanent (Rom 11:29) spiritual gift (1 Cor 12:7) which is to be employed to serve other believers as a good steward of God's grace (1 Pet 4:10). Spiritual gifts are given for the advantage of all (1 Cor 12:7), the edification of the church (1 Cor 14:26), the equipping of the saints (Eph 4:7, 12), and the glory of God (1 Pet 4:10-11).
- 4d. Sanctification – meaning positionally set apart for God (2 Thess 2:13; Heb 10:10); experientially it is the process to more and more die unto sin, and live unto righteousness (2 Cor 3:18).
5. Perseverance (when we remain Christians despite trials, tribulations and temptations) causing us to persevere in the faith, so that we do not finally fall away.
5. Death (when we finally get to see the Lord face to face) – we enter an intermediate state, where we are in the presence of the Lord, but without our physical bodies.
7. Glorification (when we receive our new resurrected bodies) – when our bodies will be resurrected and changed so that they will no longer decay.

Security

The security of the believer's salvation involves the question of if a true believer can lose their salvation. The Scriptures declare that nothing can separate the believer from the Christ (Rom 8:28-39). All true believers once saved are kept by God's power and are always saved (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Cor 1:4-8; Eph 4:30; Heb 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 24). When a professing believer turns away it shows that true salvation never took place (1 John 2:19).

²⁴"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. John 5:24

³⁷"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ³⁸"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹"This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." John 6:37-40

²⁷"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹"My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰"I and the Father are one." John 10:27-30

¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. 1 John 2:19

Special Topic – Lordship Salvation

A theological issue that has been raised to the forefront of evangelicalism in the last ~25 years is Lordship Salvation. A simple statement of the issue would be, "Does one have to submit to Jesus' lordship to be saved?". Yet the issue is more complex dealing with the meaning of faith, repentance, discipleship, and perseverance. While some see this issue as new, it has been around for many years.

There are some who seem willing to accept Christ as Saviour who will not receive Him as Lord. ... How sad it is that some talk about their faith in Christ yet their faith is not proved by their works! ... I cannot conceive it possible for anyone truly to receive Christ as Saviour and yet not to receive Him as Lord. Charles H. Spurgeon, "The Royal Saviour," *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol 56, **1910**, p. 617.

There are three main beliefs on this issue espoused by John MacArthur (Lordship Salvation), Zane Hodges (a "Radical" Non-Lordship Salvation), and Charles Ryrie (Non-Lordship Position, but thought of as a more middle ground between the two "extremes"). Unfortunately, some on each side of the argument have sought to vilify the other by labeling. Lordship salvation advocates have been labeled as believing in "means salvation". Non-lordship advocates have been labeled as believing in "easy-believism" or "cheap grace". Then there are many who view the differences as simply semantics. However, ...

"It should be obvious that these are real doctrinal differences; the lordship controversy is not a semantic disagreement. The participants in the debate hold widely differing perspectives." (Faith Works, MacArthur)

There are many points of theology that are agreed to by both sides of this argument:

- All are sinners and cannot earn God's favor through good works. God requires no pre-salvation reformation. We are saved before our faith produces righteous deeds.
- Christ's death purchased salvation from sin.
- Eternal life is a free gift from God and we are justified by grace through faith in Christ alone.
- Christians can and do sin, sometimes horribly.

The different sides of the argument agree on many Christian beliefs, but disagree on what constitutes saving faith in Jesus Christ. ... Each of these men would agree with basic evangelical doctrine such as that Christ's death paid the full penalty for our sins, salvation is by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ, sinners cannot earn salvation or favor with God, and Christians can and do sin. The debate concerns exactly what entails saving faith in Jesus Christ. **THE TRUE GOSPEL: A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE LORDSHIP SALVATION CONTROVERSY** by Eric W. Zeller, 1998.

Repentance

One of the differences in the Lordship / Non-lordship debate is repentance. For example, Ryrie says:

False additions to faith: Repentance – This is a valid condition for salvation when understood as a synonym for faith. It is a false addition to faith when understood as a prerequisite, requiring the cleansing of the life in order to be saved. Ryrie Study Bible, Page 1960, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, 1978 (Rewritten for quotation)

However, this does not appear to match the usage in Scripture since usage in context determines meaning.

Repent [Metanoia] – to change one's mind or purpose, always in the NT involving a change for the better, an amendment, and always, except in Luke 17:3,4 of repentance from sin. Vines Expository Dictionary of NT Words.

"Repentance (metanoia, 'change of mind') involves a turning with contrition from sin to God; the repentant sinner is in the proper condition to accept the divine forgiveness." (F. F. Bruce. The Acts of the Apostles [Greek Text Commentary], London: Tyndale, 1952, p. 97.)

⁴⁶and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,
⁴⁷and that **repentance for forgiveness of sins** would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Luke 24:46-47

⁹The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for **any to perish but for all to come to repentance.** 2 Pet 3:9

⁹I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

¹⁰For the **sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation**, but the sorrow of the world produces death. 2 Cor 7:9-10

²¹solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.** Acts 20:21

¹Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of **repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,** Heb 6:1

²¹I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and **not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality** which they have practiced. 2 Cor 12:21

²⁰The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not **repent of the works of their hands**, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; ²¹and they did not **repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.** Rev 9:20-21

¹¹and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not **repent** of their deeds. Rev 16:11

Clearly, repentance is not synonymous with faith, but that faith is joined with repentance. We turn **from our sins – toward God** and trust completely in Christ for salvation.

Object of Faith

Faith (noun) and to believe (verb) is the means by which salvation is appropriated to the repentant sinner. Grace as well as faith are both gifts of God.

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Eph 2:8-9

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Heb 11:1). But what is saving faith? For clearly not all belief/faith saves.

¹⁹You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. James 2:19

Follow

²⁷"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they **follow Me**; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. John 10:27-28

Obey

⁸Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. ⁹And having been made perfect, He became to all those who **obey** Him the source of eternal salvation, Heb 5:8-9

³⁶"He who **believes** in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not **obey** the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:36

Deny Self

²³And He was saying to them all, "**If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.**" ²⁴"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. ²⁵"For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Luke 9:23-26

Forsake All

³³"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does **not give up all his own possessions.** Luke 14:33

Confess Jesus as Lord

⁹that if you **confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. Rom 10:9-10

Clearly, saving faith is faith in the Lord of all. Saving faith is not merely giving assent to the facts of the gospel, but encompasses following, obedience, self-denial, forsaking all, and confessing Jesus as Lord. Non-lordship proponents wrongly assert:

False additions to faith: Surrender to the lordship of Christ. Christ must be Lord in the sense of Jehovah in order to be a qualified Savior (Rom 10:9), but Christ's personal lordship over the individual's life is not a condition for salvation. It should be the consequence of salvation and is a condition for dedication in full discipleship. Ryrie Study Bible, Page 1960, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, 1978 (Rewritten for quotation)

Result of True Saving Faith

True saving faith causes a change in the sinner.

¹⁷Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
2 Cor 5:17

The saved sinner then loves Jesus.

⁸and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. 1 Pet 1:8-9

The true believer will seek to keep Jesus' commands.

²³Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. John 14:23

¹⁵"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. John 14:15

³By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; ⁵but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: ⁶the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. 1 John 2:3-6

The Scriptures teach that it is possible for a believer to sin and to sometimes sin very badly. However, extended periods of carnality exhibit evidence that the individual never really had saving faith. And a denial of Christ is evidence that salvation never took place.

³³"But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. Matt 10:33

¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. 1 John 2:19

Lordship Salvation Conclusion

The Scriptures are clear that mere intellectual assent to facts concerning the gospel is not saving faith. True saving faith encompasses repentance – a turning away from sin and toward God through faith in Jesus. True saving faith also includes following Jesus, obedience, self-denial, forsaking all, and confessing Jesus as Lord. True believers will exhibit fruit in keeping with repentance. Though believers may sin, prolonged periods of sin and denial of Christ is evidence that true saving faith never existed.

Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology is the category of systematic theology that deals with the church – its definition, purpose, organization, and ordinances.

The Church

“Church” translates the Greek *ekklesia* meaning “a called out group”. This called out group is not people who simply profess to know Jesus nor those who identify themselves with a particular Christian group.

²¹“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. ²²“Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ²³“And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’ Matt 7:21-23

The church is the total group of individuals who place their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. When born again, these individuals are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body.

¹²For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Cor 12:12-13

²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Gal 3:26-28

The church is a NT revelation of an OT mystery.

⁴By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; ⁶*to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, Eph 3:4-6

The church is what Jesus promised to build and what began at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

¹⁸“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. Matt 16:18

The head of the church is Jesus.

¹⁸He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. Col 1:18

The universal church is a united spiritual organism consisting of all members of the body of Christ (Matt 16:18; 1 Cor 12:12-13; Col. 1:18; Eph 2:11, 3:6; 3:10). The formation of the church began at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will come to an end with the Rapture (1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thess 4:13-18). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Cor 10:32; Eph 3:1-6; 5:32).

³²Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; 1 Cor 10:32

Purpose of the Church is:

- 1) To glorify God (Eph 3:21)
- 2) to spread the Gospel (Matt 28:19-20)
- 3) to build itself up in the faith through teaching, fellowship, remembering Jesus' sacrifice, and prayer (Eph 4:11-16; Acts 2:42)

The "Body"

The church is an organized organism. Several figures picture the church: a bride (Eph 5:25-32), a building (1 Pet 2:4-5), branches (John 15:1-11), and a body.

The rich doctrine of the church as Christ's Body is a metaphor that shows the church not as an organization but as a living organism made up of many interrelated and mutually dependent parts. Christ is the head of that Body, and the Holy Spirit is, as it were, its lifeblood. . . . Members of the Body of Christ are inextricably united in their Lord, and when one member malfunctions, the whole Body is weakened. When its members disobey the Head, the Body limps and stumbles. Yet when its members faithfully respond to the Head, the church manifests the Lord's beauty, power, and glory. MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Ephesians

The body figure illustrates the diverse-unity and interdependence that is present in the church. The body is made up of unique individuals who are united by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12-27).

Believer to Believer Relationships

Being a member of Christ's body comes with responsibilities toward the head and the other members. Our motivation for striving to excel at relationships in our life is the incredible mercy and grace we have been shown. We once walked in the those things for which the wrath of God will come. We have been chosen by God, separated from sin, and beloved by Him. Therefore, we should put on those qualities that build unity in the body (Col 3:5-15).

- Love one another – Love is the sacrificial commitment of my will to another's needs and best interests regardless of the cost to myself. Love seeks another's highest good, even if it costs a great deal; even if there is no response of love or gratitude. Love is not an impulse from the feelings. It does not always run with the natural inclinations nor does it spend itself only upon those whom we like or deem worthy to receive love. It is an act of the will, so we can choose to love even if we do not feel like doing it.

¹²“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. John 15:12

¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. 1 John 4:11-12

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

⁴Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Cor 13:4-7

Love is significant in the life of the body in that it demonstrates tangibly that we belong to Jesus and is foundational in relationships.

³⁴“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35

⁸Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. 1 Pet 4:8

- Forgive one another – Forgiveness is the gracious human act of not holding wrong acts against a person. It is that act and attitude toward those who have wronged us which restores relationships and fellowship.
³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Eph 4:32
¹²So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Col 3:12-13
²¹Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” ²²Jesus said* to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Matt 18:21-22
- Build up one another
¹⁹So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. Rom 14:19
- Give preference to one another
³Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Phil 2:3-4
¹⁰give preference to one another in honor; Rom 12:10b
- Encourage one another
¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. 1 Thess 5:11
¹³But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Heb 3:13
²⁴and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. Heb 10:24-25
- Admonish one another
¹⁴And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another. Rom 15:14
- Edify one another
¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. 1 Thess 5:11
²⁹Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Eph 4:29
- Serve one another
¹³For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. Gal 5:13
¹⁰As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1 Pet 4:10
- Accept one another
⁷Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. Rom 15:7
- Be devoted to one another
¹⁰*Be* devoted to one another in brotherly love; Rom 12:10a

- Be affectionate to one another
¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ. 1 Pet 5:14
- Be hospitable to one another
⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 1 Pet 4:9
- Confess sins to and pray for one another
¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. James 5:16
- Bear one another's burdens
²Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. Gal 6:2
- Comfort one another
¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thess 4:18
- Live harmoniously with one another
¹⁵Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, Rom 15:15
^{13b}Live in peace with one another. 1 Thess 5:13b
- Show tolerance for one another
²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, Eph 4:2
- Be kind to one another
³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Eph 4:32

Organization

Members of the universal church are to gather together in local assemblies or bodies (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Gal 1:2; Phil 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:11 Cor 11:18-20; Heb10:25). Once again the purpose of the church is to:

...glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

The MacArthur Study Bible NKJV by John MacArthur

Three main types of church government:

1. Hierarchical or Episcopal:
 - Roman Catholic church, Eastern Orthodox churches, the Anglican Church, Episcopal Church in the United States, and the Methodist Episcopal church
 - This system recognizes a bishop, or church leader by some other designation, who has power by virtue of his office to direct the local church. Bishops may also direct churches in a given area.
 - Decisions are made at levels higher than the local church.
 - The defense of this form of government is usually stated as the position and authority of James in Acts 15, Titus and Timothy's role with several churches, and the idea that bishops were designated to replace the apostles. However, the term bishop is not a distinct office but a synonym for elder. And NT history does not show that bishops replaced the apostles (For example, Paul alone did not ordain Timothy – it was a council of elders (1 Tim 4:14).

2. Representative or Presbyterian:
 - Presbyterian and Reform churches.
 - Recognizes the authority of duly appointed representatives of local churches, usually grouped geographically.
 - Elders rule over both local and regional or national churches as representatives of the members. Often representatives of a local group (called a presbytery) of churches come under the supervision and direction of a larger body (or synod) and in turn the synod comes under the larger body of a general assembly.
 - While rules and extent of power vary, the idea is that duly appointed representatives constitute the authority of the church.
 - For this form of government, Scripture nowhere calls for elders to have authority beyond their local flock.

3. Congregational:
 - The Baptists, the Disciples Churches, Mennonites, the Evangelical Free churches, Congregationalists, and independents practice this style of organization
 - Each local church governs itself by means of democratic structures.
 - The authority remains with the local congregation, and important matters are decided by the congregation without respect to authority of other churches or officials.
 - While local churches may be subject to some degree to higher bodies, committees, or officials, the concept of a congregational church is that a local congregation determines its own affairs, elects and ordains its own ministers, and directs the use of its own treasury. The local congregation has authority, by vote, to lead the church.
 - There is much diversity within Congregational churches: a single pastor (or single elder), corporate board, pure democracy, and a plurality of elders.

The local church is organized (Titus 1:5) with the servant-leaders (Heb 13:7; 17) of the church being elders (also called bishops or pastors) (Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 4:14; 5:17; Titus 1:7-9; 1 Pet 5:1-5) and deacons (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim 3:8-13).

Elders are those men who are set apart and qualified by the Holy Spirit for prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9).

⁴"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Acts 6:4

They are the caretakers of the church (1 Tim 3:5).

⁵(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), 1 Tim 3:5

They rule and exercise oversight (1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Pet 5:2).

¹²But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, 1 Thess 5:12

¹⁷The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 1 Tim 5:17

²shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 1 Pet 5:2

They preach and teach the Word. (1 Tim 5:17)

¹⁷The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 1 Tim 5:17

They shepherd the flock of God (Acts 20:28).

²⁸"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. Acts 20:28

- To feed (1 Tim 3:2)

²An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 1 Tim 3:2

- To lead (Heb 13:7; 1 Pet 5:2)

⁷Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. Heb 13:7

²shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 1 Pet 5:2

- To protect and watch over (Heb 13:17)

¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. Heb 13:17

- To care for (1 Thess 2:7)

⁷But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. 1 Thess 2:7

There are specific character and ministry qualifications for elders (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9):

¹It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. ²An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. ⁴He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity ⁵(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), ⁶and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. ⁷And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 1 Tim 3:1-7

⁶*namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. ⁷For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, ⁸but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. Titus 1:6-9

	1 Timothy 3:2-7	Titus 1:6-9
1	above reproach (v2)	above reproach (v6)
2	husband of one wife (v2)	husband of one wife (v6)
3	temperate (v2)	
4	prudent (v2)	sensible (v8)
5	respectable (v2)	
6	hospitable (v2)	hospitable (v8)
7	able to teach (v2)	able to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict (v9)
8	not addicted to wine (v3)	not addicted to wine (v7)
9	not pugnacious (v3)	not pugnacious (v7)
10	gentle (v3)	
11	uncontentious (v3)	
12	free from the love of money (v3)	not fond of sordid gain (v7)
13	manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (v4)	having children who believe and are not accused of dissipation or rebellion (v6)
14	not a new convert (v6)	
15	must have a good reputation with those outside the church (v7)	
16		not self-willed (v7)
17		not quick-tempered (v7)
18		loving what is good (v8)
19		just (v8)
20		devout (v8)
21		self-controlled (v8)

Church members have a responsibility to appreciate and highly esteem and obey and submit to their elders.

¹²But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, ¹³and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. 1 Thess 5:12-13

¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. Heb 13:17

Deacons are the officially recognized servants who serve the church in leading certain church ministries and advise the elders in their shepherding role. Deacons are individuals who make it possible for elders to function properly without being distracted. As deacons are set apart to manage the ministries within the congregation, the elders are better able to fulfill their primary function of oversight. Deacons are men (or women) of good reputation, who are full of the Spirit and of wisdom.

¹Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. ²So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. ³"Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven **men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.** ⁴"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. ⁶And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. Acts 6:1-6

Deacons help the elders implement their task. The distinction between the two is that Scripture says the elders must be able to teach. That doesn't mean deacons can't teach or shouldn't teach. They certainly should be strong in sound doctrine. Also they should be full of faith, full of the Spirit, full of wisdom, and possessing a good reputation-like the men in Acts 6. They ought to be people of integrity. To state that deacons are not the primary teachers in the church doesn't mean that they are ignorant theologically. First Timothy 3:9 says they hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." That means they not only know the truth but also live the truth. Church Leadership-Qualified Servants for the Church--Deacons (Part 1), John MacArthur, 1 Timothy 3:8-13 Tape GC 54-25

Deacons, like elders, must meet certain character qualifications:

⁸Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, ⁹but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. ¹¹Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹²Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. ¹³For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. 1 Tim 3:8-13

Ordinances

Two ordinances (outward manifestations of inward realities) have been given to the church. Ordinance is an important word and helps to clarify the meaning of the communion. *An ordinance is an outward rite prescribed by Christ to be performed by His church.* As an ordinance, it does not bring special grace in and of itself. Some churches call the Lord's Supper a "sacrament," or something that is set apart as sacred and consider the ceremony and elements to be holy in and of themselves. The number of sacraments varied until 1562 when the Council of Trent limited the number to seven for the Catholic Church. However, only two observances, baptism and communion, are taught explicitly in the NT as commands of Jesus, and because they are symbolic and testimonial in nature, it is better to use the term ordinance rather than sacrament. It was ordained by Christ and is to be done in obedience to Christ, not to receive a supposed mystical blessing. These ordinances do not convey grace to the participants.

Baptism

Baptism is the first step in obedience of the new believer (Acts 8:36-38) and the outward testimony to the world that the believer is identifying himself with Christ in death and resurrection to new life (Rom 6:1-11) and with the Body of Christ (Acts 2:41). Baptism pictures outwardly what the Holy Spirit has accomplished inwardly by placing the believer into union with Jesus Christ (Rom 6:3-4) and into Christ's spiritual body, which is the church (1 Cor 12:13).

³⁶As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁷[And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] ³⁸And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. Acts 8:36-38

³Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. Rom 6:3-4

¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Cor 12:13

Communion

The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of the Lord's death (Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23) and should be observed until He returns. The remembrance should only be partaken of in a worthy manner (1 Cor 11:23-32).

Communion is an "outward expression" of an "inward reality." The elements of bread and wine are clearly symbolic. Our Savior simply took the unleavened bread and wine of the Passover dinner and incorporated them as the elements to be used in communion, to symbolize His body and blood. This contradicts flawed views that have been traditionally held in the church. Transubstantiation, as found in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, teaches that as part of the ceremony, the bread and wine literally change into the body and blood of Jesus. Consubstantiation, as found in the teaching of the Lutheran Church, teaches that Christ's literal presence does not replace but is added to the bread and wine and likewise imparts grace. The teaching of reformed churches retains the real presence of Christ in the elements, but claim that special presence is spiritual, not physical.

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." ²⁷And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. ²⁹"But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." Matt 26:26-29

²³For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. ²⁷Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. ³⁰For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. ³¹But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. ³²But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world. 1 Cor 11:23-32

Eschatology

Eschatology is the category of systematic theology that deals with the end times or “last things” – death, heaven, hell, the second coming of Christ, the rapture, the tribulation, the millennium, the resurrections of the dead, the judgments, and the eternal state.

While much in the study of eschatology we will not experience, the purpose of the study of the end times is that we be holy in conduct and diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless (2 Pet 3:11-14).

Death

The Scriptures are clear that all people, without miraculous intervention (e.g. Enoch - Gen 5:24, Heb 11:5, Elijah - 2 Kings 2:11, or raptured believers - 1 Thess 4:17) will taste death and judgment (Heb 9:27). This death is the end of physical life when the soul is separated from the body (James 2:26) with no loss of our consciousness (Luke 16:19-31; Rev 6:9-11). For the believer death means to “be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” (Luke 23:43; Phil 1:23; 2 Cor 5:8). Those that have not placed their faith in Christ as Lord and Savior are kept under punishment until the resurrection of the unsaved (Luke 16:19-26; Rev 20:13-15).

²⁷And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, ²⁸so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. Heb 9:27-28

²⁶For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. James 2:26

The outcome of the judgment is based on acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior which is manifested in a changed life:

¹⁶For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:16-18

¹³Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. ¹⁵Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? ¹⁷So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰So then, you will know them by their fruits. ²¹Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. ²²Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' Matt 7:13-23

In the end there are two eternal (or final) states for all mankind: everlasting life (heaven) or everlasting punishment (hell).

⁴⁶“These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Matt 25:46

²“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Dan 12:2

Heaven and Hell

One of the most encouraging and hope inspiring doctrines in the Scriptures is the doctrine of heaven. Conversely, one of the most disturbing doctrines in the Scriptures is the doctrine of hell. The Scriptures, taken literally, portray a wonderful, blessed view of heaven and a horrific view of hell. Even with clear Scriptural teaching on hell, it is somewhat misunderstood and in recent years gentler doctrines of hell have gained support among evangelicals. Based on the plain, literal, historical, grammatical interpretation of Scripture it is clear that heaven and hell are literal places.

All orthodox Christian theologians agree on the existence of two eternal destinies for all angels and human beings: heaven and hell. The Moody Handbook of Theology by Paul E. Enns

Description of Heaven

The believer's citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20), it is where we long to be (2 Cor 5:8). Believers immediately go to God's presence upon death (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23; 1 Thess 4:14).

We will have full knowledge of God in heaven:

¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 1 Cor 13:12

We will have fullness of joy in heaven:

¹¹You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever. Psa 16:11

Heaven will be a place of personal intimate fellowship with God:

³And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, Rev 21:3

In heaven, we will be busy worshipping God:

¹⁴I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵"For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. ¹⁶"They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes." Rev 7:14-17

We will not be alone in heaven:

²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, ²³to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. Heb 12:22-24

Heaven will be a place where the ravages of sin which we now endure will be wiped away – tears, death, mourning, crying, and pain:

⁴and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." Rev 21:4

Description of Hell

Hell is the final place of eternal punishment of the unsaved (Matt 5:22; 18:9; 23:15, 33; 25:41, 46). It is a place of agony and misery with fire and darkness (Jude 7, 13), weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30), destruction (2 Thess 1:7-9; 2 Pet 3:7; 1 Thess 5:3), and torment (Rev 20:10; Luke 16:23). Ultimately, hell is a place that is completely separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2 Thess 1:9). "Hell" is used 12 times in the NT and translates two words: gehenna and tartoo. Both refer to the final everlasting punishment of the wicked. The Scriptures describe hell as:

Darkness and a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth:

¹¹"I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; ¹²but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the **outer darkness**; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt 8:11-12

¹³"Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the **outer darkness**; in that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.' Matt 22:13

⁵¹and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**. Matt 24:51

Furnace of fire

⁴⁹"So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, ⁵⁰and will throw them into the **furnace of fire**; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matt 13:49-50

Unquenchable fire

¹⁷"His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with **unquenchable fire**." Luke 3:17

Eternal fire

⁴¹"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the **eternal fire** which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; Matt 25:41

Lake of Fire

⁸"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the **lake that burns with fire and brimstone**, which is the second death." Rev 12:9

¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the **lake of fire**. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, **he was thrown into the lake of fire**. Rev 20:14-15

Everlasting torment

¹¹"And the smoke of their **torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night**, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." Rev 4:11

Separation from God

⁹These will pay the penalty of **eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power**, 2 Thess 1:9

Intermediate State

Upon death all people enter what theologians have named the “Intermediate State”. This is the period between physical death and the resurrection. The intermediate state of three groups of people is identified: NT believers, the unsaved (both OT and NT), and OT believers. First we must define some terms:

Sheol: Hebrew word for the abode of the dead – both grave and afterlife. Used 66 times in the OT.

Hades: The NT equivalent of sheol, used 10 times in the NT. This is also the Greek translation of the Hebrew sheol in the Septuagint. This is “pre-hell”, a temporary place of torment of the wicked that will be thrown into the lake of fire at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Intermediate State of NT Believers

Paul equates being absent from the body with being present with the Lord (2 Cor 5:1-10; Phil 1:19-26). Since Christ was raised to be seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly realms (Eph 1:20), believers can expect to enter His presence in heaven upon death. The bodies of NT believers will be resurrected at the rapture (1 Thess 4:16) while the bodies of OT believers will evidently be raised at the end of the great tribulation (Dan 12:2; Rev 20:4), and all will return to earth with Christ at the second coming.

⁶Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight—⁸we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be **absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.** ⁹Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 2 Cor 5:6-9

Intermediate State of the Unsaved (both OT and NT)

When the unsaved die, their immaterial nature goes to sheol (the OT term) or hades (the Greek equivalent of sheol, used in the NT) to wait for the resurrection of the body at the end of the millennium. The souls of the ungodly are outside the body in hades and the body is resurrected at the Great White Throne Judgment and will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:11-15).

¹⁹“Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. ²⁰“And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, ²¹and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. ²²“Now the poor man died and was carried away **by the angels to Abraham’s bosom**; and the rich man also died and was buried. ²³“**In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw* Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.** ²⁴“And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ ²⁵“But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. ²⁶“And besides all this, between us and you there is a great **chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.**’ Luke 16:19-26

Intermediate State of OT Believers

The lack of direct Scriptural teaching on the intermediate state of believers during the OT has led to much speculation. What can be determined is based on a few key verses and an attempt to systematize all of Scripture on the subject. Most likely OT believers went directly to heaven. When Moses and Elijah appeared at the transfiguration they appeared in glory (Luke 9:31).

²⁹And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing *became white and gleaming.* ³⁰And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, ³¹who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Luke 9:29-31

False Ideas of the Final State

Universalism: The liberal belief that all people will make it to heaven. Universalists usually have a low view of Scripture and argue more from God's nature of love than from Biblical evidence. Biblical evidence includes passages which express desire for all to be saved (1 Tim 2:4; John 12:32; 2 Pet 3:9). Of course, many other verses show that because of man's rebellion, God's desire is unrealized (John 3:36; Matt 25:46; 2 Thess 1:8-9; 1 Cor 1:18; 4:3; Heb 2:3). In fact, it is the few and not the many that gain eternal life (Matt 7:13-14).

Annihilationism: The belief that the punishment of the wicked is everlasting in consequence not in duration and people in hell will eventually be annihilated. This view is held by few evangelicals, but has been gaining ground in recent years. Annihilationism teaches that man is created immortal and fulfills his destiny in salvation, while the wicked cease to exist either by direct act of God or by the corrosive effect of evil. Biblical passages used to defend this view speak to the death of the wicked (Rom 6:23; James 5:20; Rev 20:14), destruction (Matt 7:13; 10:28; 1 Thess 1:9), and perishing (John 3:16). Other arguments say it is inconsistent with God's love to torment His creatures forever.

However, many other verses use the term "forever" or "everlasting" in regard to the punishment of the wicked (Isa 33:14; Jer 17:4; Dan 12:2; Matt 18:8; 25:41, 46; 2 Thess 1:9; Jude 6-7; Rev 14:11; 19:3; 20:10). Also, expressions such as "fire unquenchable" (Isa 66:24; Matt 3:12; Luke 3:17; Mark 9:43-45) speak to an eternal punishment and not a cessation of existence. Spiritual death does not mean that the soul becomes a non-being, but that it is totally deprived of the presence of God, which is the essential condition of worthwhile existence (cf. 2 Thess 1:9).

Conditional Immortality: The belief that humans are naturally mortal and God imparts to the redeemed the gift of immortality, allowing the rest of humanity to cease to exist. The difference between annihilationism and conditional immortality is that the first believes that all are created eternal and the unsaved will cease to exist and the latter believes that all are created temporal and only the saved will be given eternal life. In addition to the verses used by annihilationists, the primary biblical text for conditional immortality is 1 Tim 6:16, which teaches that only God is immortal (and therefore humans are not). However, God has other attributes that are based upon Him alone that He has imparted to man, for example wisdom (Rom 16:27). The conditionalist believes that God gives immortality to the saved. There is no biblical evidence that God has created humans to exist temporarily. As demonstrated, there is abundant evidence that the redeemed will enjoy eternal life and the unredeemed will suffer eternal destruction.

Second-chance View: The belief that many who are punished in hell will eventually be redeemed. This view is held by few evangelicals.

Purgatorial View: The belief that there is a place of retribution where people who died without mortal sin go. This view is held by Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodox. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that only those who leave this life in a state of perfection go directly to heaven. Those who have died in a state of wickedness go directly to hell. There is also a large number who do not fall into these two groups and go to an intermediate holding place. Under Catholicism there are two intermediate holding places:

- a. Limbo: Limbo is for unbaptized infants. Because of original sin, which can only be removed by baptism, these infants cannot enter the presence of God. However, these infants only suffer punishment for original sin, not for actual sins committed. In addition, there is a limbo for OT believers. When Christ died, He descended into sheol and delivered these believers from their captivity and this limbo is now empty.
- b. Purgatory: Purgatory, according to Catholic theologian Joseph Pohle is: "a state of temporary punishment for those who, departing this life in the grace of God, are not entirely free from venial sins or have not yet fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions."

The primary support for the doctrine of purgatory is 2 Maccabees 12:43-45 (an apocryphal book added to the Catholic Bible in the 16th century), which speaks of Judas Maccabaeus making atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin: "... he offered an atoning sacrifice to free the dead from their sin."

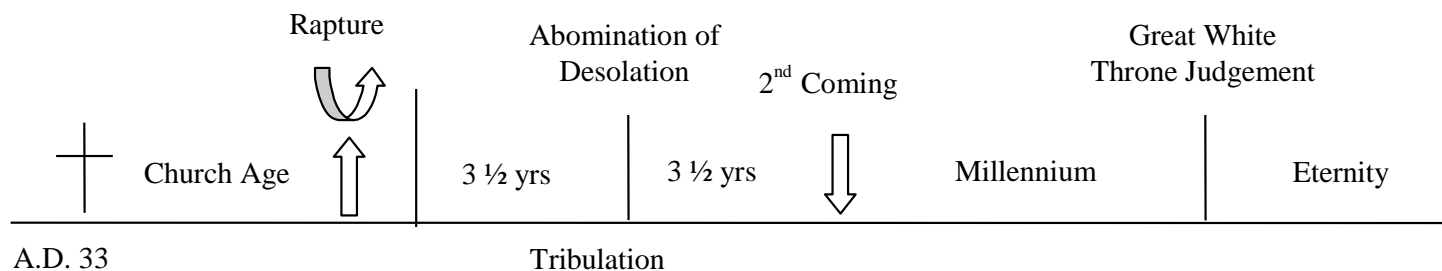
Also, Matt 12:32 is cited, where Jesus says, "But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." However, 2 Maccabees is not accepted as Scripture by Protestants and was only accepted as canonical by the Roman Catholics in 1548. To base a doctrine on 2 Maccabees is highly questionable. Also, Matt 12:32 does not teach that some sins will only be forgiven in the age to come. It only teaches that sin against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Most importantly, the doctrine of purgatory implies a salvation by works. It is Christ's death alone that forgives and atones for sin. No amount of suffering on our part is required.

Metaphorical View: The belief that biblical descriptions of hell such as fire and darkness should not be taken literally. Hell is viewed as a place of conscious suffering beyond our imagination. Held by some evangelicals.

Literal View: The belief that hell is a literal place of eternal fire that neither consumes the resurrected body nor the soul.

The Return of Jesus

The return of Jesus is a prominent doctrine in Scripture. Evangelicals all hold that Christ will return, though they differ, sometimes significantly, on the details. Though we will touch briefly on the major doctrinal positions, the diagram below presents the premillennial second coming and pretribulational rapture position held by VBC.



There are three major views concerning the coming of Christ:

1. Postmillennialism – the coming of Christ will occur after the millennium. This position holds that the last 1000 years of the church age is the millennium. It will be a time of peace and abundance brought about through the efforts of the church after which Christ will come. Postmillennialism does not apply a literal interpretation of Scripture regarding prophecy.
2. Amillennialism – there is no earthly millennium though the current state of righteousness in heaven is the millennium. The coming of Christ is at the end of the church age when there will be a time of trouble. Amillennialism does not apply a literal interpretation of Scripture and spiritualizes the promises made to Israel as being fulfilled in the church.
3. Premillennialism – the coming of Christ will occur before the millennium. The church age ends at the tribulation (either before, during, or after) at which time Christ returns with His saints to set up His millennial kingdom. Premillennialism follows the plain, literal, historical method of interpretation.

The Rapture

"Rapture" comes from the Latin translation of the Greek *harpazo* (1 Thess 4:17) meaning "caught up" or snatch or take away. The rapture is the event when the Lord will come in the air for His saints: the dead in Christ will be resurrected, living believers will be changed to their glorified state, and both will meet Christ to ascend to heaven (1 Thess 4:13-5:11; 1 Cor 15:51-57; John 14:1-3).

⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1 Cor 15:51-53

Concerning the rapture:

Postmillennialists and amillennialists both see the rapture of the church at the close of this age and concurrent with the second coming of Christ. Ryrie Study Bible NASB

Among premillennialists there are five prevalent views concerning the rapture: partial rapture, pretribulation rapture, midtribulation rapture, posttribulation rapture, and pre-wrath rapture. A pretribulation rapture appears to have the most Scriptural support.

Since the tribulation is a central factor in determining the timing of the rapture, it is important to note that the tribulation is a seven year period (Dan 9:24-27) that begins when the Antichrist signs a seven year peace treaty with Israel (Dan 9:27) and ends with Christ's return at the battle of Armageddon. It is a time of judgment upon the unbelieving world (Jer 30:7; Dan 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thess 2:7-12; Rev. 6; 8-9; 16) and persecution of Israel (Matt 24:9; 22; Rev 12:17) by the Antichrist.

²⁶"Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. ²⁷"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." Dan 9:26-27

The partial rapture refers to the size of the group that is raptured – only those saints that are worthy at the time when the Lord descends will be raptured. The mid-tribulation rapture view holds that the rapture occurs at the midpoint of the seven year tribulation. The post-tribulation rapture view holds that the rapture occurs at the end of the tribulation preceding the second coming by a short period. The pre-wrath rapture view places the rapture after the peace treaty with Israel is signed, but before the climatic wrath of God. The pre-tribulation rapture view holds that the rapture occurs before the seven year tribulation. This view seems to hold the most Scriptural evidence because:

1. the church is promised to be kept from the hour of trouble (Rev 3:10)

¹⁰Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Rev 3:10

2. the restrainer (the Holy Spirit) will be removed requiring the removal of believers (2 Thess 2)

⁶And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 2 Thess 2:6

3. the wrath of God will be poured out in the tribulation and the church is exempt from wrath (Rev 6:17; cf. 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9)
 - ¹⁷for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" Rev 6:17
 - ¹⁰and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. 1 Thess 1:10
 - ⁹For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thess 5:9
4. the rapture is imminent (1 Thess 5:6)
 - ⁶so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. 1 Thess 5:6

A proposed chronology of the tribulation is:

Rapture (Unspecified Time)

Tribulation begins – Signing of a seven year peace treaty with Israel (Dan 9:27)

Seal 1 (Rev 6:1-2) – “Cold war”; Conquering by talking of peace and safety (1 Thess 5:3)

Seal 2 (Rev 6:3-4) – Open warfare

Seal 3 (Rev 6:5-6) – Famine

Seal 4 (Rev 6:7-8) – Death; 25% of the earth’s population dies by war, famine, and wild beasts

Seal 5 (Rev 6:9-11) – Martyrdom of Tribulation Saints early in the Tribulation

Seal 6 (Rev 6:12-17) – Cosmic disturbances

Seal 7 (Rev 8:1-6) – Silence in heaven

Midpoint of the Tribulation – The Abomination of Desolation demands to be worshiped.

Trumpet 1 (Rev 8:7) – Destruction of vegetation

Trumpet 2 (Rev 8:8-9) – Destruction of seas

Trumpet 3 (Rev 8:10-11) – Destruction of fresh water

Trumpet 4 (Rev 8:12-13) – Destruction of celestial bodies (1/3 of sun, moon, and stars)

Trumpet 5 (Rev 9:1-12) – 1st Woe - Scorpion locusts to torment unbelievers for five months

Trumpet 6 (Rev 9:13-21) – 2nd Woe – 1/3 of the earth’s population killed by a demon army

Trumpet 7 (Rev 11:15-19) – 3rd Woe – The end is near – The bowl judgments

Bowl 1 (Rev 16:2) – Open sores on unbelievers

Bowl 2 (Rev 16:3) – Sea turned to blood and all sea creatures die

Bowl 3 (Rev 16:4-7) – Fresh water turned to blood

Bowl 4 (Rev 16:8-9) – Sun scorches men

Bowl 5 (Rev 16:10-11) – Antichrist’s kingdom is filled with darkness

Bowl 6 (Rev 16:12-16) – Euphrates River dried up

Bowl 7 (Rev 16:17-21) – Earthquake and hailstones

The battle of Armageddon

Jesus the Christ returns

The Millennial Kingdom

The millennial kingdom is Christ's foretold messianic kingdom when He will reign on the earth for one thousand years (Rev 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Christ over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezek 37:21-28; Dan 7:17-22; Rev 19:11-16). The living believers at the end of the tribulation will be those who populate the millennial kingdom. The kingdom will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isa 11; 65:17-25; Ezek 36:33-38). Satan will be bound for the duration of the millennium and released at the end for a final confrontation with Christ where he will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:1-10).

...the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29). TMS Website

The Judgments

Believers will be judged after the rapture according to their works done since the time of salvation (2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:11-15). This is the judgment seat of Christ.

¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 2 Cor 5:10

¹¹For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. 1 Cor 3:11-15

OT believers will probably be judged at the end of the tribulation (Dan 12:1-3).

¹"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. ²"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. ³"Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Dan 12:1-3

The Gentiles living when Christ returns to set up His kingdom will be judged with the believers entering the kingdom and the unbelievers being cast into the lake of fire (Matt 25:31-46; Joel 3:2).

³¹"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. ³²"All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; ³³and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. ³⁴"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ... ⁴¹"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴⁶"These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Matt 25:31-46

²I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land. Joel 3:2

Israel will be judged at the second coming based on their acceptance of the Messiah. The saved will enter the kingdom and the unsaved will be cast into the lake fire (Ezek 20:37-38).

³⁷"I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; ³⁸and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. Ezek 20:37-38

The fallen angels will be judged probably after the millennium and be cast into the lake of fire (Matt 25:41; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 20:10).

⁴¹"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; Matt 25:41

⁴For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; 2 Pet 2:4

⁶And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, Jude 1:6

¹⁰And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Rev 20:10

All the unsaved dead will be judged after the millennium before the Great White Throne and be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:11-15).

¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Rev 20:11-15

The Resurrections

There are two general categories of resurrections: the "first" resurrection (resurrection of the just or resurrection of life) and the "second" resurrection (resurrection of the unjust or resurrection of condemnation). The first resurrection includes the dead in Christ who are raised at the rapture (1 Thess 4:16), the tribulation martyrs (Rev 20:4-5), and the OT saints (Dan 12:2) at either the rapture or the second coming.

¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 1 Thess 4:16

⁴Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Rev 20:4-5

²"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Dan 12:2

The second resurrection will include the unsaved dead of all time and will occur at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15).

¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Rev 20:11-15

The Eternal State

After the rapture, tribulation, second coming, millennium, and Great White Throne judgment the eternal state will be ushered in (Rev 21). The current universe will be destroyed with intense heat (2 Pet 3:10) and replaced with a new earth (Rev 21:1). The new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2) will come down out of heaven and be the dwelling place of the saints (Rev 21-22). The focus of the eternal state is the fellowship of the redeemed with their Creator (Rev 21:3-4; 22-27; Rev 22: 1-5).

¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 2 Pet 3:10

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new " And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." Rev 21:1-5