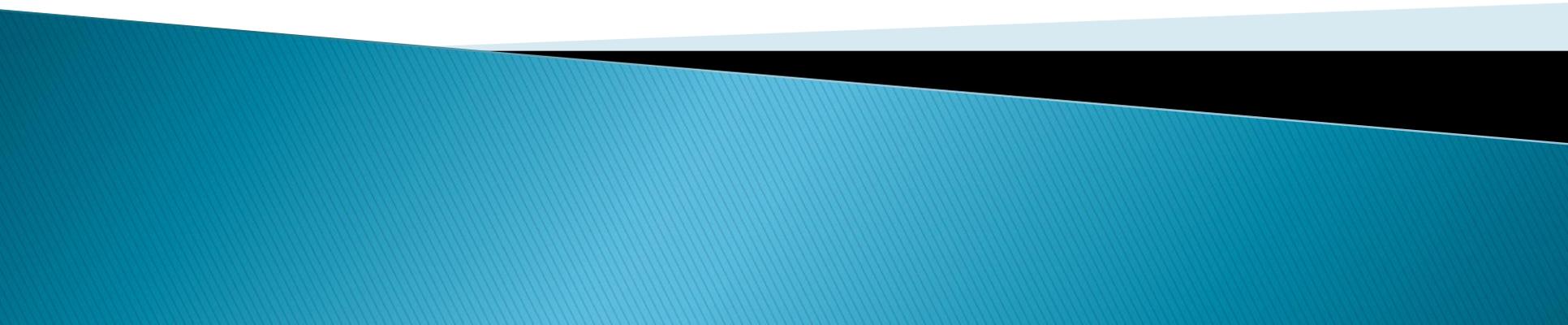


Doctrines of the Bible

A Concise Encyclopedia

By David Scott Nichols MD



Doctrines of the Bible – Introduction

- ▶ I am writing this treatise on the *Doctrines of the Bible* in an effort to present the major Christian beliefs that should be understood by all Christians.
- ▶ What is a Christian?
- ▶ *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*
(2 Tim 3:16–17)

Criterion for Doctrines

- ▶ A. All doctrine must result from a study of the Word of God – the Bible. (2 Tim. 3:16–17; Jude 1:3; Deut. 4:2; Rev 22:18–19)
- ▶ B. No doctrine may undermine the role of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in the life of a believer. (Gal. 1:8)
- ▶ C. The doctrine should not contradict the creeds of the Orthodox (undivided) Christian Church. These would include the Apostles, Nicene, Athanasian, and Chalcedonian Creeds – which speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one God (the Trinity), and of Jesus Christ as uniquely God and man (the Incarnation). These creeds expressed the faith of Christians when they were written almost two thousand years ago, and have helped to unify and protect Christians against heresy for centuries.

God and Creation

- ▶ **Creation**
 - ▶ **Miracles**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of The Trinity – Eternal**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of God**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of God the Father**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of God the Son – Jesus**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of the incarnation**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of the virgin birth**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of God the Holy Spirit**
 - ▶ **The Doctrine of Man**
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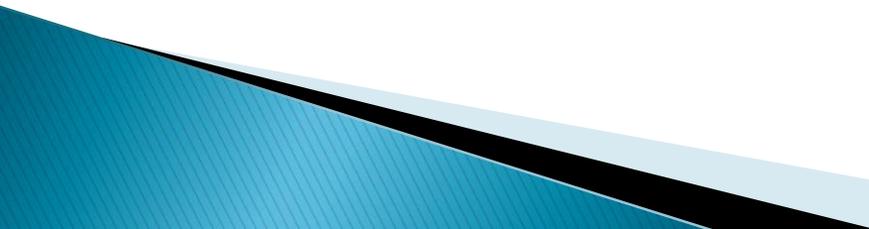
The Fall of Man and Angels

- ▶ **The Doctrine of Sin – incl. Original Sin**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Angels**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Satan & Demons**
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God's Plan to Redeem Mankind

- ▶ **Doctrine of Atonement**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Salvation**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Election (Predestination & Eternal Security)**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Resurrection**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Regeneration (Born Again)**
- 

God's Plan of Redemption cont.

- ▶ **Doctrine of Repentance and Faith**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Grace**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Justification and Righteousness**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Adoption**
 - ▶ **The Doctrine of Sanctification – discuss good works as a sign of salvation**
 - ▶ **The Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Being Filled with the Spirit)**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Prayer**
- 

God's Word and God's People

- ▶ **Doctrine of the Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Biblical Interpretation – Covenant Theology vs. Dispensationalism**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of the Church**
 - ▶ **Water Baptism**
 - ▶ **The Lord's Supper**
- 

The End Times

- ▶ **Doctrine of End Times –The Rapture and glorification of the body**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of End Times –The Second Coming**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of End Times –The Tribulation**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of End Times – Millennial Kingdom**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of the Death and the Resurrection of the Dead**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Final Judgment**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Heaven**
 - ▶ **Doctrine of Hell**
- 

God's Providence and Free Will

- ▶ **Doctrine of Man's Free Will**
- ▶ **Doctrine of God's Providential Care**

Creation

- ▶ *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.* (Gen: 1:1–2)
- ▶ The Hebrew word used here for *created* was “bara” which means “creation out of nothing.” In other words, God literally created new matter and energy when He created our universe.

God “Molds” the Universe

- ▶ God then molded this newly created universe into what we see today. The word used when shaping the previously created matter is *asah*... which can be translated as “made” or “fashion.”
- ▶ God, the Bible tells us elsewhere, is eternal.
- ▶ Plants and animals were commanded to appear by God and to reproduce to yield their *own kind*... not to evolve to produce different species over time. (Gen 1:11–12)

God Makes Man in His Image

- ▶ *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. (Gen 1:26) the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (Gen 2:7) So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. (Gen 2:21-22)*

Biblical View of Creation

- ▶ There is one God who has eternally existed
 - ▶ Creation was by this God and came out of nothing (ex nihilo)
 - ▶ Everything in the universe was created by God
 - ▶ Adam and Eve are persons of history and were a direct and special creation by God
 - ▶ The Genesis account in the Bible is an historical account... not a myth or allegory.
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Other Opinions

- ▶ Thomas Paine published a treatise called the *Age of Reason*
- ▶ *Deism* – God does not intervene in nature... He just lets the universe develop based solely on those natural laws that He introduced when He created the universe.
- ▶ Famous American deists include: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and Ben Franklin. These men all believed that God created the universe and controlled it through His providential care... but, somehow still did not allow for God's intermittent use of *blatantly* miraculous events.

Evolution

- ▶ Darwin – *On the Origin of Species* in 1859.
- ▶ *"Variation is a feature of natural populations and every population produces more progeny than its environment can manage. The consequences of this overproduction is that those individuals with the best genetic fitness for the environment will produce offspring that can more successfully compete in that environment. Thus the subsequent generation will have a higher representation of these offspring and the population will have evolved."*

The Evolution Bandwagon

- ▶ The evolution “band wagon.”
 - ▶ The Scopes Trial of 1925 added fuel to this fire.
 - ▶ Those people that sadly drifted into atheism or theistic evolution were showing a major lack of faith in God and His Word... and, of course, they were wrong.
- 

- ▶ At the beginning of the 20th century, many scientists accepted the view that we lived in an “oscillating universe” or a “steady state universe.”
 - ▶ Einstein published his General Theory of Relativity
 - ▶ Edwin Hubble – Expanding Universe
 - ▶ Einstein finally believed in God!
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Evidence for Evolution?

- ▶ *Darwin clearly pointed out that if transitional organisms were not found the world would have to reject his whole concept of evolution by natural selection.*
- ▶ Harvard's Stephen Gould, a world leading evolutionist, noted, "The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of palaeontology. The evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and nodes of their branches ... in any local area, a species does not arise gradually by the gradual transformation of its ancestors; it appears all at once and "fully formed."

Evidence continued...

- ▶ “I’m speaking on two subjects, evolutionism and creationism, and I believe it’s true to say that I know nothing whatever about either ... One of the reasons I started taking this anti-evolutionary view, well, let’s call it non-evolutionary, was last year I had a sudden realisation. ‘... One morning I woke up ... and it struck me that I had been working on this stuff [evolution] for twenty years, and there was not one thing I knew about it.’
Dr. Colin Patterson
- ▶ **“Yes, I do know one thing. It ought not to be taught in high school.”**

Objections to Evolution

- ▶ The marked lack of transitional forms mentioned above.
 - ▶ Irreducibly Complex Systems
 - ▶ We cannot create a variation in species
 - ▶ Animal Instincts
 - ▶ Life Origin itself
 - ▶ Sadly, our liberal secular society will not allow the facts to be presented in the classroom
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Conclusion

- ▶ In conclusion, I must remind the reader that if ever science has a theory or idea that is obviously contrary to what the Bible teaches, then the Bible is correct and Christian scientists should use this biblical truth to look and see why that current false scientific idea is incorrect. Today, it just so happens that the most up to date scientific ideas about creation are consistent with the Bible... yet, we must remember that this was not the case at the onset of the 20th century. Remember, at that time secular scientists had embraced macroevolution and many had also held to the idea of an oscillating, always existing universe. They were wrong, the Bible was correct.

Doctrine of Miracles

- ▶ *“a less common kind of God’s activity in which he arouses people’s awe and wonder and bears witness to himself.”*
- ▶ I believe that the type of miracle that most people think about when the term is used would best be defined as *God’s intervention into the world to cause an event that is beyond the known laws of nature to produce.*
- ▶ *Blatantly supernatural miracles*

- ▶ God often intervenes in nature to produce miraculous events, including the curing of diseases, but does so *using more subtle methods*.
 - ▶ *God's providential intervention* into his world.
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Purpose of Miracles

- ▶ God used miracles to demonstrate His *power* and therefore to show that He was the one true God. He did this in both the Old and New Testaments.
- ▶ To glorify God
- ▶ In the New Testament, Jesus performed miracles to demonstrate that he was sent by God His Father and that He was the Son of God. Recall that Nicodemus said “*we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.*” (John 3:2) Many miracles were also *signs* to demonstrate certain truths (e.g. that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God) “*it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.*” (Luke 3:21–22)

- ▶ Later on, the apostles were given the power to perform miracles to attest to their being sent by God to evangelize the world and teach the world about Jesus. For example, the book of Acts records many miracles performed by Peter (e.g. Acts 3:6–9 Peter heals a lame beggar) and Paul (he performed multiple healings and raising people from the dead through the power of God) and the other apostles (“*Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles*” (Acts 5:12)).
- ▶ Miracles bear witness to the fact that the kingdom of God has come and has begun to help people in a variety of ways... especially through healing.
- ▶ Miracles are also used to show that some people are special spokespeople for God.

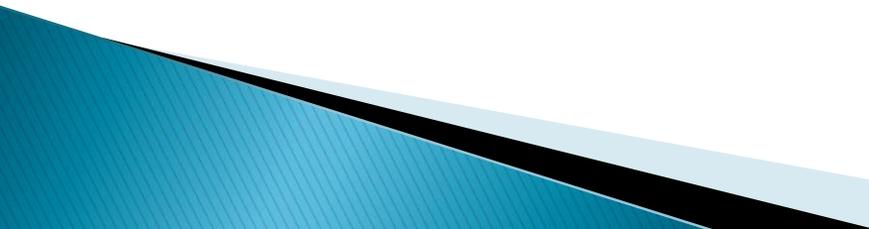
Are Miracles Meant for Today?

- ▶ There is a difference in opinion among fine Christian theologians as to whether God uses miracles in the world today. Oddly, even those theologians who believe that the age of miracles went out with the death of the apostles, or soon thereafter, still typically believe in the power of prayer to change outcomes.
 - ▶ Providential Care
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Benedict Spinoza

- ▶ Miracles are violations of natural law
 - ▶ Natural laws are immutable (absolute and unalterable)
 - ▶ It is impossible to violate immutable laws
 - ▶ Therefore, miracles are impossible
- 

David Hume

- ▶ Miracles would be a violation of natural law and if they exist are rare occurrences
 - ▶ Experience has shown mankind that natural laws are stable and unalterable (since he had not known anyone who had witnessed any miracle, that was his conclusion) and of regular occurrence
 - ▶ The evidence for the regular is always better than for the rare
 - ▶ A wise man should use this information to come to reasonable conclusions
 - ▶ Since no one can document that an event has occurred that violated natural laws, miracles must not exist.
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Conclusion

- ▶ The simple fact is that miracles do exist. God sometimes uses blatantly supernatural miracles to accomplish His will. Much more often, God uses his incredible miraculous power in a providential way – working through people and things in a much more subtle way, but also to accomplish his overarching plan for our world and His people. We are told by God to pray, to communicate with Him every day and throughout each day. It is certainly appropriate to ask God to intervene in our lives and others to help accomplish those tasks that we know are in the will of God. Sometimes this may require God to perform a miracle. So be it... that is not a problem for our God.

Doctrine of the Trinity

- ▶ Although there is only one God, he does exist in three persons.
- ▶ Tertullian (A.D. 155 – 220), first used the term Trinity when referencing God.
- ▶ The Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) concluded that Jesus was one and the same substance as God the father.
- ▶ The *essence* of these three persons is the same. However, the Father is not the Son. The Son is certainly not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father. Each person of the Holy Trinity has a different role to play.

Trinity

- ▶ Various misconceptions...
- ▶ Arianism, Tritheism, Modalism
- ▶ *“let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”* (Gen 1:26) Old Testament
- ▶ *“Let us go down and there confound their language.”* (Gen 11:7)
- ▶ *“Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time it came to be, I (God the Father) have been there.” And now the Lord GOD has sent me (Jesus), and his Spirit (Holy Spirit).* (Isaiah 48:16)
- ▶ And more.....

New Testament and the Trinity

- ▶ The New Testament has even more examples than the Old Testament.
- ▶ that *“the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and low, a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.’”* (Matt 3:16–17)
- ▶ *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* (Matt 28:19–20)

Attributes of the Trinity

- ▶ The Trinity consists of one mighty God, having one essence. Although God is one being, he exists eternally in three distinct persons
 - ▶ Consubstantiality: one divine substance is shared completely by each member of the Trinity.
 - ▶ Perichoresis: each member of the Trinity has a perfectly loving interrelationship, partnership, and mutual dependence on one another.
 - ▶ Each member has a unique role to play in creation, the world and with mankind.
- 

Trinity continued...

- ▶ *“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?... Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me”* (John 14:10a, 11).
- ▶ Each person of the Trinity has a particular role to play in creation and in the subsequent directing of that creation. These roles apparently were set in eternity past and are not interchangeable.

The Doctrine of God

- ▶ In this section, I will list the many names given to God in the Bible and then document many very important attributes of God.
- ▶ **Names of God (mostly found in Old Testament)**
- ▶ **Elohim – God (strong one) plural form of El – refers to God’s power**
- ▶ **El Yon – the most high and powerful God**
- ▶ **El Olam – everlasting God**
- ▶ **El Roi – the powerful one who sees**
- ▶ **El Shaddai – Lord God Almighty (God gives himself this name in his covenant relationship with Abraham) – relates to his ability to nourish and satisfy (shaddai – breasted one)**
- ▶ **Adonai – Lord, Master (Majesty)**

God's Names cont.

- ▶ **Jehovah (Yahweh) (YHWH) – self-existent one and God of the covenant**
 - Jireh (the Lord will provide)
 - Nissi (the Lord, my banner)
 - Shalom (the Lord is peace)
 - Sabbaoth (the Lord of hosts)
 - Maccaddeshem (the Lord my sanctifier)
 - Rohi (the Lord my shepherd)
 - Tsidkenu (the Lord my righteousness)
 - Shammah (the Lord who is present)
 - Rapha (the Lord our healer)
 - Abba – Jesus called his Father this name on occasion – means Daddy or Papa

Fifty Names of Jesus Christ

- ▶ Immanuel
 - ▶ Advocate
 - ▶ Alpha and Omega
 - ▶ Morning Star
 - ▶ Messiah (Christ)
 - ▶ Beloved Son
 - ▶ Branch
 - ▶ Bread of Life
 - ▶ Chief Shepherd
- 

- ▶ **Door**
 - ▶ **Wonderful**
 - ▶ **Counselor**
 - ▶ **Everlasting Father**
 - ▶ **Prince of Peace**
 - ▶ **Mighty God**
 - ▶ **Great High Priest**
 - ▶ **Good Shepherd**
 - ▶ **Heir of all Things**
- 

Names of Jesus cont.

- ▶ Holy One of God
 - ▶ Horn of Salvation
 - ▶ Jesus
 - ▶ King of Kings
 - ▶ King of the Jews
 - ▶ I Am
 - ▶ The Just One
 - ▶ Lamb of God
 - ▶ Light of the World
 - ▶ Lion of the Tribe of Judah
 - ▶ Man of Sorrows
 - ▶ Mediator
 - ▶ Lord of Lords
- 

Names continued...

- ▶ **Rock**
 - ▶ **Chief Cornerstone**
 - ▶ **Root of David**
 - ▶ **Resurrection and Life**
 - ▶ **Rose of Sharon**
 - ▶ **Redeemer**
 - ▶ **The Way**
 - ▶ **Son of Man**
 - ▶ **Savior**
 - ▶ **Shiloh**
 - ▶ **Prince of Peace**
- 

Names continued...

- ▶ **Son of David**
 - ▶ **Son of God**
 - ▶ **True Vine**
 - ▶ **The Truth**
 - ▶ **Word of God**
 - ▶ **The Word**
 - ▶ **The Nazarene**
 - ▶ **Seed of the Woman**
- 

The Holy Spirit (names)

- ▶ **The Comforter**
 - ▶ **Spirit of God**
 - ▶ **Spirit of Christ**
 - ▶ **Eternal Spirit**
 - ▶ **Spirit of Truth**
 - ▶ **Spirit of Grace**
 - ▶ **Spirit of Glory**
- 

Holy Spirit names

- ▶ Spirit of Life
 - ▶ Spirit of Revelation and Wisdom
 - ▶ Spirit of Promise
 - ▶ Spirit of Adoption
 - ▶ Spirit of Holiness
 - ▶ Spirit of Faith
- 

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

- ▶ Dove (purity, peace)
 - ▶ Water (life)
 - ▶ Oil (indicating anointing for service)
 - ▶ A seal (of our future salvation)
 - ▶ Wind (unseen power)
 - ▶ Fire (protection, power, purifying, judgment)
 - ▶ Earnest (as in “earnest money”)
- 

Attributes of God

- ▶ Classically, the breakdown has been to divide God's attributes into those that are *incommunicable* (unique to God) and those that are *communicable* (has some similarity to an attribute of man).
- ▶ **Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is...**
- ▶ **Independent (Aseity):**
- ▶ God needs nothing from his creation, including man, to be complete. He exists totally in and of himself. Nothing else contributed to his existence. This attribute is sometimes known as his self-existence

Independent cont.

- ▶ *“the God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything.”*
(Acts 17:24–25)
- ▶ It is interesting to consider the fact that the three distinct persons of the Trinity certainly provide all of the fellowship that God could or would ever need.

God is Pure Actuality

- ▶ *“I am who I am.”* (Ex. 3:14)
- ▶ God has no potential to become anything other than what he has always been.
- ▶ Logic demands that our ‘caused’ universe had an ‘uncaused’ Creator. God has no cause for his existence. Obviously, this requires that he not be actualized... i.e. caused... by another.

God is “Simple” (Unity)

- ▶ Simple is defined as being without parts. God is said to be *simple*, because he is not capable of being divided in any manner.
- ▶ God does not have any one attribute that takes precedence over another.
- ▶ “*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.*” (Mark 12:29)

God is Necessary

- ▶ **Necessary:** God is a Being who must exist.
 - ▶ The fact that we live in a created universe and some thing or someone had to create our universe does make it necessary that God exists. The universe had to come from someone.
 - ▶ There had to be a necessary, eternal, self-existent being to create the universe in which we live. That being we call God.
- 

A Necessary Being is...

- ▶ a Being whose nonexistence is not possible
- ▶ a Being whose existence is essential
- ▶ a Being whose essence is to exist
- ▶ a Being whose essence and existence are identical
- ▶ *“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”* (Col 1:17) *“All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”* (John 1:3)

God is Immutable

- ▶ “God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.” (Wayne Grudem)
- ▶ If God could change, this would mean he could get better or get worse. Of course, this is impossible.
- ▶ *“For I the Lord do not change; therefore, you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.”* (Mal 3:6)

Does God Change His Mind?

- ▶ There are some verses that seem to say that God does change his mind at times.
- ▶ *“Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.”¹⁰ When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.”*
(Jonah 3:9–10)
- ▶ However, situations such as these, where God threatens judgment, but does not decree it, are conditional and do not bind God to a particular course of action. It is analogous to a father telling a child that he is going to come right on into their room and punish them for carrying on so loudly.

God is Eternal

- ▶ God is eternal – no one caused him to come into existence.
 - ▶ God has no beginning and God has no end. In fact, God sees all time equally.
 - ▶ God existed before time existed.
 - ▶ God is timeless; apparently he does not experience the world as a succession of events in time, one after the other... to him, they are all timeless events. He sees the end from the beginning.
- 

God is Eternal

- ▶ *“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”* (Psalm 90:2) “
- ▶ *‘I and the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”* (Rev. 1:8)

God is Infinite

- ▶ God is without boundaries and beyond the limits of his created universe. He is not subject to any limitations at all. Anything he desires to accomplish, he can accomplish unless it is a logical impossibility.
- ▶ *“Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.”* (Ps 147:5)
- ▶ *“Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens – what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave – what can you know?”* (Job 11:7–8)

Omnipresent

- ▶ *“Am I a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord.”* (Jer. 23:23–24)
- ▶ *“Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.”* (Ps 139:7–10)

God is Spirit

- ▶ God is spirit. God is not composed of matter. When God created the universe, he created matter and energy. God, however, existing throughout all eternity, has always been and always will be totally spirit.
- ▶ *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse .”*
(Rom 1:20)
- ▶ *“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”* (John 4:24)
- ▶ *“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.”*
(1 Tim 1:17)

Communicable Attributes of God

- ▶ **God is Perfect:** There is no quality that God lacks and there is nothing about God that could be improved upon.
 - ▶ **“His way is perfect.”** (Ps. 18:30)
 - ▶ Jesus told us that we **“must be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect.”** (Matt. 5:48)
How can we be perfect?
- 

God is Love

- ▶ God desires the best for his creation and gives of himself in order to bring blessings to others. The fact that God gave humans free will demonstrates the fact that God desires a love relationship between humans and himself.
- ▶ *“Anyone who does not love does not know God, God is love.”* (1 John 4:8)
- ▶ My favorite verse on this subject is, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believe in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16)
- ▶ Most incredibly, he demonstrated his infinite love by sacrificing himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, on the cross.

God is Good

- ▶ The Bible tells us that God is the source of all that is good in the world.
- ▶ God certainly is the only perfectly good “being” – Jesus told us that when he said “*No one is good but God alone.*” (Luke 18:19)
- ▶ God’s omnipotence makes it possible for him to work through his providential care to make sure that all events in the lives of those who love and trust in him will eventually work together for good.

Omnipotent (Sovereign)

- ▶ God is all-powerful and able to do anything he desires that is consistent with his holy will.
- ▶ *“With God nothing will be impossible.”*
(Luke 1:37)
- ▶ Jesus put it another way, when he said *“With God all things are possible.”* (Matt. 19:26)
- ▶ Sovereignty refers to the manner in which God wields his omnipotence over creation in dealing with everything within his universe. God is in control of all things.

God is Light

- ▶ When the Bible speaks of light concerning God it is speaking of spiritual light. Darkness is a symbol for evil. Light is a symbol for truth and goodness.
- ▶ *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* (John 8:12) If people will follow Jesus, the light of the world, they will have life... Including eternal life in heaven.
- ▶ Speaking of the final heaven, the Bible tells us that there will be no more night. *"They will not need the light of the lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light."* (Rev 22:5)



God is Majestic

- ▶ Majesty speaks of God's greatness, his unparalleled power and glory, and his pre-eminent position as the one and only God of creation.
 - ▶ Unfortunately, rarely do people, including Christians, hold God, in proper awe – and recognize him for the majestic and loving Father and Creator that he is.
- 

- ▶ *“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.”* (Psalms 8:1)
- ▶ *“Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours.”* (1 Chron 29:11)
- ▶ *“Out of the north comes golden splendor; God is clothed with awesome majesty.”* (Job 37:22)
- ▶ *“Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty! ⁴ In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness.”* (Ps. 45:4)

God is Blessed

- ▶ Wayne Grudem states that God is blessed. He writes that “God’s blessedness means that God delights fully in himself and in all that reflects his character.” In other words, God is perfectly happy and content with his eternal state.
- ▶ Paul wrote to Timothy and called God, “*the blessed and only Sovereign.*” (1 Tim 1:11)

God is a Jealous God

- ▶ Interestingly, the Bible says that God is a jealous God. At first blush, this seems like a bad attribute.
- ▶ *“I feel a divine jealousy for you”* (2 Cor. 11:2)
- ▶ God is certainly deeply committed to protecting his honor and his people. Of course, God knows that people should not be following false gods and committing sins. Therefore, he desires that worship be directed toward him... not false gods.

God is Righteous (Just)

- ▶ God always does what is right. God's actions are the standard of what is just and right. Moses said, "*All his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he.*" (Deut. 32:4) "
- ▶ *I the Lord speaks the truth, I declare what is right.*" (Isa. 45:19)
- ▶ "*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.*" (Psalms 89:14)
- ▶ Since God is holy and righteous, he will not and cannot allow anyone who is not righteous into heaven.

God is Holy

- ▶ God is totally set apart from all evil; he is separated from sin and completely devoted to seeking his own honor.
 - ▶ God himself is the most holy one, called the *“Holy One of Israel.”* (Ps. 71:22)
 - ▶ Heaven is a holy place where God resides. Only people without the stain of sin will be allowed into a holy place.
- 

God is a God of Peace

- ▶ *“God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.”*
(1 Cor. 14:33)
- ▶ God’s plan for his people is to give them peace if they will only trust in him completely. That is the key... to trust and obey.
- ▶ *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*
(John 14:27)
- ▶ Some twenty years later Paul told the people in the Roman church, *“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”* (Romans 8:6)

God of Mercy

- ▶ God is a God of Mercy and Grace (unmerited favor).
- ▶ Christians are saved because of God's grace towards them. *"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith."*
(Romans 3:23–25)
- ▶ *"For by **grace** you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast."* (Eph 2:4–9)

God of Mercy

- ▶ God is also the “*Father of mercies, and God of all comfort.*” (2 Cor. 1:3)
- ▶ “*The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.⁹ He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever.¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.*” (Psalms 103:8–11)

Omniscient

- ▶ Simply put, God knows everything. This is well put by Elihu in the book of Job, when he refers to God as the one “*who is perfect in knowledge.*” (Job 37:16)
- ▶ “*God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.*” (1 John 3:20)
- ▶ “*I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'*” (Isaiah 46:9–10)

God knows Everything

- ▶ “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.” (Matt 10:29–30)
- ▶ God knows exactly what each of our lives will be like even before we enter into the world, *“your eyes beheld my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”* (Ps. 139:16)

God is All Wise

- ▶ Given that God is omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent, it is certainly a wonderful thing that he is also all-wise. God's wisdom is unlimited and perfect. He always makes the correct decisions and always gives the correct advice.
- ▶ *“With him are wisdom and might, he has counsel and understanding.”* (Job 12:13)
- ▶ *“O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and how inscrutable his ways.”*
(Rom 11:33)
- ▶ *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding. Acknowledge him, and all your ways, and he shall direct your paths.”*
(Prov. 3:4–5)

God is a God of Wrath Against Sin

- ▶ Jesus said, “*he who believes in the son has eternal life; he who does not obey the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him.*” (John 3:36)
- ▶ “*the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*” (2 Peter 3:9–10)

Inscrutable

- ▶ This word is defined as ‘very difficult or impossible to interpret or understand.’
- ▶ *“How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”* (Romans 11:33–34)
- ▶ *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* (Isaiah 55:8–9)
- ▶ Why might God want to remain inscrutable regarding some of His actions? How could this benefit us?

The Doctrine of the Father

- ▶ The Father has a wonderful array of unique attributes that should fill the reader with wonder, awe, respect, and tremendous love for what the Father has done for those who choose to love and follow him.
- ▶ God's role as Creator and Father to Jesus.
- ▶ If we look at God the Father as the Father of everything and everyone (Jesus, Holy Spirit, and humanity), I think we can best see his unique role in the Trinity. For instance, the father orders and regulates all things according to his eternal plan.

The Father...

- ▶ *“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.”* (1 Cor. 8:6)
- ▶ *The LORD (the Father) is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. 9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.* (Psalms 145:8–9)
- ▶ God the Father rules the universe sovereignly, *“The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.”* (Psalms 103:19)

God's Role as Father

- ▶ his role as Father stands out more than any other to differentiate from the other two members of the Trinity. As Creator and the person who orders and regulates all things, he is a Father to all mankind. *“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”* (Eph. 4:6)
- ▶ He is the spiritual Father to all Christians... *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”* (Romans 8:14–16)
- ▶ *“I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”* (2 Cor 6:17–18) God the father makes that offer to all people.

The Father continued...

- ▶ God, the Father, predestined and elected the believer and he gave them to his son, Jesus Christ. *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”*
(John 6:37–39)

God the Father...

- ▶ *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”*
(Romans 8:29–30)
- ▶ When Jesus returned to heaven after his resurrection, he asked that his Father send the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide those who chose to follow Jesus. *“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.”* (John 14:16)

- ▶ God watches over his children: he comforts them, he chastens them, and, one day, he will glorify them. *“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.”* (2 Cor 1:3–4)
- ▶ *“My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth...”* (Heb. 12:5–6)

We are God's Children

- ▶ So, the Father treats us as his children. Of course, we are his children. He has a very special relationship with the elect... those that will become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. Of course, he has an even more intimate relationship with his son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
- 

The Father...

- ▶ The Bible makes it clear, that the Father sent the Son and instructed him on what to do and say (at least, at times).
- ▶ *“But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman.”* (Gal. 4:4)
- ▶ *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*
(John 3:16) “
- ▶ *“For I have not spoken of myself; but the father, which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak.”*
(John 12:49)

God Honors and Teaches His Son

- ▶ God, the Father, honors and glorifies the Son.
“Jesus answered, if I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my father that honoreth of me; of whom ye say, that he is your God.” (John 8:54)
- ▶ *“Then said Jesus unto them, when ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my father hath taught me, I speak these things.”*
(John 8:28)
- ▶ God said, *“this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.”* (Matt. 3:17, 17:5)

God Anointed Jesus to Preach the Gospel and Offered Him up on the Cross

- ▶ *“he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”* (Luke 4:18–19)
- ▶ Finally, God offered up his son on the cross.
“Then said Jesus unto Peter, put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11)
- ▶ *“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.”* (Rom 8:32)

God also gave to Jesus...

- ▶ *“He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.”* (Eph. 1:20)
- ▶ *“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”* (Phil. 2:9) “
- ▶ *And had put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.”* (Eph. 1:22)
- ▶ *“The father loved the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”* (John 3:35)
- ▶ *“For the father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also because he is the Son of Man.”* (John 5:22,27)

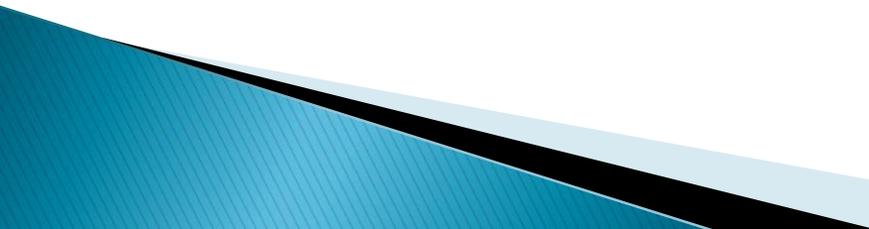
The Father and the Holy Spirit

- ▶ God the Father had a similar relationship with God the Holy Spirit in the sense that the Father was involved in handing out certain tasks for the Holy Spirit. More will be said about this in the discussion, soon to follow, concerning God the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

- ▶ Although it is true that the Father–Son relationship that took place while Jesus was in his incarnate form on earth had to be intriguingly different than it had been prior to that time, it is still true that they have always had this Father–Son relationship for all eternity. Jesus has always been the only begotten of the Father. Of course, we cannot forget the Holy Spirit as well. It is obvious that we can never completely understand the mysterious relationship of the Trinity.

The Doctrine of the Son

- ▶ Decisions of God from eternity past...
 - ▶ The decision to create the universe and all that was within it was made.
 - ▶ The decision to give men and women free will, and therefore the ability to love, was made. This also allowed for the possibility of rejecting God's law (i.e. the possibility of sin).
 - ▶ The decision was made for God the Father, one day in the distant future, to send his Son, Jesus, to earth to be born of a virgin and then to live a perfect life as a human being. The plan was for Jesus to offer up his life as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind.
- 

Jesus is God the Son

- ▶ Jesus Christ is God. The essence of Jesus is exactly equivalent to the essence of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*
(John 1:1)
- ▶ Jesus does have a different role to play, especially while on earth, than the other two persons of the Trinity. Be that as it may, he has all of the attributes of God that were listed earlier in this treatise.

God's Plan for Atonement

- ▶ The fact is that only God is capable of saving mankind from an eternal banishment to hell.
 - ▶ The decision was made by the Trinity to have the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, come into the world via a virgin birth at the appropriate point in time.
 - ▶ Jesus would come into this world as a little baby while still retaining his status as God.
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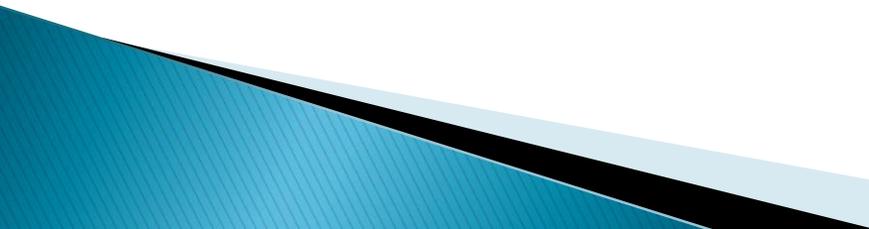
Jesus is here to do God's Will

- ▶ God the Father and God the Holy Spirit were with Jesus and helping Jesus during his time on earth. *“For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.”* (John 6:38)
- ▶ This virgin birth of God into the world as a human is known as the Incarnation (more about this can be found in the next section).
- ▶ *“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”* (Phil 2:6–8)

Roles of Jesus

- ▶ The most important role that Jesus fulfilled during his time on earth has to be his role as Savior to mankind.
- ▶ However, Jesus also accomplished many other things prior to his time on earth and while he was here on this earth.
- ▶ Genesis 1:1 tells us that “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*” It would appear that God the Father directed the creation of the universe and that Jesus carried out the actual creation since there are very many verses to that effect.

Jesus in the Old Testament

- ▶ Jesus Christ, God the Son, is seen all throughout the Old Testament as well.
 - ▶ There are a number of theophanies mentioned in the Old Testament. The theophany is an appearance by Christ prior to his incarnation in Bethlehem.
 - ▶ Often when the phrase Angel of the Lord is used in the Old Testament it should be identified with Christ himself – not always, however.
 - ▶ Four examples of theophanies...
- 

Jesus was a perfect human

- ▶ He was in the line of David as prophesied in the Old Testament. *“And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus.”* (Luke 1:31)
- ▶ *“But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”* (Gal. 4:4)
- ▶ Just as other humans, Jesus had a body, soul, and spirit. *“For in that she had poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.”* (Matt. 26:12)
- ▶ *“My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.”* (Matt. 26:38)
- ▶ Jesus had to be a man in order to qualify to be the propitiation for the sins of mankind. God would and could only accept a “like” substitute to pay the penalty for a man’s or woman’s sins (human for human).

Jesus was fully human...

- ▶ Jesus had many other characteristics of a man, growing and learning as he went through his life on earth. *“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature.”* (Luke 2:52)
- ▶ Although there are many times that Jesus used his omnipotent and omniscient powers, there were other times, where he demonstrated the limited knowledge and needs of humans. *“Where have you laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.”* (John 11:34)
- ▶ *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”* (Mark 13:32)

- ▶ Jesus also demonstrated many, many other human characteristics. He was weary, he slept when he was tired, he loved, he showed compassion frequently, at times he was righteously angered, and at times grieved.
- ▶ Jesus experienced joy, yet was troubled on occasion. *“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came by unto this hour.”* (John 12:27)
- ▶ On the night before his crucifixion, he sweat drops as blood. *“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”* (Luke 22:44)

Jesus had perfect human qualities

- ▶ Because Jesus was quite literally a perfect human being, without sin, his human attributes were outstanding. Jesus was a great friend to those who knew him well. He was always showing compassion and helping the sick and the hungry. *“And when Jesus went forth he saw a great multitude; He was moved with compassion toward them, and healed their sick.”* (Matt. 14:14)
- ▶ Many other attributes...

Jesus was 100% God while on Earth

- ▶ While Jesus was 100% human while on earth, he also was 100% God.
 - ▶ He was heralded to be God.
 - ▶ He performed many miracles.
 - ▶ He demonstrated supernatural knowledge at times.
 - ▶ Jesus led a perfect life.
 - ▶ Jesus died for us.
- 

Jesus was sinless

- ▶ *“I always do what is pleasing to Him (God)”*
(John 8:29)
- ▶ *“for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* (2 Cor. 5:21)
- ▶ *“for we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”* (Heb 4:15)
- ▶ *“and ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”* (1 John 3:5)

Jesus could not sin...

- ▶ It is important to understand that most theologians believe that although Jesus Christ was able to be tempted because he was fully human, he was not actually able to sin because he was also fully God. God cannot sin – he is perfect. Jesus did not give up any of his godlike attributes when he became God incarnate... instead, he just *added* perfect humanity to his perfection as God in one indivisible person.

The Kenosis of Jesus Christ

- ▶ *“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”* (Phil 2:5–8)
- ▶ Kenosis – This idea states that “Christ ‘emptied himself’ of some of his divine attributes, such as omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, while he was one earth as a man.” (Grudem, Wayne)

Kenosis continued...

- ▶ No Bible verses ever say that Jesus gave up any godly characteristics. He simply became a man... and a servant as well.
- ▶ There is an abundance of evidence that the Bible is the actual Word of God – 100% true and accurate. Jesus, even while on earth, was at all times 100% God:
 - ▶ *“For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.”* (Col 1:19)
 - ▶ *“Salvation is of the LORD.”* (Jonah 2:9)

- ▶ I believe that a proper way of looking at Christ's limitations while on earth do not involve him giving up any of his godly attributes. However, it is pretty apparent that *Jesus did not avail himself to all of those attributes at all times.*
- ▶ John McArthur puts it this way, “He set aside the voluntary display of his divine attributes and submitted himself to the Spirit’s direction.”

The Offices of Jesus

- ▶ Priest: a priest had to be chosen by God, consecrated by God, and usually came from the tribe of Levi. Jesus was called by God to be a priest in a particularly special priestly order, the order of Melchizedek.
- ▶ *“And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵ So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; ⁶ as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”*
(Heb 5:4–6)

Jesus is our Priest...

- ▶ Even now, Jesus intercedes for Christians as our mediator – when God looks at a Christian, he sees the righteousness of Christ. “*There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ.*”
(1 Tim. 2:5)

Jesus is our Prophet...

- ▶ Jesus was definitely a prophet while on earth. A prophet represents God before people, and often foretells future events. He would let people know what God expects of them.
- ▶ Moses prophesied that there would come a great prophet one day like himself, “*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.*” (Deut 18:15)
- ▶ Speaking of Jesus, the people said “they glorified God, saying, ‘*A great prophet has arisen among us!*’ and ‘*God has visited his people!*’” (Luke 7:16)

Jesus is King

- ▶ *“The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”* (Rev 5:5)
- ▶ **“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”** (Matt 28:18–19)

Jesus' Sacrificial Death

- ▶ Jesus died for mankind
 - ▶ The Burial of Jesus
 - ▶ The Resurrection
 - ▶ The Ascension
 - ▶ Now Christ sits at the right hand of the Father.
- 

Summary

- ▶ Jesus has a unique role to play as the second person of the Trinity. He came to earth as incarnate God to serve as our priest, prophet, and our king. He is our Mediator, the Sacrificial Lamb, our Teacher, the model for living our lives, the future King during the Millennial Kingdom, and the future Judge of all mankind.
- ▶ It is interesting to note, as mentioned above, that Jesus has been given the task of judgment in the end times... *“For the father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son.”* (John 5:22) Much more will be discussed on the topic of the Final Judgment later in this book.

The Doctrine of Incarnation

- ▶ One of the major doctrines of the Bible is that of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity... God the Son... Jesus. The definition of this word and concept was finally accepted at a council in the city of Chalcedon in A.D. 451.
- ▶ Chalcedonian Definition: *We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, other reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the father.*

- ▶ *According to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things, like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one in the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-Begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy fathers has been handed down to us.*

Other Views

- ▶ Prior to this council, there had been more than one markedly incorrect view concerning the deity and humanity of Christ.
- ▶ As mentioned earlier, the belief system known as Arianism held that Jesus was not fully God.
- ▶ Apollinarianism was a view that taught that Christ had a human body, but a mind and spirit that was the divine.
- ▶ Nestorianism was a view that somehow believed that Jesus was both a human person and a separate divine person – suggesting that these two persons might possibly be arguing at any given time as to what to do or think.
- ▶ Monophysitism – one nature only, a mixture of a human nature and a divine nature

- ▶ To summarize the definition of the incarnation, it states that Jesus definitely has two distinct natures, a divine nature and the human nature – in each of these natures, he is 100% human and 100% God. His divine nature or essence is exactly the same as that of the Father and the Holy Spirit. His human nature is exactly the same as our human nature – except that he is without sin.
- 

The Doctrine of the Virgin Birth

- ▶ A recent survey found that 9% of those saying that they are Christians believe that Jesus was not born of a virgin.
- ▶ Actually, the virgin birth of our Savior is an important aspect of God's plan for the salvation of his elect.
- ▶ *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.”*
(Matt 1:18)

Fulfillment of O.T. Prophecy

- ▶ It was a fulfillment of prophecy. Old Testament prophecies reveal that God would enter into the world via a virgin birth, have no earthly father (therefore not be from the line of Joseph), and be born in Bethlehem...
- ▶ Joseph could not be the father of the Messiah...
“Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man [Jeconiah] childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.” (Jer 22:30)

Mary, the Mother of Jesus

- ▶ Mary descended from David's son Nathan. There would be no problem for her to be in the line that would lead to the Messiah... and, of course, she was... *“the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”* (Luke 1:35)
- ▶ It was important that Jesus be God. Only God would be able to save mankind. However, Jesus had to be human as well

Necessity of the Virgin Birth

- ▶ There are a great many of explanations as to the value of the virgin birth to enable Jesus to be born without the stain of original stain. It is obvious that there would be a problem if Jesus had been born in the normal [Joseph+Mary] fashion. *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”* (Romans 5:12)
- ▶ With the Holy Spirit intimately involved in the incarnation of Christ (and Joseph out of the picture), it was not a difficult matter for God to come into this world in an appropriate manner.

Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is an equal partner in the Godhead. He is just like the Father and the Son in that the Holy Spirit is fully God. Of course, he has a different role to play which will be discussed now.
- ▶ Roles in salvation...Norman Geisler puts it, rather nicely in the following manner: “the Father is the Source, the Son is the Means, and the Holy Spirit is the Effector of salvation – it is the he who convicts, convinces, and converts.”

Holy Spirit

- ▶ He appeared frequently in Old Testament times to do the work required of him. He has had an even larger role since the Church came into existence at Pentecost.
- ▶ First of all, it is important that the reader recognizes that the Holy Spirit is a full and complete member of the Holy Trinity – in other words, he is God.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, eternal, and possessive of all of the other attributes discussed earlier concerning God

Ministries of the Holy Spirit

- ▶ 1. Role in Creation
- ▶ 2. Role in the Scriptures
- ▶ 3. Role in ministering to God's people in Old Testament days.
- ▶ 4. Role in ministering to God's people since Pentecost. *“verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee he must be born again.”* (John 3:3–7)

Holy Spirit and the Believers

- ▶ The Holy Spirit makes the believer a new creation in Christ
 - ▶ He baptizes the believer
 - ▶ He indwells the believer
 - ▶ He seals the believer
 - ▶ He empowers/fills the believer
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- ▶ **Ministry for Sinners:** One additional very important job of the Holy Spirit is to convict sinners of their need of salvation.
- ▶ *“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”* (John 16:7–8)

- ▶ **Ministry vs. the Devil:** The Holy Spirit currently limits some of the effects of Satan and his army of demons. It is true that God has allowed Satan the run of this planet “for a season”... but, of course Satan is limited in what he can do:
- ▶ *“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.”* (Isaiah 59:19)
- ▶ Paul made this pretty clear in his letter to the church at Thessalonica. *“you know what is restraining him now (the Holy Spirit) so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.”* (2 Thess. 2:6–7)

The Holy Spirit helps Jesus

- ▶ The third person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, was tasked with the responsibility of helping Jesus while he was here on earth. He did so in a variety of ways as we shall now see.
- ▶ it was the Holy Spirit that enabled Jesus to come into this world as God Incarnate. As the angel of the Lord told Joseph, “*that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*” (Matt 1:20)
- ▶ When Jesus appeared at the Jordan River to begin his ministry, the Holy Ghost came upon him to anoint him, “*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him...*” (Matt 3:16)

- ▶ *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord”.*
(Luke 4:18–19) Jesus then told the crowd that Isaiah was referring to him all those years ago.

Jesus was led by the Spirit...

- ▶ Jesus followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit throughout his ministry as he often limited his own access to his omnipotent powers while here on earth (as discussed earlier). For instance, *“But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come unto you.”* (Matt. 12:28)
- ▶ *“And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”* (Luke 4:1)

- ▶ The writer of Hebrews wrote that it was through the Holy Spirit that Jesus offered himself to his Father... *“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”* (Heb 9:14)
- ▶ Let me mention just one more of the many times that the Holy Spirit took control in order to accomplish the needs of the Trinity. *“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”* (Romans 8:11)

The Holy Spirit and the Church

- ▶ Jesus told his disciples that they needed to wait in Jerusalem for a little while as he was going to send them a Comforter soon after he returned to heaven. *“he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me;⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* (Acts 1:4–5)

Pentecost

- ▶ *“When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues.” (Acts 2:1–4)*

The Holy Spirit and the Apostles

- ▶ So we see that the Holy Spirit came to indwell the disciples, giving them great power and supernatural gifts. This new power allowed the disciples, now apostles, to begin spreading the gospel message and the Church was begun.
- ▶ *“And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit... (the first sermon of the church)*

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is involved in virtually every aspect of the church.
- ▶ *“Now when they had gone through all Phrygia in the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.” (Acts 16:6,7)*

Church Service and the Spirit

- ▶ Of course, the Holy Spirit very much wants to be a part of every church worship service. “*And be not drunk with wine, where in is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*” (Eph. 5:18–19)
- ▶ Paul explains how the proper way to preach a church service is to be led by the Holy Spirit, “*and my speech and my preaching is not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*” (1 Cor. 2:4)

Gifts of the Spirit

- ▶ Another wonderful ministry of the Holy Spirit here on earth, concerns his administration of spiritual gifts to the believer. Every person is an important individual in the eyes of God.
 - ▶ God gives each person certain talents. Some may be great orators, others may be great athletes, others may be great singers, still others may be great writers, etc.
 - ▶ When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit will bestow upon him/her at least one spiritual gift.
- 

Spiritual Gifts

- ▶ All of these special gifts are intended to be used to glorify God. Of course, it may very well be that the Holy Spirit will use a natural talent and supernaturally expand it into a spiritual gift.
- ▶ Every believer has at least one spiritual gift...
“as every man hath received the gift, even so minister, saying one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”
(1 Peter 4:10)

- ▶ No believer possesses all the gifts. This is an important point to make, because there are some who believe that everyone should have the gift of speaking in tongues.
- ▶ I don't personally believe that is true for a couple of reasons, but biblically speaking, I would point to the following rhetorical question posed by Paul, "*Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.*" (1 Cor 12:29–30)

The Spiritual Gifts...

- ▶ Purpose – *“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”* (Eph. 4:12)
- ▶ Paul lists ~20 spiritual gifts. These gifts are found in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4.
- ▶ The gift of prophecy
- ▶ the gift of apostleship
- ▶ the gift of miracles
- ▶ the gift of healing
- ▶ the gift of tongues
- ▶ the gift of the interpretation of tongues
- ▶ the gift of knowledge

Gifts continued...

- ▶ the gift of wisdom
 - ▶ the gift of the discerning of spirits
 - ▶ the gift of giving
 - ▶ the gift of exhortation
 - ▶ the gift of ministering
 - ▶ the gift of administration
 - ▶ the gift of showing mercy
 - ▶ the gift of faith
 - ▶ the gift of teaching
 - ▶ the gift of evangelism
 - ▶ the gift of pastor – teacher
 - ▶ the gift of leading
 - ▶ the gift of helping
- 

Are All Gifts Meant for Today?

- ▶ There is a significant difference of opinion on whether or not *some* of the aforementioned gifts of the Holy Spirit are meant for today – or were meant only for the apostolic period. Outstanding and brilliant Christians differ in their opinions on this matter.
- 

Fruits of the Spirit

- ▶ Along with the gifts that he gives to believers, the Holy Spirit, working through each person, desires to help them produce fruit in their Christian walk with God. It should always be remembered, that the goal of every Christian should be to pursue sanctification – to become more Christ-like – as his/her life progresses.

Christians should produce fruit

- ▶ *“We should bring forth fruit unto God.”*
(Rom. 7:4b)
- ▶ *“every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purges it that it may bring forth more fruit.”* (John 15:2)
- ▶ *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abides in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.”* (John 15:5)

- ▶ *“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh..... Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience (or longsuffering), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control.”*
(Gal 5:16–23)

The Doctrine of Man

- ▶ In any typical philosophy class, two of the more important topics discussed are “Does God exist?” and “What is the purpose of man?” ... or, as some may put it, “What is the meaning of life?” We have just reviewed in significant detail the biblical answer to the first question. The Bible says that God has always existed and created the universe at some point in the past. Since the early part of the 20th century, scientific evidence has provided massive evidence for this Creator (i.e. God).
- ▶ How did we get here? Why are we here? What does the future hold?

Important Questions...

- ▶ How and why were humans created?
 - ▶ What is the nature of man?
 - ▶ What is the purpose of life?
 - ▶ The “fall” of man
 - ▶ God’s plan for redemption
 - ▶ The future of man
 - ▶ Before proceeding any further, I want to point out that when I use the word “man” I am typically referring to the human race (men and women combined).
- 

The Origin of Man

- ▶ macro-evolution = this is the term used to describe the process used to produce all living things from a one-celled organism – one species evolving into another, etc.)
- ▶ micro-evolution– refers to varieties within a given type. Descendants are clearly of the same type as the ancestor. This does happen and is consistent with the biblical view of creation of man and all life)

Man's Origin

- Atheists believe that the entire universe and all within came about purely by accident. After a very amazing biochemical accidental process, life began and through the process of macro-evolution man eventually came on the scene.
 - Deists believe that God created the universe, but then allowed it to develop without his involvement. Hence, they believe in evolution.
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Man's Origin cont.

- **Theistic Evolution** – God created the world and then used the evolutionary process to create all living creatures. There are some in this group who think that God may have intervened, on occasion, to create new species, especially man.
- **The Biblical View** – God created the heavens and the earth followed by introducing all living creatures into and onto the earth as outlined in the first two chapters of Genesis. God created each individual species – macro-evolution had no role in God's creative process. This is the only view that is consistent with the biblical record. Let us take a look at it more closely. Interestingly, it is now the only view that is consistent with the scientific evidence as well.

- ▶ *“God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind.”* (Gen 1:21)
- ▶ God made a point of noting in his Genesis record that each species was created *according to their kind...* not created out of another species. He created man last... *“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.”* (Gen 1:26)

Evolution is not Biblical

- ▶ God certainly did not say that the Trinity was going to take a one-celled organism and eventually cause it to evolve into a creature (man) that would be made in “*Our image*.” No, instead, God states that after all else had been created, he would create man, and this creation would have a special relationship with him. In fact, man would be created in God’s image. Evolution is not consistent with the biblical account of the creation of life, leading to the creation of man.

Adam and Eve

- ▶ Adam and Eve are actual people of history. This is backed up through their mention elsewhere in the Bible... they are even mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in the third chapter of Luke. Jesus himself referenced the book of Genesis as referring to actual historical people and events.
 - ▶ Love > Free Will > Sin
- 

Why Were Humans Created?

- ▶ The Bible makes it very clear that God is completely independent of any need whatsoever. If God needed anything, he would not qualify to be God. God must be all-sufficient, and he is.
- ▶ However, the Bible tells us that God created man for his own glory and pleasure. *“Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.”* (Isaiah 43:7)
- ▶ God also created man to have dominion over the earth and all therein... *“Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”* (Gen. 1:26)

- ▶ *“let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”* (Matt 5:16)
- ▶ God also created mankind to enjoy the rest of his creation. *“The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.”* (Psalms 84:11)
- ▶ *“the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.”* (1 Tim 6:17)
- ▶ God has a great inheritance for us one day...

- ▶ If you take just a moment to think about it, there is quite a bit of similarity between the reason God decided to create mankind and the reasons an earthly father decides to have children.

The Nature of Man

- ▶ Some theologians believe that man is trichotomous, i.e. made up of body, soul, and spirit. They believe that the soul is that part of the person that includes his intellect and emotions. The spirit is a deeper aspect of a person that is involved in things such as communion with God.
 - ▶ Others believe that mankind is actually only dichotomous – i.e. the soul and spirit are synonymous.
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The Purpose of Life

- ▶ “To know, love, and serve God in this life, so that we can be happy with him in heaven.”
- ▶ I like to put it just a little bit differently. First, the purpose of life is to somehow find Jesus (this may be done through reading the Bible, Christian television, attendance at church, being evangelized, etc.). Next, a person needs to make a decision to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, or to reject the gospel message.
- ▶ Then, if they accept Jesus into their heart, they should spend the remainder of their life working towards their sanctification. This is just an expanded version of the Catholic catechism.

Seek out God

- ▶ *“I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.”* (Prov 8:17)
- ▶ *“you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”* (Jer 29:13)

Accept Jesus as Lord and Savior

- ▶ *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”* (John 3:16)

Work toward our sanctification...

- ▶ *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”* (Eph 2:10)
- ▶ *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”* (Matt 6:19–20)

Our Future Reward!

- ▶ *“In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know.”* (John 14:2–4)
- ▶ *“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.”* (1 Cor 2:9)

The Story of Man...

- ▶ Adam and Eve...
 - ▶ Their free will choice...
 - ▶ Their fall from grace...
 - ▶ God's plan of redemption...
- 

The Doctrine of Original Sin and the Doctrine of Sin

- ▶ Although Adam and Eve were created in a state of perfection, they both sinned by exercising their free will to disobey God. They had absolutely everything going for them. However, after being tempted by Satan, they decided to disobey God. Satan had been thrown out of heaven for trying to be like God. His pride had destroyed him.
- ▶ *“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”* (Gen 3:5) Eve decided that she would do things her way... she would not follow God’s simple command... as easy as it was to follow. Adam followed his wife into sin.

Sin and Death

- ▶ This disobedience, this sin, changed Adam, Eve, the human race, and the world in a significantly negative way from that point on. Mankind would now face the inevitability of death.
- ▶ *“your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you.”* (Isaiah 59:2)
Now, Adam and Eve were slaves to sin and Satan.

The Effects of Sin

- ▶ Adam and Eve experienced a sudden change in their human condition. For the first time, they experienced the emotions of shame and fear. *“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.”* (Gen 3:7)
- ▶ God punished Adam and Eve. He sent them out of the Garden and... *“To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.”* (Gen 3:16) *“And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you,*

- ▶ *'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'* (Gen 3:17–19)

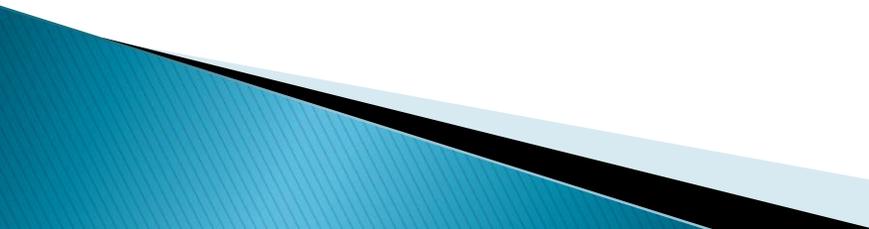
Inherited Sin

- ▶ Because of their sin, all subsequent generations of men and women would experience suffering, the weariness of work, spiritual separation from God, and physical death. Adam's sin was imputed to all of his descendants. This is sometimes referred to as the transmission of "Original Sin" or "Inherited Sin."
- ▶ *"I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."* (Psalms 51:5)
- ▶ *"sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin."* (Rom 5:12)

Original Sin

- ▶ **The Arminian position:** Arminius taught that Adam's posterity had their will to remain sinless markedly reduced because of Adam's sin, but it was still possible that a person could remain sinless throughout their life. That is, that possibility, however remote, still exists.
- ▶ **The Augustinian position:** The great St. Augustine's taught that because of the human race being looked at as a unit by God, Adam's sin was imputed upon all of his posterity. Therefore, all of Adam's progeny would be born with a corrupted nature. This position is the one accepted by the majority of theologians today.

Is this fair?

- ▶ No doubt, some would say that this is not fair. Of course, everyone understands that parents do pass on to their children much of who they are. Somehow, therefore, it appears that a sinful soul is transmitted from sinful parents by the natural process of conception in some mysterious way. People are born with a sinful nature that, in and of itself, results in legal guilt before God. Also, this sinful nature will cause each individual, inevitably, to sin, as time passes.
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The Righteousness of Christ

- ▶ Frankly, it is fortunate that God does allow for the imputation of one person's standing before God for another. Because of Adam's sin, we are born with the sin nature. However, as we shall discuss in much more detail later, because of Jesus Christ living a perfect life, followed by his sacrificial death on the cross, those who place their trust in him have his righteousness imputed to them... and are saved for an eternity in heaven. *“For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”* (1 Cor 15:21–22)

The First Sin

- ▶ The origin of sin came sometime before Adam's first sin. Satan, once named Lucifer, led a revolt of angels against God in a ridiculous attempt to make himself like God. Prior to this terribly sinful action, apparently no sin had ever been committed. Ezekiel tells the story of Lucifer's revolt (Ezek. 28:11–19).
- ▶ *“You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. ¹⁶ “By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; Therefore, I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you.”* (Ezek. 28:15–16)

What is sin?

- ▶ Anytime a person does something against the will of God, it is a sin. There is no doubt that sin is universal. *“For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.”* (Eccl 7:20)
- ▶ *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23)
- ▶ As we have seen, even angels sin. One sin makes a person guilty before a perfectly just God. Of course, Adam and Eve are excellent examples of this fact.
- ▶ There are sins of omission and sins of commission. Sometimes doing nothing can be a sin.

Unintentional Sin

- ▶ Sins can be committed unintentionally. God said, "*If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD, though he does not know it, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity.*" (Lev 5:17)

Consequences of Sin

- ▶ If a person has committed even one sin, they are guilty before God. *“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”* (James 2:10)
- ▶ The penalty for sin is death... even eternal death and punishment. Any person who dies without accepting Christ as Savior will face this horrendous future...

Levels of Sin

- ▶ Although it is true that any and all sins will result in eternal death and punishment, some sins are worthy of more punishment than others. Jesus referred to this when he was standing before Pilot and said, "*You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.*" (John 19:11)
- ▶ Obviously, some sins are greater than others.

- ▶ The Bible tells us that the *unbeliever* will have problems related to his sin, including: a lack of understanding of the truth, an inability to get all that one should receive from reading the Bible, a deceitful heart, an inability to receive good things from the Spirit.
- ▶ When a Christian commits a sin, he/she does not lose their salvation. However, our fellowship with God is adversely affected. Christians are subject to discipline as are all children... remember, God is a Christian's father and "*the Lord disciplines those he loves.*" (Heb. 12:6) The Christian will experience a loss of the fruit of the Spirit, including joy, peace, love, confidence, assurance of salvation, fellowship, and more.

Sin unto Death

- ▶ Some Christians commit the “sin unto death.”
“*There is sin leading to death.*” (1 John 5:16)
“*For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.*” (1 Cor 11:29–30)
- ▶ “*The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*” (Rev 20:10)

Sin Effects the World

- ▶ *“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”* (Romans 8:20–22)

Unpardonable Sin

- ▶ *“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.”*
(Matt 12:31–32)

Safeguards Against Sin

- ▶ Given the obvious harm that sin brings into each life, everyone should do all they can to stop committing them. The Bible tells us that we should be holy and just as God is holy, *“he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”* (1 Peter 1:15–16)

- ▶ Study the Bible regularly: “*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!*” (Ps. 119:11)
- ▶ “*I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.*” (John 17:15)
- ▶ Keep your thoughts and actions on proper things and to do good things. “*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*” (Phil 4:8)

Victory over Sin

- ▶ Ultimately, there is only one way to gain victory over the effects of sin. Contrary to the statements of many famous people in the world today (such as Oprah Winfrey), the only way is through Jesus. *“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.”* (John 14:6)
- ▶ If a person accepts the free gift of eternal life from God, he/she will have victory over sin. Every person born will end up in heaven or hell... the only path to heaven is through Jesus.

The Doctrine of Angels

- ▶ God created angels as spiritual beings and apparently they are male. They are all given male names in the Bible. However, the Bible never specifically states that they are all male. Should God desire, they can appear in human form as reported in the Bible.
- ▶ *“Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on his face.”*
(Num 22:31)

Attributes of Angels

- ▶ Angels have intelligence and moral judgment. They can follow God's commands and they can revolt against God's will.
- ▶ *“To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?”* (Job 38:6–7)
- ▶ We do know that Lucifer, the chief angel, and one-third of all the angels sinned against God and were thrown out of heaven. Heaven is the home of the faithful angels, but they also have many things to do here on earth.
- ▶ There are a great many angels.

Angelic Appearances

- ▶ Angels can communicate with humans by talking; they can appear as ordinary human beings. They are used by God to guard, protect, warn, and bring messages to people. For example, “an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, *“Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”* (Matt 1:20) and
- ▶ *“For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.¹² On their hands they will bear you up.”* (Psalms 91:11–12)

Types of Angels

- ▶ Archangel
 - ▶ Cherubim
 - ▶ Seraphim
 - ▶ Living Creatures
 - ▶ Guardian Angels
 - ▶ Angel of the Lord
- 

Characteristics of Angels

- ▶ Angels do not marry – Jesus taught that we will be like them in heaven where we will *“neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”* (Matt. 22:30)
- ▶ Angels have more power and might, than humans. The Bible refers to angels as mighty ones who do God’s word. *“Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!”* (Psalms 103:20)

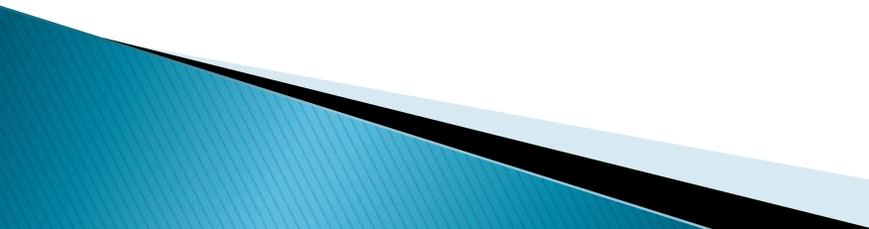
- ▶ *“What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels.”*
(Heb 2:6–7)
- ▶ Angels were not created in the image of God, and cannot bear children. When angels sinned, they were cast out of heaven, and, as we shall see in the next section, their fate is sealed.
- ▶ One day in the future, God will give us authority over angels. *“Do you not know that we are to judge angels?”* (1 Cor 6:3)

- ▶ *”Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”* (Heb 13:2–3)
 - ▶ Although angels may be incredibly imposing figures, they are not to be worshiped by humans.
 - ▶ Angels are still around today. It is possible, that a person could have an experience with an angel.
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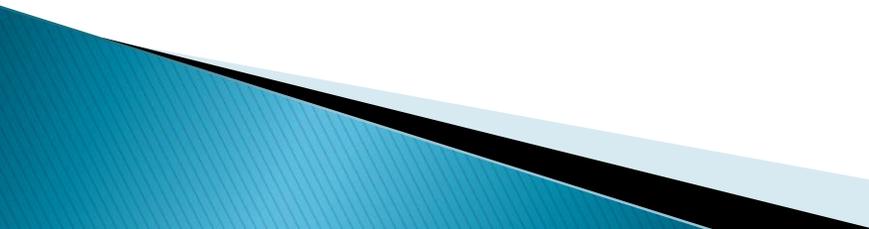
The Doctrine of Satan and Demons

- ▶ Satan is a miserable and terrifying fallen Angel. He was named Lucifer before he rebelled against God. Satan has the dishonor of being the first individual in the universe to sin. Isaiah tells the story of his fall and future... *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! ¹³ For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. (Isaiah 14:12)*

Names of Satan

- ▶ the devil
 - ▶ the serpent
 - ▶ the ruler of this world
 - ▶ the prince of the power of the air
 - ▶ the evil one
 - ▶ Beelzebub
 - ▶ the father of lies
 - ▶ a murderer from the beginning
- 

Satan's capabilities

- ▶ Satan is the god of this world...
 - ▶ Satan and his army of demons use a variety of tactics to hurt people and keep them from Christ. They also come against Christians to *oppress* them by causing guilt, fear, confusion, sickness, and pride. Although Satan and Demons do have a lot of power, they do have their power limited by God.
 - ▶ Even though Satan and his demons can cause much trouble on this earth, Christians can fight back against them.
- 

Resisting the Devil

- ▶ Jesus gave us examples of how to resist the devil.
- ▶ All throughout history there has been demonic activity. There are varying degrees of oppression by demons.
- ▶ Jesus cast out many demons during his ministry on earth.
- ▶ The activities of the devil and demons can be noted throughout the entire Bible. For example, in Old Testament times, when some of the Israelites turned from God to the worship of pagan gods, “*They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons.*” (Psalms 106:37)
- ▶ Many New Testament examples as well...

- ▶ During the Millennial Kingdom, Satan and his demons will not have the run of this earth as they do now. Satan will be thrown into a bottomless pit... *“I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.”* (Rev 20:1–3)
- ▶ After the thousand years, God will create a new heaven and a new earth... at that time, the devil will be sent to hell forever... *“the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”* (Rev 20:10)

Satan and Demons Today

- ▶ Satan and his demons are still alive and well today. Sadly, many Christians do not recognize that their lives and others can be adversely influenced by demons.
 - ▶ If one thinks that demonic oppression is a real possibility, it is appropriate to rebuke the demon in the name of Jesus.
- 

The Christian Life

- ▶ When a person becomes a Christian, everything does not simply become a bed of roses. For one thing, as Paul wrote to the Romans, “*I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*” (Romans 7:22–25)

- ▶ The more we are able to turn control of our lives over to the Holy Spirit, the greater our success will be to live as Christ would have us live.
 - ▶ Secondly, it is important that we do not forget the fact that Satan and demons do exist, and try their best to ruin lives for Christians and non-Christians alike.
 - ▶ Fortunately, Jesus came to save people from their sins while defeating Satan in the process.
- 

Doctrine of Atonement

- ▶ The next topic to discuss will be the atonement that was provided by Jesus Christ that allows for the salvation of sinful human beings. The Merriam–Webster dictionary defines atonement, as the “reconciliation of God and humankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.”
- ▶ “Why was it necessary for Christ to supply atonement for the sins of mankind?”
- ▶ God is not only the quintessential example of perfect love; God is also always perfectly just. He cannot allow a sinful person into heaven... unless that individual has paid the penalty for his/her sins.

The Wages of Sin

- ▶ *“For the wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23)
- ▶ The justice of God required him to find a mechanism that would allow him to bring salvation to the people he loved (all mankind) and still pay the penalty for their sins. It was impossible for sinful men or women to do this on their own.
- ▶ God’s decision was to send his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, to live a perfect life as a human being and then to sacrifice himself as a **propitiation** (to allow for a change in God’s attitude toward sinful man from one of enmity toward us to one of acceptance) for the sins of all those who would accept his perfect gift.

- ▶ A perfect man, who was also the perfect God, after living a sinless life would be able to pay the penalty for imperfect mankind. However, this would require Jesus to personally pay the penalty for those sins and die.
- ▶ It is interesting to note that Jesus, while in the Garden of Gethsemane praying to God, was not looking forward to the torture that he would face the following day (remember, he was 100% human while 100% God). In fact, he asked his father in heaven, "*O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.*" (Matt 26:39)

The Logic Behind the Atonement

- ▶ “Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” (Luke 24:26)
- ▶ It is also interesting to note that Jesus followed that comment by teaching from the Old Testament concerning the prophecies of the Messiah (i.e. the prophecies relating to himself), *“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”* (Luke 24:27)
- ▶ Paul also taught on this subject.

Justification by Faith

- ▶ *“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight²¹ But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

- ▶ *²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*” (Romans 3:20–26)

Reasons for Atonement cont.

- ▶ *“in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”*
(Heb 2:17–18)
- ▶ In Old Testament times, God had his people sacrifice animals to demonstrate their allegiance to him. This animal sacrifice needed to be done over and over. Still, it could not really take away the sins of a person as

The Perfect Sacrifice

- ▶ *For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵ not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another-- ²⁶ He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.” (Heb 9:23–28)*
- ▶ Jesus had to accomplish two critical tasks. Jesus had to live a life of perfect obedience to satisfy the requirements of the law and he also had to suffer while paying the penalty for our sins. This would only need to be a one-time sacrifice.

Righteous before God

- ▶ Therefore no human is righteous before God on his own account. However, in the system of justice that God has deemed appropriate, it's the perfect God/Man, Jesus, who lived a life of perfect obedience to God's law. This would earn righteousness for sinful mankind.
- ▶ Paul speaks about this in his letter to the Philippians when he said that he, *“suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of his own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.”* (Phil. 3:8–9)

Adam ---- Christ

- ▶ *“By one man's disobedience (Adam's) many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience (Christ's) many will be made righteous. ²⁰ Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, ²¹ so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace (unmerited favor) might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (Romans 5:19–21)

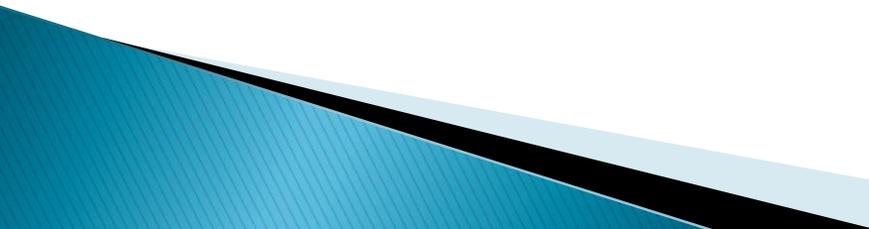
God's Justice System

- ▶ God is omniscient and omnipotent, and he sets the rules. The great news, however, is that God uses the same justice system to allow sinful mankind to “inherit” the righteousness of Christ purely through faith. We surely did not gain this righteous standing before God on our own merit.
- ▶ God does allow for the righteousness gained by Jesus through his living a perfectly righteous life while on this earth to be imputed to those men and women who will trust in Jesus as their Savior. However, that still leaves mankind with a very serious problem... the penalty for the sins is death and eternal banishment to hell.

Who will pay the penalty for our sins?

- ▶ Once again, we see that God allows for the imputation to certain men and women the consequences of a completed task of Jesus... to those who recognize what Jesus did for them and trust in him for their salvation. God allows Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins. He did this at Calvary.

Summary

- ▶ First, we as a human race inherited the “original sin” of Adam. Not only that, but it is not possible for a person to live a life of sinless perfection.
 - ▶ We do have the opportunity, through faith, to be looked upon by God, as having the righteousness of Christ – as he led a perfect life, while on earth.
 - ▶ Last, but not least, Christ was willing to take upon himself the penalty for our sins. Jesus did this at Calvary – he suffered a torturous death while paying the penalty for our sins.
- 

Christ – The Lamb of God

- ▶ *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*
(2 Cor 5:19,21)
- ▶ *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.”* (Eph 1:7–8)

He Paid Our Penalty

- ▶ I believe that it is important that all people recognize what it meant for Jesus, to pay the penalty for our sins. We need to take time to understand the **physical torture** that he endured to save us.
- ▶ The physical pain that Jesus endured was not as terrible as the **emotional pain** that he had to bear. Jesus was punished for our sin. We don't know exactly how God exacted that punishment – but we can imagine that to pay the penalty for the sins of all mankind, this punishment must have been incredible.

Christ—the propitiation for our sins

- ▶ *“He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”*
(1 John 2:2)
- ▶ Easton’s Bible Dictionary defines what Christ did for us in defining the word **propitiation**... “because by his becoming our substitute, and assuming our obligations he expiated our guilt, covered it, by the vicarious punishment which he endured.” In other words, by Jesus bearing the wrath of God against sin, the justice required by God has been paid for. Therefore, God no longer looks at the faithful believer as a guilty sinner, but instead sees him/her as having the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Remember, *“the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”* (Isaiah 53:6)

A Willing Sacrifice

- ▶ “do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?” (Matt 26:53–54)
- ▶ However, Jesus had to go to the cross in order to pay the penalty for our sins. He did so willingly, *“when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness”* (1 Peter 2:23–24)

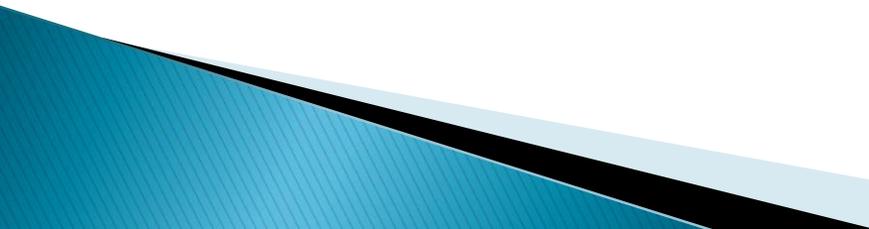
A One-Time Sacrifice

- ▶ *He [Christ] has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”* (Heb 9:26–28)
- ▶ Christ was willing to take upon himself the guilt for our sins, and then deal with the terrible consequences of that guilt – death and punishment. There may still be some reading these words that wonder why Jesus would do this for a sinful world. The answer is simple. He loves us with an infinite love.

Final Moments on the Cross

- ▶ *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* (Matt 27:46)
 - ▶ *"It is finished!"* (John 19:30)
 - ▶ *"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"* (Luke 23:46)
- 

Summation

- ▶ Because people are born with the stain of “**inherited sin**” and because everyone **sins** during their lifetime, they are separated from God.
 - ▶ Unless God were to intervene in the world, all humanity would die and enter into **eternal separation** from God – i.e. hell.
 - ▶ Fortunately, God sent his son, Jesus Christ, to be the **propitiation** (see definition above) for the sins of the world.
 - ▶ Jesus paid the penalty for our sins by willingly **sacrificing** himself on the cross. He then conquered death as demonstrated by his **resurrection** from the grave.
 - ▶ Christ’s perfect life, followed by his sacrificial death, has **reconciled** mankind to God.
 - ▶ Those who trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, gain **redemption**, and will one day gain entrance into heaven, where they will spend an eternal life of blissful existence.
- 

Theories of Atonement

- ▶ **The Necessary–Satisfaction Theory:** Anselm (A.D. 1033–1109)
- ▶ **The Moral Influence Theory:** The French theologian, Peter Abelard (A.D. 1079–1142)
- ▶ **The Recapitulation Theory:** Church father, Irenaeus (A.D. 125–202)
- ▶ **The Ransom Theory:** Origen (A.D. 185 – 254)
- ▶ **The Governmental Theory:** Hugo Grotius (A.D. 1583–1645)
- ▶ **Penal Substitution Theory:** most consistent with the Bible’s explanation

Substitutionary Theory

- ▶ The atonement concept that is accepted as being **most consistent with the Bible's explanation** is that a loving but perfectly righteous and just God required an acceptable payment for the sins of mankind. Only Christ satisfied these requirements as He had lived a perfect life as a man (and as God the Son). Hence, when Jesus willingly gave his life on the cross and took upon himself God's wrathful judgment for the sins of the world, he satisfied the demands of God for justice being served. God allowed his Son to pay the penalty for the sins of the world.

- ▶ *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.”*
(Gal 3:13)
 - ▶ *“who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.”* (1 Peter 2:24)
- 

The Extent of Atonement

- ▶ **Unlimited Atonement:** Jesus died as the propitiation for the sins of all mankind, without exception. *“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”* (Acts 2:21)
- ▶ **Limited Atonement:** Christ’s atoning death was meant only for the elect. Charles Hodge explains why he takes this point of view as follows: "If God from eternity determined to save one portion of the human race and not another, it seems to be a contradiction to say that the plan of salvation had equal reference to both portions; that the Father sent his Son to die for those whom he had predetermined not to save, as truly as, and in the same sense that he gave him up for those whom he had chosen to make the heirs of salvation."

Unlimited Atonement

- ▶ “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)
- ▶ “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)
- ▶ “Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life.” (Romans 5:18)

Limited Atonement

- ▶ *"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."* (Matthew 1:21)
- ▶ *"...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* (Matthew 20:28)
- ▶ *This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*" (Matthew 26:28) “
- ▶ *"...and I lay down my life for the sheep."* (John 10:15)

Conclusion

- ▶ It is really important to realize that the Bible obviously does not make the answer to this question clear enough for committed Christians to agree. Superb theologians disagree on this issue. Even more important, the answer is not of any great significance. There is no doubt about the meaning of certain verses...Never forget,
- ▶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) or as Paul put it...
- ▶ “*For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’*” (Romans 10:13)

Doctrine of Salvation

- ▶ How is salvation obtained? What is the role of God? What must a man or woman do to be saved? The Bible says, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.*" (Acts 16:31) How does one believe on Jesus?
- ▶ It was apparently necessary that Jesus shed his blood because...
- ▶ "*according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*" (Heb 9:22)

God Chooses His “Elect”

- ▶ We must understand that God has by far the most important role in the salvation process. God decided from eternity past those that he would “elect” for salvation. We have a role to play, to be sure, but only if God has chosen us to be “conformed to the image of his Son.” Salvation begins with election... without God first choosing a person to be saved, that person will not choose Jesus as Savior.
- ▶ This is an intriguing topic because it calls into question the whole concept of free will for mankind. There are basically two reasonable ways that theologians have looked at this through the ages. Let us now take a look at the controversial *Doctrine of Election*...

Doctrine of Election

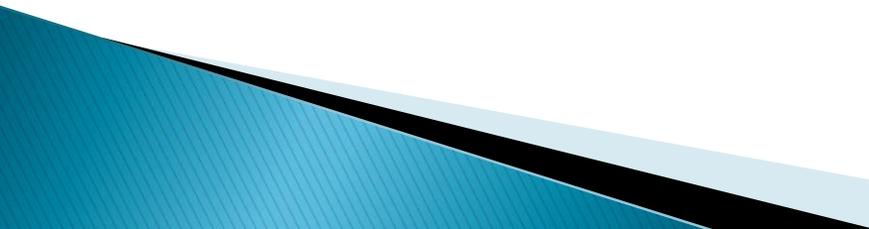
- ▶ The Bible makes it very clear that before the world was created, God elected certain people to be saved. That may surprise some reading this treatise, but it is absolutely true. Take a look at just a few of the verses that speak to this point:
- ▶ *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.”* (Acts 13:48)

- ▶ *“He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love⁵ He predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.”* (Eph 1:4–5)
- ▶ *“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.”* (Eph 1:11)
- ▶ *“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation”*
(2 Thess 2:13)

Doctrine of Predestination (and Eternal Security)

- ▶ Merrill Unger's Bible Dictionary defines this term as follows: "God's total plan with respect to humanity is called predestination or foreordination. His purpose to act in such a manner that certain men will believe and be saved is called election. His purpose to act in such a manner that certain will disbelieve and therefore be lost is called reprobation."
 - ▶ Pre-destination also applies to other aspects of life besides salvation.
- 

Predestination

- ▶ This absolutely requires the use of his attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. There is an amazing amount of evidence on the world scene and among individuals that demonstrates this “providential care” to be an actual fact.
 - ▶ How does God come to his decision on who to choose as the elect? Also, if a person is saved, will they always remain saved? There is quite a difference of opinion on these topics.
- 

- ▶ In addition to those listed above, there are many other verses that speak about election (e.g. 2 Tim. 1:9, 1 Peter 2:9, Rev. 13:7–8, etc.).
- ▶ It should be clear that if God chooses some to be conformed to his image, he did not choose others. Why not? Paul asked that question when he wrote his letter to the Romans... then, immediately answered it...
- ▶ *“What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ”*

- ▶ *For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." ¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. ¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use?"*
(Romans 9:14–21)

More on Election

- ▶ There are varying views on exactly how God goes about electing people for salvation. The Bible tells us that God makes his decision based on his will (see Eph 1:5 above and the next verse shown below)... not on any good works that a person may do... or not do... in the future. *“though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call—”* (Romans 9:11)

It is God's Decision alone

- ▶ So, we know that God does not elect people based on their future works any more than he saves us when we turn to him based on how good we have been during our life on earth. Paul, as is noted above, simply says that we have no right to argue the point as the Creator of the universe can do whatever he wants to do regarding this issue.
- ▶ God never tells us the inscrutable reasons why he decides to elect one person to be saved... and not another. That remains a mystery. However, I surely believe that there are some hints given.

- ▶ Because I believe that God is perfectly just, always exhibits perfect love, and acts in a reasonable manner, I personally believe that God chooses people to be saved that he recognizes are the kind of people that would want to follow him. Since we all are given free will, those who God chooses will choose him via their free will – of course, they do not know what God's decision was in eternity past... i.e. the fact that God elected them before the creation of the universe.

- ▶ Calvinists would reject my view. They believe that God makes his choice concerning the elect completely disregarding the likely future nature or likely future choices of any given person. My view is one formulation of a variety of Arminian views on the topic of election. The following are three views to consider, the first two are most often mentioned when speaking of *election*; the last viewpoint expresses my personal viewpoint:

5-Point Calvinism

- ▶ **T** – Total Depravity of Man – mankind has been born into sin and is totally depraved even to the point where they cannot have the faith to come to God on their own accord and must have a Savior to be looked upon as being righteous by God.
- ▶ **U** – Unconditional Election – God does not choose an individual to be one of his elect based on anything inherent in that individual. He does not consider the plusses and minuses of the individual at all... He does not consider whether that person might have used his free will to trust in Jesus if God had not predestined that individual's choice. John McArthur puts it this way, "It is the doctrine taught by Scripture throughout Scripture that God sovereignly, independently, uninfluenced by any other person chooses who will be saved and that that choice was made by God before time began, before the world was created in eternity past." God simply chooses based on the kind intention of his will."

- ▶ **L** – Limited Atonement – Jesus only died for those that were chosen in eternity past by the Trinity... persons known as *the elect* of God. His sacrificial death was sufficient for all people, but only efficient for the elect.
- ▶ **I** – Irresistible Grace – God offers a gospel call to all people. However, only the elect will accept his call to repentance... and they never will reject it – hence, it is irresistible.
- ▶ **P** – Persistence of the Saints – all of the elect will eventually go to heaven. They cannot lose their salvation. They have **eternal security**. This position is often stated, “once saved, always saved.”

Classical Arminianism

- ▶ **Total Depravity of Man:** the belief that God must supply the faith needed to allow each of the elect to place that faith in Jesus for their salvation. Only God will regenerate certain people to accept his free gift of salvation. He does it through the third person of the Trinity working in every *elect* person.
- ▶ **Conditional Election:** Arminius wrote, “Predestination is the decree of the good pleasure of God in Christ, by which he resolved within himself from all eternity, to justify, adopt and endow with everlasting life, to the praise of his own glorious grace, believers on whom he had decreed to bestow faith.” He then writes that God’s decree to elect “has its foundation in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from all eternity those individuals who *would*, through his preventing [prevenient] grace, *believe*, and through his subsequent grace *would persevere*...he likewise knew those who *would not believe and persevere*. Hence, God elected the appropriate group for salvation.

- ▶ **Unlimited (but only the elect will accept it) Atonement** – Jesus died for all people. However, only the elect will choose to accept the gospel and be saved.
- ▶ **Resistible Grace** – Most forms of Arminianism believe that because God gives mankind freewill, they can and do (at times) resist and reject the call of God. These people are the non-elect of God.
- ▶ **Conditional Persistence (Conditional Salvation)** – the only thing or individual that can cause a person to lose his/her already possessed salvation, is that person himself/herself. If saved people want to reject Jesus later in life, they can do so (they still have the free will to do so). Although Arminius did note many Bible verses that seemed to suggest that Christians could lose their salvation, he also noted many that suggest just the opposite. He really did not know for sure whether a person could lose his/her salvation or not... note this quote from his comments on this subject... ‘I should not readily dare to say that true and saving faith may finally and totally fall away.’

My View

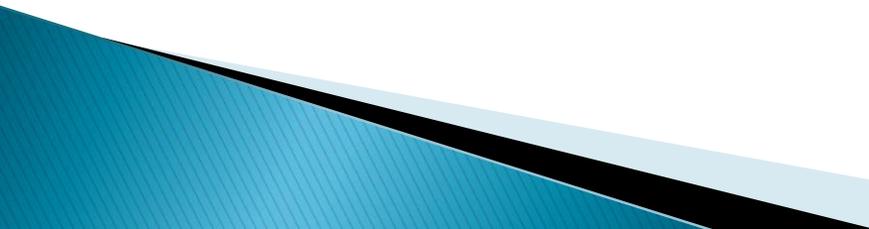
- ▶ **Total Depravity of Man** – (same as Calvinism and Classical Arminianism) Man needs a Savior!
- ▶ **Conditional Election** – (same as Classical Arminianism above) God is omniscient and certainly knows everything about every human being that will ever exist. I believe that his perfect love and justice causes him to use this knowledge when choosing his elect... in some manner that we cannot know or understand at this time (maybe we will when we get to heaven). By the way, **this conditional election does not mean that God chooses based on what he knows about our future works** (Paul points this out... *“when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call – she was told, the older will serve the younger.”* (Romans 9:10–12) It is just too difficult for me to believe that God does not take into consideration the tendencies and character of each of his created children in deciding whether to grant them eternal life... or not. Of course, I may be wrong in this belief.
- ▶ I will go into the reasons for my opinion on this matter in more detail when discussing the Doctrine of Free Will near the end of this book. I believe more explanation is in order to explain the reasons for why I take this view – these relate to free will and God's loving nature.

- ▶ **Unlimited (but only the elect will accept it) Atonement** – Jesus’ sacrificial death was sufficient for all people, but only the elect will take advantage of this incredible gift. Note the following four verses as examples that suggest that Jesus died for all people, not just the elect of God:
 - ▶ *“we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.”* (1 Tim 4:10)
 - ▶ *“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all.”* (1 Tim 2:5–6)
 - ▶ *“For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”* (Col 1:19–20)
- ▶ **Irresistible Grace** – I believe that God the Holy Spirit, works in the heart and soul of the elect to give them the necessary faith to believe... and they always do accept this gift of God. Those that are not the elect, are not given the needed faith to believe.

- ▶ **Persistence of the Saints** – I think that once a person is saved, they are always saved... but, I sure would not bet my life on it. There are many biblical verses that seemingly suggest that once a person is saved, absolutely nothing (and no one, not even the person himself/herself) will keep him/her from an eternity in heaven. Although this is true, there are plenty of theologians who believe that God allows a Christian to exercise a free will choice to turn away from God. They point to many verses to support their view as well. I just feel that the evidence is a little more powerful for the once saved, always saved position.

What must we do to be saved?

- ▶ We have spent a reasonable amount of time discussing the *doctrines of atonement and election*. We saw how Jesus came into this world and gave his life to pay the penalty for our sins while defeating Satan.
- ▶ *“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (Col. 2:13–14)*

- ▶ We noted that from eternity past God made the decision to choose an *elect* group of individuals for salvation... we understand that this is an inscrutable biblical fact to most people... yet, absolutely true. What else should we understand?
 - ▶ For one thing, we need to understand the critically important doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without his resurrection, no one would be saved.
- 

Doctrine of the Resurrection

- ▶ Evidence that Christ rose from the grave...
- ▶ I believe that the amazing change that took place in each of the disciples' lives (as well as James, Paul, and others) after they saw the risen Christ is wonderful evidence of the veracity of that report.
- ▶ The entire New Testament is predicated on the risen Jesus Christ. It would not have been written if Jesus had remained in the grave.
- ▶ When Jesus rose from the dead on that Easter morning it was no coincidence that the Jews were celebrating their Feast of First Fruits... Jesus was the first fruits of the resurrection of all who would follow him. He also had a glorified body.

The Believer's Future in Heaven

- ▶ Peter tells us that God has stored up for believers in heaven a wonderful future thanks to what Jesus accomplished for us in the resurrection...
- ▶ *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* (1 Peter 1:3–5)

- ▶ Paul had similar words when he wrote his epistle to the Romans, “*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*” (Romans 6:4–5)
- ▶ “*It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification*”. (Romans 4:24–25)

Heavenly Future...

- ▶ *“in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.”* (1 Cor 15:20–23)
- ▶ *“if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”* (John 14:3)

Christ, Our Mediator

- ▶ Now that Jesus has ascended into heaven, he continues to have several important roles to play concerning the salvation of mankind. Jesus was sent by God the Father to be a mediator between God and mankind. Job was hoping that this would one day become a reality when he spoke to God the Father and said,
- ▶ *“Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both. ³⁴ Let Him take His rod away from me, and do not let dread of Him terrify me.”* (Job 9:33–34)

Christ, our defense attorney

- ▶ In the New Testament, it becomes clear that this mediator is Jesus, “*For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.*” (1 Tim 2:5–6)
- ▶ In heaven, Jesus is our **mediator**. He is also our **righteousness**, He is our **defense attorney** before God, He is our **co-heir**, He is our **brother**, He is our **friend**, He is our **Lord**, and He is our **Savior**.

The Doctrine of Regeneration

- ▶ Being “Born Again” ...
- ▶ It can be more completely defined as the spiritual change that God brings to the heart of a man or woman to change his/her inherent sin nature to a nature that is able to respond to the gospel message in faith. The cause of this change is God and it involves a change in the nature and will of the man or woman. God acts to do this because of his love and mercy as he wants to bring salvation to his elect. The Holy Spirit is primarily the person of the Trinity that brings this regeneration to mankind. Once a man/woman is born again, a person can respond in faith to the gospel message in a positive manner... and always will.

You Must Be Born Again

- ▶ Jesus told Nicodemus all about the need for regeneration... *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*⁴ *Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*⁵ *Jesus answered,*
- ▶ *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* (John 3:3–6) We are not supposed to understand how the Spirit completes this necessary change in our spirit, *"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."* (John 3:7–8)

Christians are new creations

- ▶ *“if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸ Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ.”* (2 Cor 5:17–18)
- ▶ *“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”* (Eph 2:1)

When we are born again, we are ready to respond to the gospel

- ▶ The above verses, and many more like them, point to the fact that we are all “dead in sins” and unable to respond to God until we are born again (regenerated – given a new life – by God).
- ▶ After a person experiences this regeneration, or new birth, he/she is ready to turn from his/her sins and make Christ the Lord and Savior of his/her life. Although we have to be born again before our nature is capable of wanting to turn to Jesus in faith, the saving faith given us by the Holy Spirit comes right after the new birth. Then, God will, invariably, bring us to a saving relationship with his Son.

- ▶ **“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.”** (John 6:44) *“The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.”* (Acts 16:14)
- ▶ In these two verses, we see that God worked on the hearts/spirits of the people referenced to regenerate them; only then (but quickly after this re-birth) were they ready to follow Jesus in faith.
- ▶ **Once we are born again we are immediately given the faith necessary to ask Jesus into our lives – these two separate events are seemingly synonymous to the individual.**

Doctrines of Repentance and Faith

- ▶ Once God has changed a person via regeneration (i.e. they are born again), the next step toward salvation is for that person to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit by *faith*.
- ▶ This is done by *repenting of the sin* in one's life, followed by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Repentance is not simply being sorry for one's sins. The Greek word for repentance means "to reconsider" or to "change one's mind" and feel remorse for previous actions.
- ▶ Biblical repentance is a call for a person to make a conscious decision to make a 180 degree change in his/her life and to be truly sorry for past sins and a sincere desire to live a Christ honoring life in the future.

Conversion

- ▶ The new Christian must realize his need for a Savior and then ask Jesus into his life... placing his faith in Jesus and trusting in the Lord's sacrificial death on the cross for his eternal salvation. This repentance, coupled almost immediately by faith in Jesus, results in *conversion*.
- ▶ There are some theologians who believe that prospective Christians need only ask Jesus to be their Savior... and not ask him to be Lord of their life.

True Saving Faith

- ▶ I do not believe that a person can have a saving relationship with Jesus and not have him be Lord of that life as well. I suggest that since Jesus is God (Lord of all), that once he becomes the Savior of a person, once the Holy Spirit comes to live within a person, God will assume the role of Lord of that life as well.
- ▶ Secondly, if a person is *truly penitent* and really decides to turn his life around because of his love for Jesus, he will want Jesus to be Lord over all that he does.

- ▶ So, we are to repent (turn away from sin and our old life) and then come to Jesus in faith (turn toward Jesus). Once a person does trust and believe in the gospel, he/she is saved eternally and becomes a new creation in Jesus...
- ▶ *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”* (Acts 3:19)
- ▶ *“godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation.”* (2 Cor 7:10)

God grants us the faith to believe

- ▶ We have seen that once people gain the new birth (regeneration), they are literally new creatures (born again) and will always then repent and turn to Jesus in faith. This will result in their salvation. Note that God supplied everything needed for this wonderful transformation. It is true that we must come to Jesus in faith, but God will provide the faith for those of the elect to do so.
- ▶ *“For by **grace** you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works.”* (Eph 2:8–9)

Our Role – Faith in Jesus

- ▶ There is one thing that we do have to do when presented with the opportunity of salvation... we must put our faith in the gospel message and accept the finished work of Jesus at the cross. We must recognize that our only hope for salvation is through the finished work of Christ. We cannot do it ourselves. We must put our faith in Jesus to take care of our future. Yet, as this verse and many others show, even this faith that we must exercise is another great gift from God!
- ▶ *“Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.”*
(Heb 12:2)
- ▶ *“God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”*
(Romans 12:3)

Doctrine of Grace

- ▶ **Grace** – unmerited favor. As explained above, God grants mankind salvation purely out of love and not because of anything we do to earn it. It is a gift of God.
- ▶ *“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.”* (Titus 2:11–12)
- ▶ *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 6:23)
- ▶ *“if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace”* (Romans 11:6)

God made us with a free will...

- ▶ God is a God of love and he is very merciful toward mankind. God, as I will discuss in more detail later, made us in such a way that we would be able to actually respond in some small way and express our love for him as we experience and appreciate his love for us. We are not made to be robots.
- ▶ When we turn to Jesus in faith, we are saved, pure and simple. We experience *conversion*.

The Doctrine of Justification – being declared righteous

- ▶ When God looks at this new “creation” – this new Christian, he sees him through the prism of his Son, Jesus. From God’s legal point of view, he has been declared righteous because Jesus truly was righteous and Jesus is standing in the Christian’s place. That is the desire of Jesus. We are no longer judged as lost sinners, because we are no longer under the Law. Instead, we are now judged based on the merits of our Savior. He has his righteousness imputed to his children. In God’s legal system, this is perfectly appropriate to do.

The Righteousness of Christ

- ▶ For basically the same reasons God imputed Adam's sin onto all mankind after Adam, he imputes Jesus' righteousness on all those who trust in him for their salvation. Again, we do not work for our righteousness (we could never obtain it via work), but we accept this righteousness as the free gift coming from the grace of God. In fact, if we have any inkling that we must work for this gift or that we have worked to deserve any aspect of our salvation, God says that we will be judged by our works... and that would spell doom (see Romans 4:4)
- ▶ *“Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.”* (Romans 4:4)
- ▶ *“a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.”* (Gal 2:16)

- ▶ *“since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*
(Rom. 5:1–2)
- ▶ *“the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed... through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all believe.... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness.”* (Romans 3:21,23–25)
- ▶ *“we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.”* (Romans 3:28)



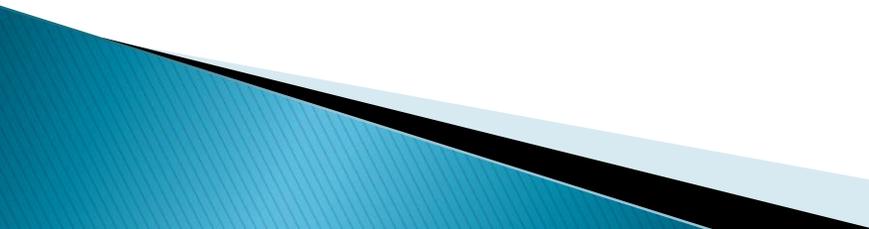
The Doctrine of Adoption

- ▶ After new believers place their trust in Jesus, they are brought into the family of God as adopted sons and daughters. We become brothers and co-heirs with Christ. Our destiny is secure – outstanding support as a child of God while on earth followed by a wonderful eternal life in heaven.
- ▶ *“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* (John 1:12–13)

Co-Heirs with Christ

- ▶ *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”* (Romans 8:14–17)
- ▶ Of course, that means that fellow Christians are also our brothers and sisters. We should treat them as such.

Benefits of being adopted children of God

- ▶ We will not receive the full benefits of our adoption into the family of God until we arrive in heaven one day.
 - ▶ Even so, as an adopted son or daughter of God, we enjoy many benefits during our life here on earth. For example, we have the Holy Spirit living within us as a comforter and advisor and the seal of our salvation.
 - ▶ We can go to God in prayer at any time – to worship him and thank him, to praise him for all he has done for us, to plead with him for answers to the difficult problems in our lives, and simply to talk to him on a daily basis.
- 

- ▶ Our goal in life should be to allow the Holy Spirit to control every aspect and minute of our existence.
- ▶ Bible study and prayer are two extremely important avenues towards reaching this goal.
- ▶ As a loving and perfect father, God will discipline his adopted children when needed in order to help them become better people. The writer of Hebrews explained this well when he wrote, "*My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.*" (Heb. 12:5–6)

Work to be more like Jesus

- ▶ It should be every Christian's goal to become more like Jesus Christ each and every day of their life. We are, indeed, supposed to work to accomplish that goal. This work is referred to as pursuing sanctification.
- ▶ We are saved solely via the grace of God *“through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”* (Eph. 2:8–9) However, once saved, God wants us to put effort into becoming the best Christian person we can be.

Salvation Summarized

- ▶ **Election** from eternity past by the Trinity – some being **predestined** for salvation
- ▶ Creation of the world and man
- ▶ The Fall of Man – **inherited sin imputed** to all mankind
- ▶ Jesus comes into the world, lives a perfect life, and then gives his life on the cross as the **sacrificial Lamb**.
- ▶ Jesus is **resurrected** from the dead and ascends into heaven where He sits at the right hand of God.
- ▶ God accepts his **atonement** for our sins. He is the **propitiation** for our sins.

Salvation Summary continued...

- ▶ At some point, through the process called **regeneration**, the elect are **born again**. God provides this regeneration primarily through the person of the Holy Spirit... although God the Father may play a role as well.
- ▶ The born again individual **repents** and places his **faith** in Jesus as Lord and Savior. This process is referred to as **conversion**. The **faith** to do this came from God and only God's unmerited favor (his **grace**) made this possible.
- ▶ God **justifies** penitent sinners and **imputes** to them the **righteousness** of Christ.
- ▶ The sinner thus gains **redemption** and is **adopted** into the family of God where he/she becomes a co-heir with Christ.

The Doctrine of Sanctification

- ▶ God is behind every aspect of the salvation of mankind.
- ▶ It is true that a person does have to exercise their free will in order to place their God-given faith in Jesus... we should certainly not forget that.
- ▶ Also, it should be understood that after one's conversion and then adoption into the family of God, He does not expect His new child to simply sit back, live the "life of Reilly." No, once people become Christians, God expects them to spend the remainder of their lives working to become more like Jesus. The dictionary defines biblical sanctification as the state that God intends a Christian to be in and used for the purpose that God intended... i.e. a Christian is to be holy. The process used to pursue this state is referred to as the process of **sanctification**.

Faith without works is dead

- ▶ It is most certainly true that there is absolutely no work involved in obtaining one's salvation. However, I would like to suggest to all people that believe they are saved, and at the same time do not desire to live a Christ honoring life, that they look deeply into their soul to see if they really have repented of their past sins. Remember, if this truly has been done, it is a life altering transformation, a 180 degree turn toward Christ and all that he stands for while putting the sin of the past behind, forever. Jesus reminds us all that if we truly love him, we will obey him.
- ▶ *“Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.”* (1 John 3:9)
- ▶ *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”* (James 1:22)
- ▶ A true saving faith in Jesus Christ will be manifest by a changed life and a life that is honoring to God. How is your life stacking up?

Process of Sanctification

- ▶ Sanctification begins as soon as a person is adopted into God's family... i.e. as soon as one becomes a Christian. The process is life-long and although it should, of course, go on an upward path toward holiness, there will be undulations as one goes along.
- ▶ No Christian should be a slave to sin. Since they have repented and received the Holy Spirit upon conversion, they are now a new person in Christ.

- ▶ *“our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that **we should no longer be slaves of sin.** Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.....¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but **present yourselves to God** as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”*
(Romans 6:6,11-14)

Can we become perfect?

- ▶ Although Christians should continue to pursue their sanctification until the day they die, they will never become perfect,
- ▶ *“Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.”* (Eccl 7:20)
- ▶ *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”*
(1 John 1:10)
- ▶ *“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”* (Matt. 6:11)

One day, we will be perfect

- ▶ We will join with these other brothers and sisters and become one of the, “*spirits of just men made perfect.*” (Heb 12:23)
- ▶ We will not receive our glorified bodies until a later date... at the Second Coming of Jesus. “*the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.*”⁵³ *For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.*” (1 Cor 15:52–53)

Holy Spirit controlled life

- ▶ God, primarily in the person of the Holy Spirit, plays the major role in our work of sanctification. Each individual also has to do his/her best to obey Jesus in this quest as well. An excellent verse that points out the role of both man and God is the following, “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*” (Phil 2:12–13)
- ▶ We should never forget that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. It really should be our goal in life to have the Holy Spirit dominate our will. Certainly, if the Holy Spirit is running our life, we can't go wrong.

Old Life vs. New Life

- ▶ Paul spoke about his struggles with this very problematic issue in the early years of his Christian life...*“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹ For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. ²⁰*
- ▶ *²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”*
(Romans 7:18–24)

What is the answer?

- ▶ The answer to his question of who was going to deliver him from “*this body of death*” came in the next verse, “*I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.*” (Romans 7:25)
- ▶ As one would expect, his answer was God, through Jesus Christ. Paul recognized that he had to stop trying to live his life by “the flesh.” He was going to need to live it by the Holy Spirit within. “*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*” (Romans 8:5–6)

Walk in the Spirit

- ▶ *“For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”*
(Romans 8:13)
- ▶ *“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”* (Gal 5:16–18)

Holy Spirit – our helper

- ▶ When controlled by the Holy Spirit, we will have a much better life in so many ways. The Bible tells us that the Spirit will even help us when we pray... *“the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”* (Romans 8:26–27)

Fruit of the Spirit

- ▶ *“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*
(Gal 5:22–25)

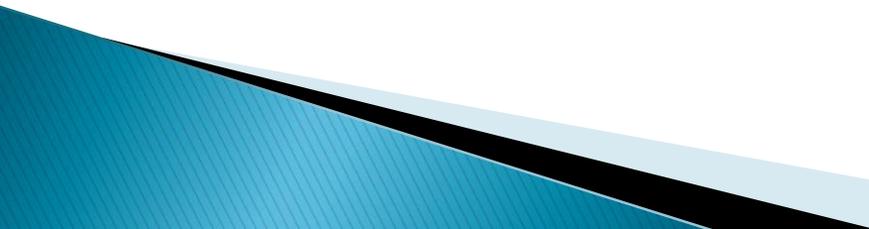
How do we allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives?

- ▶ I do not believe that there is any easy way to gain our sanctification. I clearly remember when I used to pray in my younger years and ask that the Holy Spirit would simply take control of my life upon my awakening and then run my life each day – i.e. leave me out of the decision making process. I figured, if I had God controlling my every thought and action, I would never sin and only do good things. I even figured out that I was still using my free will because I was the one praying to ask God to take over. I seemingly had it figured out. Great idea... right? Unfortunately, as Paul must have found out too, God does not allow things to work that way. It is just not that simple. Frankly, I wish it were.

How to grow in Christ

- ▶ God will do his part, we need to do our part.
- ▶ Pray
- ▶ Read the Bible
- ▶ Study the Bible
- ▶ Fasting
- ▶ Witness
- ▶ Obey Jesus – *“But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”*
(1 Cor 9:27)
- ▶ Attend Church and worship God

The Doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

- ▶ Also, let us discuss the topic of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Are these two things different?
 - ▶ Many books written on the doctrines of the Bible do not cover much on the topic of the baptism in the Holy Spirit... if it is discussed at all.
 - ▶ There has been an explosion of interest in the work of the Holy Spirit with the dawning of the Pentecostal movement in the 20th century.
- 

Two Views on the subject...

- ▶ Pentecostal Christians (and other charismatics) believe that this baptism is meant to be an additional blessing meant for people who are already Christians.
- ▶ Many other denominations, such as Southern Baptists, and most Presbyterians, believe that the only baptism in the Holy Spirit comes with entrance into the family of God... i.e. and this comes with a person's confession of faith in Jesus at the same time one is gaining salvation.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

- ▶ It is a fact that millions of Christians believe that they have experienced a baptism in or with the Holy Spirit that came some time *after* they became Christians. They note that their Christian life experience improved markedly after this event, and included a significant increase in their ability to manifest and use spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Traditional Pentecostal Christians generally state that this “second blessing” was initially manifested (and needed to be manifested) by the gift of “speaking in tongues.” Others in the charismatic movement (those that believe in this “second blessing”) do not believe that the gifts received always include the gift of speaking in tongues.
- ▶ Is this a “second blessing?”

- ▶ People who claim this experience almost always are convinced that they have indeed been touched in a special way by the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ *“And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, ‘you heard from me;⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’”* (Acts 1:4–5) What is the significance of this verse?

- ▶ There are a few other occasions mentioned in the book of Acts that demonstrate that people that had become believers did not receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit until a later time... not too much later, but still not instantaneous with conversion.
- ▶ *“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, ¹⁵ who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”*
(Acts 8:14–17)
- ▶ There is another similar situation noted in Acts 19:1–6.
- ▶ So, is there a second blessing?

- ▶ The New Testament mentions only seven occasions where people are specifically “baptized in the Holy Spirit”... and then discusses them.
- ▶ There is mention of the baptism with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost by Jesus (Acts 2) and by Peter (Acts 11).
- ▶ *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”* (1 Cor 12:13-14)

- ▶ The Pentecostals believe that this verse does not refer to their concept of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Instead, it is referring to a baptism done by the Holy Spirit ... not where Jesus is baptizing his followers in the Holy Spirit. If this verse really is saying that this baptism has happened to all Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, then it must be saying that all Christians do experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit... and it not an extra blessing as Pentecostal maintain.

- ▶ How do those who do not believe in the “second blessing” explain those verses that seem to speak of a baptism after someone had already been saved?
- ▶ The explanation relates to the time period that all of this was taking place. It was the time when God was moving from his Old Covenant treatment of humanity to his New Covenant relationship with believers. The day of Pentecost was the actual day of transition and cannot be used as a benchmark for what will become the norm decades and even centuries down the line. The fact that Jesus had his disciples wait for the “Comforter” until Pentecost in no way means that this wait will become the norm. Obviously, considering what took place on that day (remember the amazing fanfare by which the Holy Spirit arrived), it made sense for God to usher in the Church in that fashion.

- ▶ There are still the experiences in the book of Acts of those new Christians that sometime later received the Holy Spirit that need an explanation. Why do these not speak of a “second blessing?”
- ▶ Let us discuss that now... (Acts 8 and 19)
- ▶ Those who believe that Christians should not seek for a special additional baptism by the Holy Spirit, simply believe that the New Testament reasons given for this type of special blessing are not sufficient to outweigh the evidence that we are all baptized in the Holy Spirit at the time of our conversion (with a few notable exceptions in the early days of the Church).

Something very real takes place

- ▶ However, that definitely does not mean that people who do not believe in a second *baptism* in the Holy Spirit also do not believe in a second *blessing* by the Holy Spirit. Most do. How could one possibly explain all of the fantastic blessings that have come to so many people who have experienced what they generally refer to as the “baptism in the Holy Spirit?” These cannot all be products of the imagination. Many of us just look at this blessing differently

- ▶ All agree that Christians must be the temple of the Holy Spirit. As Paul told the Corinthian Christians, “*Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*” (1 Cor 3:16)
- ▶ The Bible speaks of Christians often being filled... and, therefore being re-filled by the Spirit of God.
- ▶ “*do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.*” (Eph 5:17–18) The verb used for filled should be more appropriately translated “be continually being filled.”

Continual refilling with the Holy Spirit

- ▶ Recall that the apostles were all filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Of course, that was the whole point of that day. Yet, frequently thereafter, they received a new filling with Holy Spirit.
- ▶ At a later date, the Bible tells about Peter receiving a new filling... *“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel.’* (Acts 4:8)
- ▶ When Peter and John returned to the company of the other apostles and friends and reported what had happened, the eventually outcome of that meeting was one more filling with the Holy Spirit...
- ▶ *“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”* (Acts 4:31)
- ▶ The point is that there should be a frequent re-filling with the Holy Spirit throughout the lives of Christians.

Speaking in Tongues

- ▶ The Bible says after listing the many gifts of the Holy Spirit, “*But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*” (1 Cor 12:11) Different people get different gifts.
- ▶ Paul also said, “*Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.*” (1 Cor 13:8–10)

Speaking in Tongues

- ▶ I have known a great many superb Christians who do claim to have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Maybe they have been; I do not know for sure. Maybe this is a second blessing on top of the original indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Yet, some of these people do not speak in tongues. So, even if one does believe in this second blessing, I do believe that the preponderance of evidence is that not everyone will receive the gift of tongues.

Conclusion

- ▶ So, what is the point? All Christians are given the gift of the Holy Spirit. Yet, this wonderful person of the Holy Spirit can play a large role in the life of a Christian or a small role. It is really up to each person. The key is to work diligently to turn over our lives each day to the control of the Spirit of God. This is done through prayer, Bible reading and study, godly meditation, using our spiritual gifts for the Church, worship, and moral living.
- ▶ Pentecostals and other charismatics believe it important to prepare their life in such a way that they can experience the second blessing of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Others, such as Southern Baptists and most Presbyterians, believe that a person should prepare their life in such a way that they can experience more of a continual filling (or re-filling) with the Holy Spirit.

Doctrine of Prayer

- ▶ It should be the goal of every Christian to become more like Jesus each day. I suggest that there are at least three things that we should do daily to accomplish this goal:
 - ▶ Obey Jesus in all that we do. In other words, live a moral and ethical life that will make our Lord proud.
 - ▶ Study the Bible with vigor. In other words, really try to dig deeply into God's Word. Allow God to speak to you through his "Living Word."
 - ▶ Pray to God. Do this throughout each day and set time aside to pray more intensely at some point(s) during the day.
- 

- ▶ Prayer is our opportunity to come to God and talk to him about all of our hopes, dreams, concerns, worries, etc. It is our chance to sit down with our all-loving, omnipotent Father and have a deep heart-to-heart talk.
 - ▶ God, of course, knows what we are going to say during our prayers. “For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.” (Matt 6:8) So, why should we pray?
- 

The Lord's Prayer

- ▶ *“Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”* (Matt 6:9–13)
- ▶ It is a good idea to carefully study our Lord's Prayer to see those items he believed were appropriate to include in our own prayers.

Purpose and Effectiveness of Prayer

- ▶ We can show our love of God through the time we spend in prayer and the content of those prayers. God loves us and he wants us to reciprocate that love. If we truly love God, it would make sense that we would want to spend time talking to him.
 - ▶ The effectiveness of prayer
- 

- ▶ **The Effectiveness of Prayer:** God tells us to ask for what we want when we come to him in prayer.
- ▶ *“you do not have because you do not ask.”* (James 4:2)
- ▶ *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened”.* (Matt 7:7–8)
- ▶ There are various other factors that do come into play as far as whether God will grant us our requests.

Jesus is the Mediator

- ▶ God has only promised to answer the prayers of his children... i.e. Christians.
 - ▶ God may hear and answer other's prayers at times.
 - ▶ We are now able to enter into the Holy of Holies because Christ has become our mediator. We now have direct access to speak to God...
- 

Unconfessed Sin

- ▶ A Christian's prayers may well be stymied by unconfessed sin.
- ▶ *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* (Matt 6:14–15)

Obedience

- ▶ *“Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. ²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”*
(1 John 3:21–22)
- ▶ *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.”* (Psalms 66:18)
- ▶ *“The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.”*
(Prov 15:29)

In Jesus' Name

- ▶ *“whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do.”*
(John 14:13–14)
- ▶ What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus? Although it is appropriate to call attention to the fact that one is praying in the name of Jesus by adding this expression in a prayer, it is important to realize that this phrase is not a magical phrase.
- ▶ Actually, what Jesus is telling us is that we should come to God in prayer because, as Christians, we are able to do so on his authority... and because of his merits.

Pray with humility

- ▶ *“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”* (James 4:10)
- ▶ The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Pray With Faith

- ▶ *“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”* (Mark 11:24)
- ▶ Note how Jesus tells us that if we come to God in prayer with confidence, our prayer requests will be granted.
- ▶ Now, that does create somewhat of a quandary, since experience shows most people that not all of their prayer requests will be granted exactly as they requested. ...
- ▶ *“let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.”* (James 1:6)

Faith

- ▶ How do Christians gain faith as they work toward their sanctification? For one thing, we need to follow biblical advice on that subject...
- ▶ *“Faith comes through hearing and hearing by the word of God.”* (Romans 10:17)
- ▶ We need to study the scriptures often and come often to God in prayer. The more time we spend in prayer and in the Word, the more we will see God work in our lives and the more faith we will receive.

Ask for Faith

- ▶ *“if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”*²³ Jesus said to him, *“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”*²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, *“Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”* (Mark 9:22–24)
- ▶ *“Trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on your own understanding, acknowledge him in all your ways and he shall direct your paths.”* (Prov. 3:5–6)



Praying Earnestly and with Persistence

- ▶ “Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. ²⁵ Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. ²⁶ And He said, "Let go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" (Gen 32:24–26)
- ▶ The widow and the unjust judge

Praying in Private

- ▶ *“in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”* (Dan 6:10)
- ▶ Jesus often would go off by himself to pray... *“So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”* (Luke 5:16)
- ▶ Jesus told us *“when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”* (Matt 6:6)

Fasting and Prayer

- ▶ *“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”³ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”* (Acts 13:2–3)
- ▶ Rarely done today.

Praying according to God's Will

- ▶ *“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”* (1 John 5:14–15)
- ▶ Even Jesus was subject to this qualification. For example, *“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”* (Matt 26:39)

Prayer Requests – not all answered “yes.”

- ▶ Basically, the situation with prayer is that when we pray, God will grant us our requests if they align with his overall providential plan (His will) for this world (more about God’s providence a little later). The more obedient we have been, the greater our faith, the more persistent we are, the more humility we show, the more likely that God will grant us our requests. However, there are some requests that cannot be granted because doing so would interfere with God’s overall plan.

Unanswered Prayer

- ▶ Every reasonable Christian recognizes that God does not give us positive answers to all of our requests. We have just covered many things that we as Christians can do to pray with more power and faith... and we should do these things. Even so, there will still be prayers that will not result in God granting us what we request. We must remember that God has an over-arching plan for this universe and for every person in it.
- ▶ The answer given to Job...

Faith to Follow

- ▶ When we puzzle over life's unanswered questions and unanswered prayers, let us use our faith in God to see us through. As Paul put it in the book of Romans, it makes no sense for the clay to question the "Potter". Man questioning an all-loving God is just as absurd. Instead, let us re-orient our minds, and let all of our questions disappear as we hand over all of our questions, doubts and fears to God. We know for certain that God loves us considering all that he has done and sacrificed for us. I believe that God does not answer all of our questions because he wants us to exercise our faith in him

Conclusion in Job

- ▶ Job really did believe that God was omnipotent, omniscient, and all-loving, it only made sense that he should be willing to give literally every circumstance in life over to God in complete faith and trust. If he were not willing to do this, then he really did not believe those things about God.
 - ▶ This new-found trust and faith brought Job into a beautifully trusting relationship with his Creator. We should do the same as Job. Put all of your faith and trust in God.
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- ▶ The Holy Spirit is blessing those who believe in a second blessing and those who believe in a re-filling with the Holy Spirit after a one-time baptism at the onset of their Christian walk. God only knows for sure who is technically correct... but, God honors both with a Spirit-filled life.
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God's Word and God's People

- ▶ **Scripture – Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy**
- ▶ *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*
(2 Tim 3:16–17)
- ▶ *“no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Peter 1:20–21)

God spoke through the prophets

- ▶ David said, *"The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue."* (2 Sam 23:2)
- ▶ Zechariah wrote that the Israelites failed to abide by the Word of the Lord that they had received from God's prophets... *"Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets."* (Zech 7:12)

Inspired Word of God

- ▶ Paul makes it very clear in his letter to the Galatians that the Bible is inspired by God... *“But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* (Gal 1:11–12)
- ▶ Historically and doctrinally, the Bible is said to be the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God. Let us break these three words down:

Inspiration

- ▶ The Bible is **inspired** by God: As Paul wrote to Timothy, “*all scripture is given by inspiration of God.*” We see in this verse that every word in the Bible comes from God, ultimately. If God did not want something in his Word, he would make sure that it did not appear.
- ▶ Jesus taught that every word in the Bible was coming from God when he said, “It is written, ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*’” (Matt 4:4)
- ▶ The Bible is now the final authority in matters of faith and a believer’s work toward sanctification. As Jesus said, “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*” (Matt 24:35)

Biblical Inerrancy

- ▶ The Bible is the **inerrant** Word of God: Scripture, in the original manuscripts, does not affirm anything contrary to fact. The Bible is without error. This tenant can be found in many verses throughout the scriptures.
- ▶ As Paul wrote to Timothy, “*all scripture is God-breathed.*” Naturally, this implies inerrancy. Many other verses have already been noted above that tell us that the Bible is the Word of God. Hence, it cannot have errors in it since God is perfect and does not make mistakes (remember that God is omniscient). The Bible affirms the obvious as well...
- ▶ “*it is impossible for God to lie.*” (Heb 6:18)
- ▶ Jesus said when speaking of his Father, “*Your word is truth.*” (John 17:17)
- ▶ The Psalmist confirmed truth... “*The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*” (Psalms 119:160)

Infallible

- ▶ Infallible is a word that describes the fact that the Bible is God's Holy Word; it cannot fail and it cannot be broken. Jesus told us that *“the Scripture cannot be broken.”* (John 10:35)
- ▶ This word means more than the fact that the Bible is without errors concerning factual matters. The Bible presents to the reader the promises of God and the commands of God. It will accomplish the eternal plans of God.
- ▶ *“My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”* (Isaiah 55:11)

Additional Characteristics of the Bible

- ▶ The Bible has certain other characteristics besides the three mentioned above. It is *necessary, sufficient, indestructible, and indefatigable.*

The Bible Illuminates the reader

- ▶ *“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*
(1 Cor 2:14)
- ▶ *“even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe.”* (2 Cor 4:3–4)
- ▶ The good news is that God will illuminate his Word to those seeking him... *“it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”* (2 Cor 4:6)
- ▶ God will honor the seeker of truth... those who seek him. *“you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”*
(Deut 4:29)

Conclusion

- ▶ Norman Geisler wrote a good definition of God's Word that combines the fact that it is inspired, inerrant, and infallible. He wrote, "The **inspiration** of Scripture is the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit who, through the different personalities and literary styles of the chosen human authors, invested the very words of the original books of Holy Scripture, alone and in their entirety, as the very Word of God **without error** in all that they teach (including history and science) and is therefore the **infallible** rule and final authority for the faith and practice of all believers."

- ▶ If we have evidence to believe that the God of the Bible is who he says he is, and that his Son is really the Son of God and rose from the dead, then we surely have reason to believe their words.
- ▶ Jesus assured us that the entire Bible is the Word of God... that should certainly be enough for his followers. If we cannot trust the entire Bible, why should we believe anything that it says... anything? Some people like to pick and choose what they will accept as truly being words from God (in the Bible). What makes these people think that they are capable of being God's editors? That surely is the height of hubris.
- ▶ The simple fact is that we will not be able to understand everything that happens to us and others during our life here on earth.

- ▶ We should trust that God knew what he was doing and would make sure that *“all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* (Romans 8:28)
- ▶ The Bible wants us to take seriously the following, *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”* (Prov 3:5–6) Do your best to do that at all times.

Scripture–Method of Interpretation

- ▶ **Covenant Theology vs. Dispensationalism**
 - ▶ Consider the varying methods of biblical interpretation that conscientious students of the Bible have employed over the centuries. Just how the individual views the content of the Bible will make an enormous difference on how that person interprets certain portions of it, including its prophetic words.
 - ▶ As already mentioned, most conservative theologians view the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.
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- ▶ Even given that most of conservative scholars take this same view, there still is a difference of opinion on just how to interpret the Scriptures. So, even though this topic is not actually a doctrine of the Bible, it is very important to understand how different theologians interpret the Word if we are to properly understand many of the doctrines presented in this book.
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Literal vs. Allegorical

- ▶ There are two basic ways that the Bible has been interpreted down through the ages: literally and allegorically. Vastly different conceptions of the Israel and end-time events result, depending on which of these methods is used.
- ▶ **Literal Interpretation:** Those people who interpret the Bible *literally*, believe that the reader should approach it in the same manner that he/she would interpret any other work of non-fiction. This is also called the *grammatical-historical* method of interpretation.

Literal Interpretation

- ▶ Those who take this approach, take the words of the Bible to mean what they actually say. However, when it becomes obvious that a word or phrase is meant to be taken as a metaphor or a 'figure of speech', it should be interpreted in that way.
- ▶ The literal method of interpretation is the most straightforward method. It may be arguable whether this is the best method to use for interpreting end-time prophecies, however, this method certainly is the best one to minimize speculation and subjective interpretation.
- ▶ Hundreds of Old and New Testament prophetic passages have already been fulfilled – and they have all been fulfilled in the literal manner just described.

Allegorical Interpretation

- ▶ This method is essentially the opposite of the literal approach. The history behind this technique of interpretation is interesting. Two very important “Church Fathers”, Origen (AD 185–254) and Augustine (AD 354–430), championed this approach to prophecy. Both of these well-known theologians and philosophers were greatly influenced by their classical Greek education.
- ▶ Origen was considered the father of the allegorical approach to biblical interpretation. He had a great desire to find hidden meanings in God’s Word... he simply assumed that these spiritual, mystical meanings were there.

St. Augustine

- ▶ Augustine followed about 200 later.
- ▶ Augustine's influence dominated the Church for most of the next 1000 years. The book of *The Revelation* was looked upon as a symbolic view of the spiritual warfare between good and evil. It was certainly not taken as a serious analysis of end-time events. It was not until the reformation that Catholic views on the Bible were even contested (e.g. by Martin Luther).
- ▶ Interest in the study of prophecy lagged behind. It took until the early part of the 19th century before scholars interested in prophecy began to re-think this allegorical approach and return to the literal method of interpretation.

- ▶ There are many who still choose to view the Bible in this allegorical fashion today. The major difficulty with that approach is that objectivity may well be lost. One individual's conception of the symbolism behind a verse or series of verses may well be totally different than another person's... who is to say which one is correct? As will be shown, this method of interpretation leads to a far different view of many of the plain words of scripture than does the literal method.

Biblical Systems of Theology

- ▶ The two main systems that are prominent in Christianity today are *covenant theology* and *dispensational theology*. These varying methods of looking at the inter-relationship between God and man have surprisingly influenced the study of Israel and eschatology.
- ▶ Depending on which system is used to interpret the major eschatological books in the Bible, very different views of the end-times will result... including the future fate of Israel.

Covenant Theology

- ▶ Covenant Theology is a system that believes that God has formed essentially three different covenants with mankind (actually, there are some covenant theologians who only adhere to two *covenants*). The concept behind it is that the entire Holy Bible can be viewed as being the Word of God brought to humanity in the nature of these three covenants between God and man.

Covenant Theology

- ▶ **covenant of redemption:** This involves the *harmony* and *unity* of purpose of the Trinity from eternity past. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit agreed about bringing forth the works of redemption.
- ▶ **covenant of works:** God promised life if Adam and his progeny were totally obedient to him, but death would ensue if Adam disobeyed (i.e. sinned). Adam, of course, sinned. Since the destiny of Adam and Eve and their progeny was to be determined by their behavior, i.e. by their works, this second covenant is called the *covenant of works*.

Covenant of Grace

- ▶ **the covenant of grace:** This was given to Abraham, Moses, and David, and continued to be passed all the way down the line. With this third covenant, God provided redemption for his people through an incredibly gracious and loving gift. God condescended to send his only Son to earth as the perfect ransom for the elect. Jesus Christ is the mediator of this covenant.

Old Testament Faith

- ▶ In covenant theology, the belief is that the people in the Old Testament looked *forward* to the Messiah “of promise” to save them. In some inscrutable way, God gave each saved Old Testament saint at least some measure of knowledge of the coming Savior. Their faith in the coming Messiah was what provided their eternal salvation.
- ▶ The undergirding principal of covenant theology is that God’s central purpose is to provide salvation to his elect. This has been the plan of the Holy Trinity from eternity past.
- ▶ Although it is true that no one is saved by virtue of any of their own merit or works, everyone truly is still saved by works... the perfect works of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Works and Grace

- ▶ The intriguing point of this way of looking at God's plan for the ages is that all of the various covenants that God has made with Israel and the Church (e.g. Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, and the New Covenant) are looked at as being out-workings of either the covenant of *works* or *grace*. The *covenant of works* really only applied to Adam. Once he sinned, God instituted his *covenant of grace*. All of the promises that God made from Abraham to Moses to David and all the way to the New Covenant are all aspects of this covenant of grace. Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of all of these intermediate covenants of grace. Basically, everything in the Old Testament that happened after the "fall" was one aspect of this merciful covenant of grace. Therefore, this system of theology effectively simplifies biblical interpretation into two covenants... *works* and *grace*.

Covenant Views...

- ▶ the Church generally is looked upon as an extension of Israel in this system of theology. Therefore, when the nation and people of Israel reject God, the Church inherits their promises.
- ▶ stresses the centrality of Jesus Christ and God's grace in our salvation.
- ▶ Covenant Theology combines the historical-grammatical method of Scripture interpretation with the allegorical method when dealing with prophecy. Covenant theologians generally use the literal approach with most of the Scripture, but must interpret many of the promises God made to Israel in a spiritual sense.

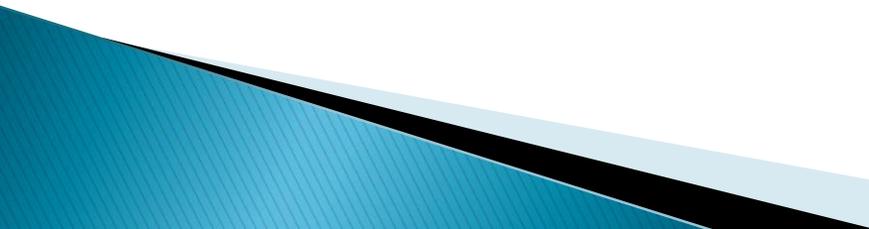
History

- ▶ Covenant Theology is of fairly recent origin. Most books on this topic say that this system came into being around the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
- ▶ Johannes Oecolampadius (1482–1531) may have been the first to develop a *detailed covenant theology* concept including the doctrine of the covenant of redemption, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.
- ▶ the system most commonly used by Reformed Churches to understand the Bible

Dispensationalism

- ▶ Fairly new method of interpretation
- ▶ John Darby (1800–1882) is considered the founder of the classic tenants of Dispensational theology. Later, his views were expounded in the classic Scofield Reference Bible. Men such as Lewis Chafer (founder of the Dallas Theological Seminary), John Walvoord and Charles Ryrie have added definition and refinement to this way of looking at God's dealings with mankind.

The Early Church

- ▶ There have been references to “dispensations” since the early Church. Justin Martyr, Irenaus, and Clement of Alexandria are just three of many examples of early Church Fathers who wrote concerning this concept that they found within the Bible.
 - ▶ The basic concept is that God has divided up the entire existence of mankind into several different dispensations or stewardships. That is, although God never changes, he does relate to mankind in different ways depending on the time–period in question.
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What is a dispensation?

- ▶ The original *Schofield Reference Bible* stated that a dispensation was “a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.”
- ▶ three distinguishing characteristics of a dispensation: a change in God’s governmental relationship with man, a resultant change in man’s responsibility, and a corresponding revelation to effect this change

Seven Dispensations

- ▶ Many people define seven different dispensations: Pre-Fall, Conscience, Government, Patriarchal, Mosaic, Church, Millennial. Some texts give these different names.
 - ▶ There is no set number of dispensations that must be adhered to in this system. There may be things that are instituted in one dispensation that carry-over or are modified in the next. Some promises given in one dispensation may not be fulfilled until another.
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The Dispensational Approach

- ▶ Dispensationalists use a *literal approach* to biblical interpretation.
- ▶ The *glory of God* is the basic underlying principle to understanding the Bible.
- ▶ Dispensationalists take the view that a better understanding of the glory of God can be seen if God is viewed in the variety of ways that can be noted when looking at his dealings with mankind and his creation in the various different dispensations from eternity past.

Need for Faith

- ▶ There was some confusion in the past concerning the belief of dispensationalists concerning the absolute requirement of faith for salvation in Old Testament times. This was most likely an outgrowth of an ill-advised comment by Schofield in the first edition of his Reference Bible. However, he later made clear that he recognized that a person is saved only through faith.
- ▶ Today, the teaching of dispensationalists and covenant theology concerning the necessity for faith for salvation is essentially the same... with one interesting caveat...
- ▶ covenant theology has adopted the view that everyone that is saved is saved through *faith in Jesus Christ*.
- ▶ Dispensationalists take a different view. They also believe that all people are saved by faith and faith alone. They also believe that it is the blood of Jesus sacrificed for the elect on the cross which results in the salvation of all the saints. However, they believe that God judges their faith based on the information that he has provided them.

- ▶ “For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his **eternal power and divine nature**--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)
- ▶ God mentions that no one will have an excuse for a lack of faith. However, no mention is made in the above verse that they will have been told of Jesus. God gave the Old Testament people a clear outline of what they were to believe in and trust in for their salvation. No mention was made of his Son Jesus coming to earth, living a perfect life, and then sacrificing himself on the cross for his elect... at least as far as can be gleaned from the Bible. That is the reason that dispensationalists take the view that everyone is saved by faith... but, faith that is placed into whatever God has made clear to each particular individual.
- ▶ Dispensationalists certainly recognize *Israel as separate from the Church.*

Other Systems of Theology

- ▶ Progressive Dispensationalism
- ▶ This view is seemingly an attempt at combining some of the aspects of covenant theology and dispensational theology. It really does not do much to help in determining the best way to interpret end-times prophecy. It adds nothing to the question of whether Israel remains distinct from the Church in God's end-times plan. Therefore, the details of this system will not be discussed.

Summation

- ▶ The basic concepts of covenant and dispensational theology have now been stated. Both are reasonable methods of looking at God's interaction with his creation. Both have much to recommend them in the eyes of their adherents. They both hold tenants that honor God and the saving work of his Son, Jesus. Interestingly, looking at only the tenants as outlined above, it is not that difficult to accept both as being perfectly good methods of viewing the Bible.

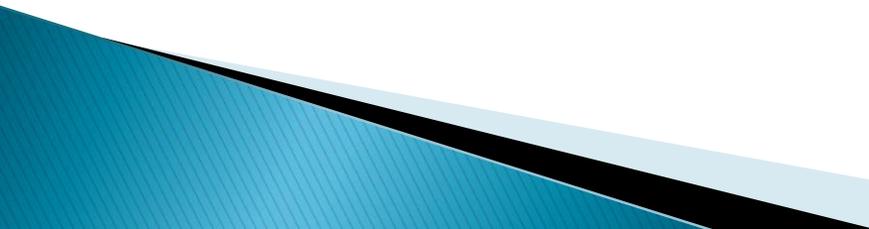
- ▶ Covenant Theology is simply a broader view of God's intentions and plans for his creation. The Holy Trinity has from eternity past had every intention of bringing his elect into a saving relationship with him through his Son. The history of the world and the Bible bring that into focus. One would think that the majority of dispensational theologians would agree with that conception, but, of course, they would break the Bible down a little further.

- ▶ God obviously dealt differently with Adam and Eve before the fall than he did with Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness. God gave the Law to Moses and expected the Israelites to live by it. By the time that Paul was teaching, he was telling his disciples to make sure that they did not trust in the Mosaic Law, but rather to trust in the Law written on their hearts. God also has given modern educated mankind much more information about his Son than he gave to Job and to those living in that ancient time. This is the simple concept behind dispensationalism.

Israel and the End-Times

- ▶ As we shall see a little later, to the covenant theologian Israel does not always mean the nation and people of Israel. In fact, the Church becomes the New Testament Israel. The people who believe this are bright, committed Christians and the reasons for their conclusion on this topic are accepted by millions. Therefore, these two views (on Israel and the Church **and the end-times**) and the reasons behind them will be presented later (when we discuss the Church, the Millennium, and the Tribulation) and the reader can decide which makes more sense to them.
- ▶ It is interesting and worthwhile exercise for any person to contemplate the system of theology that he/she believes is the best given his/her thoughtful interpretation of the Holy Bible.

Doctrine of the Church

- ▶ It may be surprising to the reader to know that covenant theologians and dispensationalists even differ on their definition of the Church of Jesus Christ. That makes three major areas where they differ in their interpretation of the Bible:
 - ▶ The future of the nation and people of Israel
 - ▶ The interpretation of end-times prophecies – including the Millennium
 - ▶ The definition of the Church
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Covenant Theology – Church

- ▶ Covenant theologians believe that the church is made up of the family of all true believers that have existed for all time. Of course, this would include those who followed God before Abraham (e.g. Noah), all of the Old Testament saints that came after Abraham, and all believers in Christ since Pentecost.
- ▶ Wayne Grudem says that this definition states that the church is made up of all people who are saved – no matter when their salvation occurred. Grudem notes that Christ died for everyone that has trusted in God for their salvation. Therefore, he states that the church is made up of *all people* who Christ died to redeem.

- ▶ Those with this concept of the church believe that Jesus added to his church in a major way on the day of Pentecost, but that his church actually existed prior to his incarnation and sacrificial death on the cross. They point to the fact that people of God in the Old Testament were referred to using the same Greek term, *ekklesia*, as is used for the church in the New Testament. For example...
- ▶ *“the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’”*
(Deut 4:10)

Ekklesia

- ▶ The Septuagint translates the word “gather” as being equal to the Greek term *ekklesia*. The author of Hebrews wrote that all present day Christians are surrounded by a great “*cloud of witnesses*.” (Heb. 12:1) Of course, this writer is pointing back to the great Old Testament saints. He exhorts the present day Christians to push on forward as we all work toward are future heavenly reward. He reminds them with the following words...
- ▶ *“you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.”* (Heb 12:22–24)

Dispensationalist concept of the Church

- ▶ Dispensational theologians believe that the church of Jesus Christ began at Pentecost. Let us take a look at their reasoning. Norman Geisler points out one important reason that he believes the origin took place at this later date is because the church that he is referencing is the New Testament church founded by Jesus. Specifically, this church is “an assembly of believers joined to Christ’s spiritual body by the Holy Spirit at the moment of regeneration when the individual places their faith in the Lord Jesus as their Savior.” (*Systematic Theology*, Norman Geisler, p. 1077)
- ▶ *“when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”* (Gal 4:4–5)

- ▶ The resurrection and ascension of Christ had to have occurred prior to a proper functioning of the church.
- ▶ Dr. Harold Wilmington continues along this line of reasoning when he states that “the principal evidence that the church began on the day of Pentecost concerns the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. The Lord declared that this particular and distinctive ministry of the Spirit was still future just before his ascension. On the day of Pentecost it first occurred. This places the believer in the body of Christ.”

Mystery of the Church

- ▶ One other reason mentioned to explain why it is proper to look upon the church as coming into existence at the day of Pentecost is the simple fact that it is spoken of as a “*mystery*” not to be revealed until New Testament times.
- ▶ *“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—² if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,³ how that by revelation He made known to me the **mystery** (as I have briefly written already,⁴ by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the **mystery of Christ**),⁵ which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:⁶ that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.”* (Eph 3:1–6)

Mystery continued...

- ▶ *“the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”* (Col 1:26–28)

- ▶ It does seem obvious that the gospel of Jesus Christ which reveals the good news that every man (both Jew and Gentile) have the opportunity to trust in Jesus for their salvation, was indeed, a mystery until New Testament times. I suggest that although a great deal is written about the coming Messiah in the Old Testament scriptures, the actual gospel message was indeed a “mystery” until revealed by Jesus. This is written about by Paul fairly often. Not only that, but the fact that the Holy Spirit would come and live within each new creation in Christ was also a mystery until it actually took place on the day of Pentecost.

The New Covenant

- ▶ God did reveal to Abraham and Jeremiah that one day in the future he would make a New Covenant that would include more than just the salvation of the Jews... Gentiles would be grafted into God's plan.
- ▶ *"Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country.....to a land that I will show you. ² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great..... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* (Gen 12:1-3)
- ▶ *"this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."* (Jer 31:33) Jeremiah reveals that God will one day make a New Covenant where his law will be written in people's hearts and minds... not simply on stone tablets.

The Church of Jesus Christ

- ▶ Although the verses above show God's plan of salvation, where does the idea come from that the church began at Pentecost? Many point to the words of Jesus...
- ▶ “on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”
(Matt 16:18)
- ▶ This verse surely suggests that Jesus planned to start (build) *his* church at sometime in the future... not to add to one already in existence.

- ▶ It is true that the word *ekklesia* is the same word used for the assembly of God's people in the Old Testament passages mentioned earlier. However, that certainly does not mean that all churches are the same. We cannot say that the present day Christian church is identical to the present day Mormon church, or the present day Islamic church. Of course, in this case, the *ekklesia* in the Old Testament and the *ekklesia* to be built by Jesus in the New Testament times both are made up of followers and believers by faith in God.

The Unique Church

- ▶ John McArthur has a comment to make on these verses in Matthew, “Christ calls it “My church,” emphasizing that He alone is its Architect, Builder, Owner, and Lord. The Greek word for church means “called out ones.” While God had, from the beginning of redemptive history, been gathering the redeemed by grace, the *unique church* He promised to build *begins at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit, by whom the Lord baptizes believers into His body – which is the church.*” (The McArthur Bible Commentary, John McArthur, p. 1155)

Chief Cornerstone

- ▶ *Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." (1 Peter 2:4–6)*

- ▶ *“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone,²¹ in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”* (Eph 2:19–22)

Kingdom vs. Church

- ▶ It is worthwhile to note that these verses are often used by covenant theologians to back their view that the church includes all Old Testament saints. They say that verse 2:19 says that the New Christian becomes a fellow citizen with the saints and other members that are already in the household of God. They believe that this means that Paul is saying that the church began with the first follower of God... that first Old Testament saint. Although, I surely will not be dogmatic on this point, I agree with others such as John McArthur who wrote the following to explain his reasoning on this section of verses, “God’s *kingdom* is made up of the people of all time who have trusted in him.” (ibid, p. 1688) All believers are members of God’s *kingdom* – God’s household. As noted earlier, McArthur does not believe that these Old Testament saints are included in the New Testament church – the church that has Jesus as its chief cornerstone. The apostles and prophets spoken of in the next sentence are the New Testament apostles and prophets.

- ▶ “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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) Jesus purchased the church via his sacrificial death and resurrection.
- ▶ “*He* (God the Father) *put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,* ²³ *which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*” (Eph 1:22–23) The church is the body of Christ. Therefore, it must have come into existence after his incarnation.

- ▶ *“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many.”* (1 Cor 12:12-14)
- ▶ Here we see that the church is looked at as a body. Other verses note that Jesus is the head of this body. Christians make up the remainder of the body...

Summary

- ▶ Covenant theologians say the church must include all believers in God... all saved men and women. Dispensationalists say that the New Testament strongly points to the church as being brought into existence on the day of Pentecost... and that the set of believers in the church they are referring to require the death and resurrection of Jesus and the indwelling of each believer by the Holy Spirit. This, obviously, did not occur until Pentecost. In one true sense, this “church” is just a subset of the covenant “church.”

The Church is visible and invisible

- ▶ “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His.” (2 Tim 2:19) The invisible church is the church as God sees it. The visible church is the church as believers see it.

The Church is local and universal

- ▶ Any size body of Christians who meet to worship God can be referred to as a church. It can be a small group meeting in a home. Of course, it can be a typical local church in a city. The word “church” can also be used to refer to the entire community of Christians throughout the world.
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Metaphors for the church

- ▶ **The Body of Christ (Jesus is the head of this body)**
“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free.” (1 Cor. 12:12–13)
- ▶ **Bride of Christ (Jesus, of course, is the groom)**
“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph 5:25–27)

- ▶ The Sheep and the Shepherd (Christ) *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”* (John 10:11)
- ▶ The Living Stones and the Chief Cornerstone (Christ) *“you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”* (1 Peter 2:5)
- ▶ A Royal or Holy Priesthood (Jesus is the great high priest) *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”* (1 Peter 2:9)

The Purpose of the Church

- ▶ To love God
 - ▶ To worship God
 - ▶ To glorify God through...
 - Fruit bearing
 - Giving
 - Preaching
 - Witnessing
 - Trusting God's Word
 - Suffering
 - Prayer and praise
- 

- ▶ To evangelize the world
 - ▶ To baptize believers and celebrate the Lord's Supper
 - ▶ To instruct believers
 - ▶ To discipline believers
 - ▶ To edify and exhort believers
 - ▶ To provide fellowship
 - ▶ To provide help for others, including believers
- 

Church Government

- ▶ **The Congregational View:** The Baptists, Congregational, and many Independent churches use this form of government. It is characterized by placing the authority of rule with the members of the local church. The pastor serves as the only elder. Deacons are then chosen to help him in carrying out all of the duties of the church.
- ▶ **The Presbyterian View:** Each local church elects elders to represent them. Reformed and Presbyterian churches have this form of government. Some elders are involved only in the governing of the church while others, such as the pastor, are involved in preaching, teaching, and administering ordinances.

Church Govt. Cont.

- ▶ **The Episcopal View:** This view has been adopted by the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Methodist, and Eastern Orthodox churches. It is a government led by bishops. These bishops are assisted by deacons and priests. Bishops make the decisions on the bishops who will succeed them.
- 

Officers and Ordinances

- ▶ **The Officers of the Church:** Apostles, Elders (aka Bishops or Pastors in the New Testament), and Deacons. I will not take the time to discuss the various qualifications or duties of these officers of the church. The New Testament does go into reasonably good detail regarding these offices.
- ▶ **The Ordinances of the Church:**
 - **The Lord's Supper** – discussed in another section
 - **Baptism** – discussed in another section

The Future of the Church

- ▶ The Church of Christ has a glorious future. One day in the future, all those that are in the true (invisible) church will be raptured as they receive their glorified bodies (both those already dead and those still alive on earth). All those in the church will one day appear before Christ at the Bema Judgment. At some wonderful time in the future, all church members will enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb with Jesus Christ. When the New Heaven and New Earth have been established by God, all those that make up the church/kingdom (i.e. in this case, I am referring to all believers of all time) will live and reign for eternity as co-heirs with Christ.

Water Baptism

- ▶ There are two ceremonies that Jesus commanded his followers perform – water baptism and the Lord’s Supper. There is a difference of opinion between Roman Catholics and Protestants on the significance of both of these ceremonies.
- ▶ The Catholics refer to them as sacraments and believe that, in and of themselves, participation in the ceremony of both conveys *grace* to those involved. A second viewpoint, called the Protestant paedobaptist view, states that infant baptism is analogous to infant circumcision in Old Testament days.

- ▶ There is even a third group of Christians – Southern Baptists are representative of this group – that believe that baptism should be saved for only those individuals who can make a conscious decision to accept Jesus as Savior... this excludes infants. This decision should rightly be followed by what they refer to as “believer’s baptism.”

Meaning of Water Baptism

- ▶ The Greek word used for baptism is baptizo. This word is translated as “*to plunge, dip, or immerse.*” Hence, classically, a person being baptized would have been immersed under water.
- ▶ This makes sense if one thinks of the logical manner in which John would have practiced baptizing people in the Jordan River. It also makes good sense when one thinks about the symbolism of the act

The Symbolism of Water Baptism

- ▶ The book of Romans puts it nicely, “*do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*” (Romans 6:3–6)
- ▶ Christians are to be “*buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*” (Col 2:12)

Symbolism

- ▶ Obviously, the picture painted in the verses above require baptism by immersion... not just sprinkling. For those believing that this ordinance is symbolic of dying and having one's old, sinful body buried, only to rise out of the grave in a brand new body, full immersion certainly makes sense.
- ▶ It should still be fine to express this symbolism by sprinkling... it just requires more imagination.
- ▶ Another symbolic aspect of full immersion is that it demonstrates that the new Christian has his/her sins washed away *completely* by their faith in Jesus.
- ▶ Finally, many see in the full immersion of the body, the image of going down into the waters of judgment and death. Upon rising out of the water, the new convert realizes how he/she is now alive again because of what Christ has done on the cross.

Who should be baptized?

- ▶ Baptism is meant only for Christians. Sometimes it is referred to as believer's baptism in many churches.
- ▶ *“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized.”* (Acts 2:41)
- ▶ *“when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.”* (Acts 8:12)
- ▶ *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* (Gal 3:27)

Infant baptism

- ▶ There is no specific mention of infant baptism in the Bible.
 - ▶ Roman Catholics believe that infants must be baptized as, in their theology, baptism is necessary for salvation... i.e. the act of baptism causes regeneration. It removes the penalty for original sin.
- 

Baptism for the Catholics

- ▶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church on infant baptism:* “Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth.”

Luther has a different idea

- ▶ The Reformation began because Luther adamantly defended the proposition that salvation was by faith and faith alone. There was no place for any type of work at all in providing salvation to anyone. There was nothing that a person could add to the finished work of Jesus on the cross... except to receive his free gift of eternal life by faith. For this reason, the Protestant church rejects the value of infant baptism *as a mechanism to bring salvation.*
- ▶ *“a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”* (Gal 2:16)

Protestant concept of baptism

- ▶ I have already mentioned the fact that many Protestant denominations, including many Methodist, Presbyterian, and Reformed churches believe that infants of believers should be baptized. Their reasoning is that infant baptism is the outward sign that the baby is entering a family that has a covenant relationship with Jesus. It is analogous to the Old Testament practice of infant circumcision. Neither of these ordinances provided salvation for the baby, but they both indicated that the infant would be raised with the intent that the baby would, prayerfully and hopefully, come into a saving relationship with Christ.

Christening

- ▶ It probably is worth mentioning that many Protestant churches do provide for a beautiful ceremony that has a similar purpose as the paedobaptist's infant baptism. Yet, it is not a baptism nor is it called that. This is referred to as a **Dedication** or **Christening**.

The Necessity of baptism

- ▶ **Catholic Catechism on baptism:** “Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis*), and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: ‘Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word.’“
- ▶ *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*
(Eph 2:8–9)

- ▶ Cornelius and those with him were saved by the preaching of Peter *prior* to being baptized. “*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.* [hence, they were Christians at that moment] *and those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”* [Obviously, baptism came after they had become saved] *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”* (Acts 10:44–48)

- ▶ Roman Catholics and those in the Church of Christ have at times referenced the following verses from 1 Peter to support their idea that baptism is required for salvation...
“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 3:18–21)

- ▶ The fact is that this type/antitype example given by Peter shows just the opposite. Just as Noah and his family were not saved in any way by the water they found themselves surrounded by, but, instead, they were saved by their faith in God... Christians also are not saved by the water in the baptismal (or river) but are also saved by the faith they have placed in Jesus Christ... and this faith gives them a good conscience toward God.

Death Bed Salvation

- ▶ One more blatant example of how baptism is not required for salvation was provided by Jesus while he was on the cross. Recall how he told one of the criminals at his side, “*And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*” (Luke 23:43) Quite obviously, this man was not baptized, but he did go to heaven.

The Lord's Supper

- ▶ On the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus gathered his disciples around him and together they took part in the Jewish annual Passover Feast. Not coincidentally, this feast was established over one thousand years earlier when the Jews were about to leave Egypt.
- ▶ It was most definitely a “*type*” of what was to happen to Jesus that night and the next day. Dake’s Study Bible defines a type as “a preordained representation wherein certain persons, events, and institutions of the O.T. stand for corresponding persons [almost invariably, Jesus], events, and institutions of the N.T. Types are pictures or object lessons by which God has taught his redemptive plan. They are a shadow of things to come.”
- ▶ Other names for this sacrament include: the Eucharist, Communion, and The Lord’s Table.

- ▶ Jesus instituted this ordinance while they were eating their Passover meal... *“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 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)

Purpose of the Lord's Supper

- ▶ It is a reminder of the wonderful fact that Jesus went to the cross and gave his body and blood to pay the penalty for our sins. Only Christians are to participate in the Lord's Supper... and as Christians we can celebrate our salvation granted to us by the grace of God and the atonement provided us through Christ.
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Bread and Wine

- ▶ The Roman Catholic View
 - ▶ The Lutheran View
 - ▶ The Reformed View
 - ▶ Memorial View
- 

Significance of the Lord's Supper

- ▶ The breaking of the bread should remind us of the breaking, torture, and flogging of the body of Jesus just before and while on the cross. The wine symbolizes the shedding of the blood of Jesus that was required to provide for the forgiveness of sins of those who trust in him.
- ▶ Those who partake of the Lord's Supper are proclaiming their belief in Jesus as Savior and Lord. They are symbolically showing that they identify with the necessary beliefs of all Christians. *“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.”* (1 Cor 11:26)

Who should participate in the Lord's Supper?

- ▶ Only those Christians who have examined themselves and find that they are living in a manner worthy of a Christian should take part. Otherwise, trouble could be forthcoming as Paul told the Corinthians...
- ▶ *“whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰ For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. ³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.”* (1 Cor 11:27–31)

Frequency to Celebrate

- ▶ There is no set frequency mentioned in the Bible for Churches to administer the Lord's Supper. In early New Testament times, this ordinance was typically celebrated at every meeting. Later, it was observed weekly as a rule. Today, each church should set their own schedule... but, I believe that most churches that I have attended partake in this ordinance far too infrequently.

The End Times – The Rapture

- ▶ *“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”⁵⁵ “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (1 Cor 15:51–55)*
- ▶ 1 Thess. 4:13–17

Old Testament Saints

- ▶ Let me just add that there is a difference of opinion on when the Old Testament saints will receive their glorified bodies. Many think that since they may not, technically, be members of the Church (when the Church is defined as those believers who trusted in Jesus and have been baptized in the Holy Spirit by Jesus since Pentecost), they will receive their glorified bodies right after Jesus returns at the Second Coming. In any case, the Old Testament saints will receive their resurrection bodies at the Rapture or shortly thereafter.
- ▶ It does seem to be true that the tribulation saints (those who are martyred because of their faith in Jesus during the Great Tribulation) will receive their glorified bodies just after the Second Coming.

- ▶ There is a difference of opinion as to when the Rapture will take place. Let me briefly explain the differing viewpoints on this issue. First, let us look at those views taken by scholars who believe in a Great Tribulation followed by a literal Millennial Kingdom.
 - ▶ **Post-Tribulation Rapture**
 - ▶ **Mid-Tribulation or Pre-Wrath Rapture**
 - ▶ **Pre-Tribulation Rapture**
- 

- ▶ There are some who do not believe that there will be an actual 1000 year Millennial Kingdom. These folks typically believe that when Christ comes again (The Second Coming), He will immediately set up the New Heaven and New Earth. Typically, theologians who take this view do not believe that there is any difference between the verses others see as distinguishing between the Rapture and the Second Coming.
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Conclusion

- ▶ The Rapture will be a glorious time for believers. Jesus will come for his Church and call them up (both those already dead and those still alive) to meet him in the clouds. It is a separate event from the Second Coming. The Rapture is imminent... it could happen at any time. For those who wonder about that point, I suggest the reading of my book, *Fifty Signs of the End Times, Are We Living in the Last Days?* There are no additional events that need take place prior to the Rapture... none. The Rapture will be followed by the Second Coming.

Doctrine of the Second Coming

- ▶ There is little disagreement among theologians about the fact that Jesus will come again. He certainly will. Biblically, there is no doubt. The character and honesty of Jesus requires his return to earth one day. He told us that he will come again. Not only that, but he promised one day to rule the world as the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. He surely did not do that on his First Coming. He will when he comes again.

- ▶ The actual Second Coming I am speaking of in this section is when he will set his feet on the Mount of Olives, quickly defeat Satan and the Antichrist, and then set up his Millennial Kingdom. This will occur at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation. He will appear at that time in order to defeat the Antichrist and his army at the infamous battle of Armageddon... or...
- ▶ Amillennialists believe that this Second Coming will result in Christ setting up the final heaven and earth.

Christ comes again

- ▶ *“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.¹⁷*

Christ Defeats Satan and the Antichrist

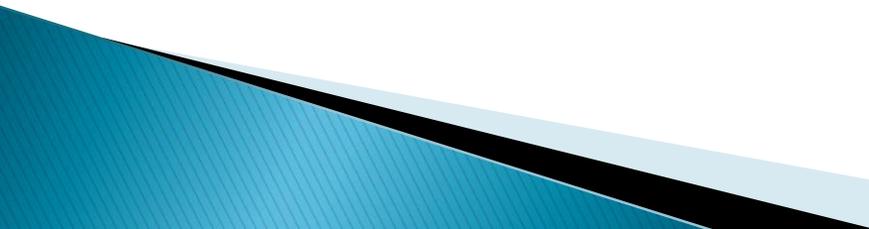
- ▶ *And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse.” (Rev 19:11–16,19–21)*

- ▶ *"Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, ¹⁵ to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."* (Jude 1:14–15)
- ▶ *"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself."* (John 14:2–3)

Summary

- ▶ The Second Coming of Christ will occur one day in the future, preceded by the Rapture.
- ▶ This will result in the saints (followers of Christ) gaining their permanent glorified bodies (at the Rapture).
- ▶ The saints will return with Christ to live and reign with him in heaven and earth (with or without an intervening 1000 year Millennial Kingdom here on earth).
- ▶ Christ will judge his followers at the Bema Judgment Seat and, later judge the unrepentant sinners at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Doctrine of the Tribulation

- ▶ The Tribulation is still another event that is looked at differently by those with different eschatological views. Let me mention the four major ways that this time period has been looked at over the centuries:
 - ▶ **Preterist view:** There are some who believe that the Tribulation spoken of in the Bible already took place during the first century.
 - ▶ **Post-millennial view of the Tribulation**
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- ▶ **Amillennial view of the Tribulation:** The world will enter a period of increased tribulation with the appearance of the Antichrist just before the Second Coming. The Rapture and the Second Coming will take place at essentially the same time... the former just prior to the latter. There will be no actual 1000 year Millennial Kingdom.
- ▶ **The Pre-millennial view of the Tribulation:** A very short time after the Rapture, God will allow for a seven year period of marked Tribulation on earth at the end of this age. The last half of this Tribulation (i.e. the second 3 ½ years) will be an intensified period of suffering during which time God will really pour out his wrath on the people of the earth and the earth itself.

The Great Tribulation

- ▶ *“Then he [the Antichrist] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week [seven years]; but in the middle of the week [after 3 ½ years] he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”*
(Dan 9:27)
- ▶ *“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.”* (Matt 24:21–22)

Summary

- ▶ I strongly believe that the last viewpoint is the correct conception of the end-times Great Tribulation. The past sixty years has had so many prophecies come to fruition that relate to the Second Coming and the coming Antichrist, the only view of the Tribulation that makes very good sense is the pre-millennial view... in my opinion. Not only that but that is the only view that points to an actual 1000 year Millennial Kingdom on earth... and, as is pointed out in the doctrine of the Millennial Kingdom, there is strong evidence for an actual Kingdom on earth – with Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords – to follow the Great Tribulation. Of course, obviously there are many who disagree with me on this point.

Doctrine of the Millennial Kingdom

- ▶ All throughout the Holy Bible, God gives people the hope of a future kingdom that will be ruled by the beneficent Messiah. This future hope is noted by virtually all of the Old Testament prophets, many of the apostles and even the Messiah, himself... Jesus. The people of Israel were looking ahead to the day that their Messiah would come and usher in a wonderful new Messianic Kingdom on earth. Isaiah and Ezekiel wrote extensively on this topic as they described the wonders of this time and place.

- ▶ The Messiah did indeed come. Upon his First Advent, Jesus did bring in a new kingdom. However, it was not the type that the Old Testament saints had come to expect. He spoke to the Pharisees about a kingdom that would be within the believer. He also spoke frequently of another type of kingdom... one that would be material and in the future. That one sounded much more like the kingdom described to and by the prophets of old. The book of *The Revelation* also seemingly points to a future one thousand year Messianic Kingdom... if taken literally. However, there still is a mystery surrounding the exact nature and timing of this future kingdom. There is certainly a difference of opinion on just when this kingdom will appear and what it will be like.

Three Concepts of the Millennial Kingdom

- ▶ A listing of the basic concepts of each kingdom idea will be presented.
 - ▶ The reasons why that view has been accepted by some will be given.
 - ▶ A few of the main objections that others have to that particular conception of the kingdom will also be pointed out.
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Amillennialism.

- ▶ The whole idea behind amillennialism is that Christ's Kingdom is a spiritual Kingdom. There will be no actual Millennial Kingdom on earth. John Walvoord, a well respected prophecy scholar, defines amillennialism as follows: *"Satan is conceived as being bound at the first coming of Christ. The present age between the first and second comings is the fulfillment of the millennium. There will be no more millennium than there is now,.....the eternal state immediately follows the second coming of Christ."* (*The Millennial Kingdom*, p. 6)
- ▶ Reformed or Realized Amillennialism – kingdom in heaven only
- ▶ Many people who hold to the amillennial view actually do believe that this *spiritual* kingdom is currently here on earth.

Satan is currently bound

- ▶ Amillenarians generally agree that “the thousand years [is] a symbolic number, spanning the entire “church age.”
- ▶ Regarding the binding of Satan, the idea is that Satan cannot deceive God’s people with relative impunity as he did before the Messiah came. Satan, they say, was bound by Christ at Jesus’s First Advent. This binding means that Satan cannot deceive the nations until he is released at the end of the millennial age. He is still allowed to create some havoc on the earth, but he is not allowed to keep the Holy Spirit from convicting some people to come to Christ. So in that way, he is bound.

- ▶ The amillennial view of theology uses an allegorical approach to Bible prophecy. These theologians see the world we live in now as the Millennial Kingdom of God. It is just that the reign of the saints is in heaven (or in the *hearts* of the saints on earth).
- ▶ They do not believe that there will be a final fulfillment of God's covenants with the nation of Israel as the Church has become the spiritual Israel since the time of Christ. Apparently, those promises meant for Israel are being fulfilled in a mysterious, allegorical fashion even now. This is the view of covenant theology which is shared by almost all adherents of amillennialism.

Millennium vs. Heaven

- ▶ There are many promises of blessing to come in the Millennium noted throughout the Bible, both in the Old and New Testament. These do not seem to be coming to fruition on the earth today. It is difficult for many, especially in modern times, to believe that we are currently living in the beautiful thousand year reign of Jesus as portrayed in the Bible, especially as described in Ezekiel, Isaiah and The Revelation. For most Christians this sure does not feel like the promised Millennial Kingdom read about in the Scriptures.

- ▶ Those accepting this amillennial view generally believe that the biblical chapters that many take to be a description of the Millennial Kingdom on earth are actually a description of the eternal New Heaven and New Earth... the eternal residence of all those who love God.
- ▶ As will be shown a little later, Premillennialists believe that the eternal Heaven and Earth will be fashioned by God only *after* the completion of the thousand year Millennium.
- ▶ One last point should be mentioned concerning this particular controversy. If it can be shown that there are distinct differences between the Millennial Kingdom and the New Heaven and New Earth, the evidence shifts strongly to those holding a premillennial view of the Kingdom.

Postmillennialism

- ▶ The second view of the Millennial Kingdom to be discussed here was not really developed until a minister from England named Daniel Whitby (1638–1726) came on the scene.
 - ▶ The belief among historians is that some became receptive to this view mainly because of the many advancements that began with the Reformation.
 - ▶ Unfortunately, many horrible events (WWI, WWII, massive famines and pestilence), and the wholesale slaughter of so many cultures (e.g. the Jewish Holocaust, ethnic cleansings of Somalia, Darfur, Bosnia, etc.) in the twentieth century have put a marked damper on this idea.
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- ▶ “Postmillennialism expects the proclaiming of the Spirit–blessed gospel of Jesus Christ to win the vast majority of human beings to salvation in the present age. Increasing gospel success will gradually produce a time in history [which they identify with the ‘millennium’] prior to Christ’s return in which faith, righteousness, peace, and prosperity will prevail in the affairs of people and of nations. After an extensive era of such conditions the Lord will return visibly, bodily, and in great glory, ending history with the general resurrection and the great judgment of all humankind. Hence, our system is postmillennial in that the Lord’s return occurs after an era of ‘millennial’ conditions” (Gentry, Kenneth)

Types of Postmillennialism

- ▶ Biblical – the Holy Spirit will work in *individuals* to such an affective degree that someday there will be enough excellent Christians to bring in a Utopian Society
- ▶ Liberal – puts focus on society (like New Age religion). It is totally unbiblical.

Biblical Postmillennialism

- ▶ The Millennium will end with the return of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ The thousand years noted in Rev. 20 is not to be taken literally – instead, it is a long period of time between the First and Second Advents of Jesus when the Church will be progressing gloriously towards its ultimate state reached just prior to the return of Jesus.
- ▶ The Millennial Kingdom is not a literal, earthly kingdom. It is spiritual... i.e. Christ living within the hearts and souls of each Christian.
- ▶ With an ever increasing percentage of Christians in the world, and their ever increasing move towards sanctification, eventually the world will reach a time of spiritual and moral excellence. It will not be perfect as there will still be some unbelievers. However, it will be so close that it will be a glorious world and will be prepared for Jesus to come again to this world filled and dominated by Christianity.
- ▶ Israel is not distinct from the Church at this time in history.
- ▶ Since this view believes that we are currently living in the Millennium, Satan is bound. Therefore, Satan cannot keep Christians from marching on to the excellent, Christianized world that awaits.
- ▶ They take many prophetic passages as allegory – as required to suit their needs in interpretation.

- ▶ Interestingly, although they see the world increasingly improving until it reaches the point where Jesus will come again, it does believe in a final revolt by Satan yielding a sudden increase in evil just before Jesus comes back.
- ▶ Jesus will judge all mankind upon his return. There will be a general resurrection that will include everyone at that particular time. Believers and angels will enter eternal bliss in heaven; demons and unbelievers will enter hell where they will experience everlasting punishment.
- ▶ Interestingly, this view has many similarities to that of amillennialism. The main difference is that this view sees the world getting more and more Christianized due to the workings of the Holy Spirit within the hearts of believers as we approach the Second Coming. In fact, it is this Christianization of the world that eventually will bring Jesus back to earth to claim his Kingdom, so to speak.

Premillennialism

- ▶ The view of the early Church concerning the Millennial Kingdom parallels that of most modern day prophecy teachers and writers. In the first century after the ascension of Christ, the Holy Spirit was actively working within many of the apostles (e.g. Paul, Peter, John) in the writings that would eventually become the New Testament.
 - ▶ Most of the early Church Fathers had intimate contact with either these men or men who were taught by these men. One would expect their ideas concerning the interpretation of the Scriptures to be correct
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Concept believed by early church

- ▶ Author Charles Feinberg once wrote, “Every book that we have read and studied on the question of the millennium, whether it was favorable or unfavorable to the doctrine, or whether it gave full force and value to the testimony or tried to dissipate its implications, admitted freely that the entire Church of the first three centuries was premillennial, almost to a man. (Charles Feinberg, *Premillennialism or Amillennialism*, 1961)

Church Fathers

- ▶ Ignatius (bishop of Antioch), Papias (bishop of Hierapolis), Justin Martyr, Irenaeus (bishop of Lyons), and Tertullian. For example, Papias wrote, “There will be a Millennium after the resurrection from the dead, when the personal reign of Jesus will be established on this earth.”
- ▶ Justin Martyr wrote, “But I and whatsoever Christians are orthodox in all things do know that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, and a thousand years in the city of Jerusalem, built adorned, and enlarged, according as Ezekiel, Isaiah, and other prophets have promised...”

- ▶ With some of the events of the last sixty years, especially the amazing fact that Israel once again has become a nation – seemingly in a miraculous fashion – Bible believing theologians have once again been brought back to realizing the total veracity of the Scriptures. No matter how unlikely something seems (such as Israel becoming a nation again), if the Bible says it will happen, it will happen.

Modern Day Prophecy Scholars

- ▶ This premillennial view of prophecy in this current age is held by teachers such as Hal Lindsey, John Walvoord, Perry Stone, Tim LaHaye, John MacArthur, and Thomas Ice, and was held by the late Grant Jeffrey.
- ▶ This is the viewpoint that teaches that Jesus Christ will return to earth *before* the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom of God. The Millennial Kingdom will be a literal thousand year period of time on earth during which Christ will live and reign over mankind as a perfect benevolent king.
- ▶ Virtually all *dispensationalists* take this point of view on the end-times.

- ▶ We should recall that those who disagree with this view believe that when Jesus returns He will set up the final heaven and earth right away. They also state that the verses in the Bible that describe a beautiful future age are describing the *final* heaven and earth – not an intervening Millennial Kingdom. However, as will be shown below, the Bible describes a wonderful future age that is markedly better than any age ever experienced on this earth, but still this time is well short of what the final heaven and earth will offer. For instance...

- ▶ *“No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³ They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. ²⁴ “It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” Says the LORD.” (Isaiah 65:20–25)*

Millennium – nice, not perfect

- ▶ Life will be very nice during the Millennium, but babies will still be born... and deaths will still occur. Certainly, there will be no death once the final heaven and earth are created by God. Here is another verse that shows that this time will not be totally perfect...
- ▶ *“with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.”* (Isaiah 11:4)

- ▶ *“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁷ And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. ¹⁸ If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.²⁰ In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. ²¹ Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.” (Zech 14:8–11,16–21)*

- ▶ The Bible shows that in the Kingdom Age, Jesus will reign to the ends of the earth. That has not taken place yet.
- ▶ *For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”*
(Isaiah 2:2–4)

- ▶ There are plenty of other reasons why so many believe in an actual Millennial Kingdom. I have listed and discussed most of these reasons in my book, *A Comprehensive Analysis of Prophecy, Past, Present, and Future*. This book goes into great detail on all aspects of eschatology (end-times prophecy). As I mentioned earlier, it can be read and downloaded on my web site, www.nicholsbiblestudies.com.
- ▶ One other reason that there are so many that believe in a future Millennium is that the Bible says that Satan will be bound during that time:
- ▶ *“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.”* (Rev 20:1–3)

- ▶ *“Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?’”* (Acts 5:3)
- ▶ *“The god of this age (Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”* (2 Cor 4:4)
- ▶ These verses are from a period of time after the Lord’s sacrificial death... and, therefore, after Satan would have supposedly been prohibited from tormenting humans (due to his defeat at the cross and, supposedly, his resultant immediate binding). As the verses above (and many others in the epistles) point out, Satan is very active on the earth today.

- ▶ *“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

- ▶ *7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”*
(Rev 20:4–10)

Amillennial view of this time

- ▶ Kim Riddlebarger, a well-respected amillennialist believes that the thousand years is just a symbolic number; it really just relates to the fact that this period will span the entire church age. Riddleberger, and others with his view, simply refuse to believe that God meant the reader to accept the above verses as being a time period of 1000 years. It is not difficult to see the problem that premillennialists have with his interpretation. Of course, anyone can say that one thousand years does not mean one thousand years, but, there is no reason to think that this is one of the rare instances in the Bible where God did not mean what He said when He spoke of a number. It is quite obvious that a millennium is 1,000 years in length.

- ▶ The only way of getting around this is to call upon more allegory in one's interpretation of the Bible. This is not a problem of consequence for those adhering to the amillennial viewpoint. The millennium is just a figure of speech, they say. It should be looked upon as just a very long period of time. What is the evidence for this position? None.
- ▶ I have just reviewed a few of the many reasons that so many current Bible scholars now adhere to a literal Millennial Kingdom that will be ushered into existence by Jesus right after his Second Coming. Of course, there are a few other views as noted. No one should be adamant about this topic as it is not critical to a correct understanding of the gospel and the path to salvation.

Doctrine of Death and the resurrection

- ▶ The Bible tells us that everyone will one day die and then face one judgment or another. *“it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment”* (Heb 9:27)
- ▶ Although there will be an exception for those who are raptured, this truism is essentially inclusive of all humanity. There is a great deal of difference for Christians who die vs. non-believers. Christians simply pass from this life into a much better life, immediately.
- ▶ Non-believers pass into a much worse existence... but, both are still alive, in a spiritual existence initially.

- ▶ *“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”* (2 Cor 5:6–8)
- ▶ *“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²² But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”* (Phil 1:21–23)

- ▶ *“through death he (Jesus) might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”* (Heb 2:14–15)
- ▶ When we die, our soul leaves our body. Rachel’s death is described in the book of Genesis in the following manner, *“as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin.”* (Gen 35:18)
- ▶ As James said, *“the body apart from the spirit is dead.”* (James 2:26)

- ▶ There are many Old Testament verses that speak of souls living on in heaven after the death of the body (e.g. Enoch, Elijah, Job, David, ...). Let me just mention one...
- ▶ David speaks to God about his future... *“For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. ¹¹ You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*
(Psalms 16:10–11)

- ▶ Jesus told the thief on the cross, *“And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’”* (Luke 23:43)
- ▶ *“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.*” (Luke 23:46)
- ▶ *“And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’”⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”* (Acts 7:59–60)



- ▶ When an unbeliever dies, his/her soul immediately leaves the body of that person and enters into some form of eternal punishment. In Old Testament days, they were said to go to a place of torment in hades (sheol). They may still go there upon death today, or to some other similar place. This subject is not clearly discussed in the Bible. However, later, their soul will join with their resurrected body and then they will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. At that time, the eternal fate of each unbeliever will be meted out by Jesus. Their eternal home will be in hell.

How should a Christian look at death?

- ▶ Eventually, Christians have total victory over death... but, during this lifetime on earth, God plans to use disease and death in our quest for sanctification. There are many lessons to be learned as we deal with disease and death. Both are our enemies.
- ▶ Paul wrote to the Corinthians that, “*The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*” (1 Cor 15:26)... and it is.
- ▶ One glorious day we will all be able to sing out with Paul, “*When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"* (1 Cor 15:54–55)

- ▶ Christians should look at life as Paul suggested... as if it were a marathon race... *“let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.”* (Heb 12:1–2)
- ▶ *“it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me.”*
(Phil 1:20–22)

- ▶ We need to remember as we struggle at times during our life here on earth... especially as death approaches, that God has plans for us.
- ▶ Paul reminds us all that “*we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*” (Romans 8:16–17)

Old Testament Saints

- ▶ There are basically two ideas put forth as to where the Old Testament saints went while waiting for Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection. One group reasons that they would have gone to a section of hades known as paradise – a very nice place, indeed – because Jesus had not yet paid for their sins. After Jesus died and rose from the dead as the first fruits of salvation, all of these saints would have immediately followed him into heaven.

- ▶ *“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.”* (1 Cor 15:22–23)
- ▶ *“grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”* (Eph 4:7–8)

- ▶ Many with this view also point to the story Jesus told in Luke 16 concerning Father Abraham, Lazarus and the rich man (who is mentioned to be in hades). Those with this view of where the Old Testament saints waited until Jesus came, say that Abraham and Lazarus were located in the paradise section of hades.
- ▶ On the other hand, there are many theologians who are convinced that these Old Testament saints did have their souls go directly to heaven after death. They believe that Luke 16 tells the story of a conversation between heaven (where Abraham and Lazarus were) and hades (the abode of the rich man)... not between paradise and hades.

- ▶ Although these scholars do believe that Christ was the first fruits for all those that followed him (i.e. the Church), this did not include the Old Testament saints... at least with respect to their souls. Jesus was indeed the first fruit of all when speaking of **bodily resurrection**. However, he was not the first to go to heaven from earth as far as a person's spirit is concerned... according to this view.

- ▶ The fact is that these two groups of scholars simply differ on their interpretation of certain equivocal verses in the Bible. For example, take this Old Testament verse from Ecclesiastes, “*the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.*” (Eccl 12:7–8)
- ▶ Those who believe that the saints in Old Testament times had their souls go directly to heaven, see this section of scripture as evidence for that point of view. Others think that these two verses say that the spirit indeed goes to God after death... but, after Christ was the first fruit of the resurrection of all spirits.

- ▶ Everyone agrees that all believers' souls end up in a wonderful place immediately after death... in paradise or heaven.
 - ▶ After Christ's resurrection, all agree that every Christian that has passed from this life to the next now resides in heaven in spirit form.
 - ▶ Third, all non-believers' souls who have ever died now reside in hades or a similar place of torment... they will be given their physical bodies and be banished to hell after the Great White Throne Judgment.
- 

Is there a purgatory?

- ▶ Although Roman Catholics believe in a place called Purgatory, there is no mention of it in the Bible. However, in the Apocrypha they find some support for this theory. The Apocrypha is not part of scripture for many good reasons... primarily because of errors noted in it and the fact that it suggests certain doctrines that are contrary to all of the teaching of the Bible. The major verse used to support the idea of purgatory is... *“Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.”* (2 Maccabees 12:46)

The Resurrection Body (glorified body)

- ▶ *“we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.”*
(1 Thess 4:15–17)
- ▶ *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”*
(1 Cor 15:51–53)

- ▶ Jesus also spoke of all the dead, not just the believers...“an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”
(John 5:28–29)

Old Testament Saints

- ▶ There are many verses in the Old Testament that reveal that the idea of bodily resurrection was known in those times too. For example, Job said, *“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.²⁶ And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,²⁷ whom I shall see for myself.”* (Job 19:25–27)
- ▶ *“Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise.”* (Isaiah 26:19)

More on the glorified body...

- ▶ When our Lord returns, he will initially rapture his saints into the air. As noted a little earlier, some believe that he will then take these saints, with their newly acquired glorified bodies, right back into heaven where they will remain throughout the Great Tribulation... then return with Jesus to observe him defeat Satan and the Antichrist at Armageddon. That is the pre-tribulation rapture viewpoint. The post-tribulation view of the rapture essentially combines the Rapture with the Second Coming... the Rapture will occur just before Jesus descends back to earth to win the battle of Armageddon. In both of these views, the saints will then enter into the Millennial Kingdom while “clothed” in their glorified bodies.

- ▶ Anyone coming to Christ during the Millennium will be given their glorified body if they happen to die during this period of time or at the conclusion of the Millennium. Certainly all saints will enter the New Heaven and New Earth in the glorified bodies.
 - ▶ God will set up the final heaven and earth.
- 

Great White Throne Judgment

- ▶ All people who have not trusted in Jesus for salvation will also be raised by Jesus; however, they are raised to face the Great White Throne Judgment. After writing about the saints who will live through the Millennium, John noted that following: “*The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.*” (Rev 20:5) In other words, God will raise the lost just before they are to face their judgment.

Our Future Glorified Body

- ▶ Our glorified body will be like the resurrection body of Jesus. *“There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. ⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.”* (1 Cor 15:40–43)

Our Glorified Body

- ▶ We know that our new body will be indestructible, powerful, and glorious. Although we will not have the omnipotent power of God, we will have tremendous power in our heavenly bodies. Besides being indestructible, they will be eternal. We will never get sick, worry, experience pain, or age. Christ seemingly was able to pass through walls. We may well be able to do similar things. We may even experience more than the currently experienced four dimensions (time, length, width, height).
- ▶ We will also bear the image of Jesus Christ... *“Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust (Adam), we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven (Christ).”* (1 Cor 15:49)

A body that will not sin

- ▶ Our body and soul will not sin. God will make our new body so that we are not subject to the sinful desires that plague mankind in this age. *“It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.”* (1 Cor 15:44)
- ▶ We will be able to recognize the people in heaven that we now recognize on earth. The New Heaven and New Earth will be incredible places to live.

Doctrine of Final Judgment

- ▶ The Bible makes it very clear that every person will one day stand before the Lord and receive an accounting of his/her deeds and a *final judgment* that will determine their eternal destiny.
- ▶ *“it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”* (Heb 9:27)
- ▶ *“Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.¹¹ Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.”*
(2 Cor 5:9–11)

Great White Throne Judgment

- ▶ *“And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”* (Rev 20:9–10)
- ▶ *“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.”*
(2 Tim 4:1) Jesus will be the judge.
- ▶ *“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”* (John 5:22)

The Lake of Fire

- ▶ *“I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then **Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.** ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev 20:11–15)*

Bema Judgment

- ▶ Believers will be judged by Jesus at an earlier time. This judgment is typically referred to as the **Bema Judgment**. At this judgment, Christians will be judged according to their works while on earth. This judgment will not have anything to do with whether one is going to heaven or hell... that has already been settled once the person accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."* (John 5:24)

Purpose of Bema Judgment

- ▶ *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*” (1 Cor 3:12–15)
- ▶ Although the quality of a person’s Christian life will be judged by Jesus one day, the individual himself will always end up in heaven.
- ▶ *“lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”* (Matt 6:20)
- ▶ *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* (2 Cor 5:10)

Crowns given at the Bema Judgment

- ▶ *“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”*
(James 1:12)
- ▶ *“there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”* (2 Tim 4:8)

Heavenly Perfection

- ▶ God has promised that everyone will experience perfect joy and happiness in heaven. There will be no anxiety or worry, or jealousy or any other negative emotion. We won't be involved in a jealous competitiveness with others.
- 

Judgment of the Nations

- ▶ Dispensationalists do believe that there will be one other significant judgment by Christ... this is referred to as the **Judgment of the Nations**. Tim LaHaye, John Walvoord, John McArthur, Warren Wiersbe, Harold Wilmington, and others hold this view. After the conclusion of the Great Tribulation, there will be millions of people left on earth. The Jews would have just experienced years of horrible tribulation by the Antichrist. Jesus will have just defeated Satan and the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon... right after his Second Coming. The Old Testament prophet Joel wrote concerning this time in history... at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation...
- ▶ *"For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, ² I will also gather all nations..." (Joel 3:1)*

The Sheep and the Goats

- ▶ *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" (Matt 25:31–34)*

Man's Judgment of Angels and other men

- ▶ *“Do you not know that we shall judge angels?”* (1 Cor 6:3)
- ▶ Not only that but the disciples will judge the twelve tribes of Israel in some fashion... *“Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”* (Matt 19:28)

Why any judgment at all?

- ▶ Most theologians believe that God wants to make it clear to all people that his justice is being served in a very appropriate manner. Also, a formal process will serve to demonstrate better his holiness and righteousness. This Final Judgment will be a public process – everyone will have to face Jesus and, as Paul proclaimed long ago, all men and women will know the truth of the following statement...
- ▶ *“God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*
(Phil 2:9–11)

Doctrine of Heaven

- ▶ What are the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd heavens?
- ▶ Heaven certainly should be the wonderful goal of all Christians. In biblical terms, the heavenly abode of God, the angels, and our future home is referred to as the third heaven.

Heaven – God’s Throne Room

- ▶ “Thus says the LORD: “*Heaven is My throne.*” (Isaiah 66:1) Jesus now sits at the right hand of God the Father in that throne room.
- ▶ “*After the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.*” (Mark 16:19)
- ▶ Angels make their abode there. All souls of departed believers have gone to be with the Lord in heaven. This is made clear throughout the Bible:
- ▶ “*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.*” (Psalms 23:6)
- ▶ “*I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.*” (Phil 1:23)

Heaven is an actual place

- ▶ Strangely, there are some who question whether heaven is even an actual place. Of course, the answer is a most resounding, “yes!”
- ▶ Jesus himself, spoke about departed souls coming to be with him in heaven when he spoke these wonderful words of comfort to the thief on the cross, *“And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’”* (Luke 23:43)
- ▶ The Bible also makes it clear that Jesus was going to a place when he ascended up into heaven... not that he was going to some ethereal concept of nothingness. *“Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.”* (Luke 24:51)
- ▶ Stephen saw heaven open to receive him.

- ▶ Once God created heaven, it became his primary residence, so to speak. Of course, as mentioned above, since he is omnipresent, his essence is everywhere at all times. However, the Bible does state that his throne room is located in heaven.
- ▶ Since the creation of angels, their home has been in heaven. *"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven."* (Matt 18:10)
- ▶ As shown in the verses quoted earlier, all departed souls who have placed their faith in God also have their home in heaven. Interestingly, heaven will be re-modeled (or re-created) by God very soon after the Millennium and the Final Judgment.

The Final Heaven

- ▶ *“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, ...¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works.....¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of was cast into the lake of fire..... **Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.”** (Rev 20:11–15)*

The New Heaven

- ▶ This New Heaven that God will create one day will last forever. God will not only create this New Heaven, but he will also create the earth. Although I use the word create to describe the method God will use to bring this New Heaven and New Earth into existence, there is a difference of opinion as to whether they will be entirely new creations (out of nothing) or just major re-modeling jobs of the current heaven and earth.
 - ▶ There are verses that support both views.
- 

A remodeled Heaven and Earth

- ▶ The consensus of opinion does seem to be that our current heaven and earth will be markedly remodeled – not totally eliminated. Most theologians do not think that God would do away with his original creation completely. They believe that God will remodel this earth and heaven and believe that the verses which seem to imply the elimination of the heaven and earth really only point to the fact that God will effect major change via a major overhaul of the current order. For example, he may burn the surface of this earth in order to bring in a more beautiful “creation” for eternity.

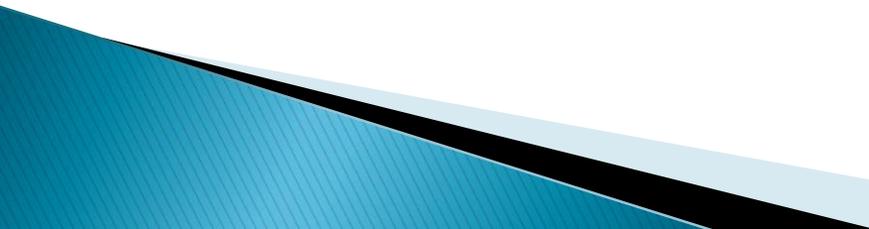
Residents of the New Heaven and New Earth

- ▶ Along with God and his angels, all those who have trusted in Jesus as Savior plus the Old Testament saints will live in this New Heaven and New Earth in our glorified bodies. A portion of this New Heaven will descend toward the New Earth as described by John in *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*.
- ▶ *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God." (Rev. 21:1–3)*

The Glory of this New Heaven

- ▶ *"Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."
10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,
11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.
12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. 14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*
- ▶ Heaven described in detail – Rev. 21:9–27

List of Heavenly Characteristics

- ▶ Heaven's duration – forevermore
 - ▶ It will always be light.
 - ▶ Perfect in every way... no pain, illness, etc.
 - ▶ Beautiful mansions
 - ▶ Beautiful worship and music
 - ▶ Beautiful place
 - ▶ We will work for the cause of Christ.
 - ▶ We will have an incredible wedding supper with Christ
 - ▶ We will eat and drink and play while in heaven.
- 

Characteristics of Heaven

- ▶ We will be re-united with loved ones.
 - ▶ We will have increased knowledge and intelligence.
 - ▶ We will see God.
 - ▶ We will be rewarded for our work on earth.
 - ▶ We will be perfect.
- 

Paul's Experience

- ▶ *“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a one was caught up to the third heaven. ³ And I know such a man--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- ⁴ how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”* (2 Cor 12:2-4)
- ▶ What Paul had revealed to him was so incredible that God actually gave him a “thorn in the flesh” to keep him humble. *“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.”* (2 Cor 12:7)

Doctrine of Hell

- ▶ It is interesting that only 32% of people in a recent large survey said that they believed in hell – defined in the survey as a place of torment and suffering where people’s souls may go after death. That is pretty amazing since ~80% identified themselves as being a Christian (although only 43% of people polled said that they repented of their sins and had accepted Jesus as Savior). In other words, the majority of people who call themselves Christian do not either know or believe Jesus when he clearly spoke about hell on multiple occasions during his time on earth.

Jesus on Hell

- ▶ For example, Jesus said when speaking of hell, *“In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* (Matt 22:13)
- ▶ He also made sure that all his listeners knew how critically important it was to avoid going there, *“if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire.44 where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”* (Mark 9:43–44)

Hell – an actual place

- ▶ We can define hell as an *actual place of eternal conscious punishment for the unsaved*. It is interesting that so many people believe that the God of the New Testament demonstrated so much of his love for humanity while he walked the earth, that he could never sentence anybody to eternal damnation. They say something like, “Oh, all that is just Old Testament stuff.” Well, it is not.
- ▶ Jesus spoke on the topic of hell more than any other individual in the entire Bible. Of course, Jesus spoke of his desire “*that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.*” (1 Tim. 2:4) Unfortunately, those people who reject God’s offer of salvation through his Son’s sacrificial death on the cross will not be allowed entrance into heaven. There is only one other alternative... hell.

Hell – Home for the Devil, Demons, and Unrepentant mankind

- ▶ The Bible does say that hell was initially prepared for the Devil and his demons. In fact, it was Jesus that said hell is “the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt 25:41) However, it does serve a dual purpose as well. It is now ready for unrepentant mankind, Satan, and his demons. One day in the future, as discussed elsewhere in this treatise, the devil will be thrown into hell for all eternity.
- ▶ *“the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”*
(Rev 20:10)

The Lake of Fire – eternal

- ▶ *“I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.....¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books..... And they were judged, each one according to his works.¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev 20:11–15)*
- ▶ *“the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image.” (Rev 14:11)*

Gehenna

- ▶ The Bible does use metaphors to describe hell, no doubt. One that used on multiple occasions by Jesus is Gehenna. Jesus simply used this word for hell. As would be expected, this was very insightful on the part of Jesus. Gehenna was a particularly foul, rotten smelling, city dump just southwest of the city walls of Jerusalem.
- ▶ **Annihilationism** – not biblical
- ▶ There are levels of hell.

What about those who do not hear of Jesus?

- ▶ **What about those who never hear about Jesus?** This question used to bother me a lot when I was a teenager. I could not see how a loving God could possibly punish someone who had never been given the chance to hear or learn about his Son. Now, I have an answer that comforts me on this issue. For one thing, I think about the Old Testament saints. I seriously doubt whether Moses, Jeremiah, Daniel, Isaiah, Joshua, Ruth, and so on, knew that Jesus (being total God and total man) would one day come and give his life on the cross for the forgiveness of their sins. Yet, he did. These Old Testament saints and thousands more, are now in heaven. How did that happen? I believe that God, in his loving mercy, judged the Old Testament saints based on the information they were given during their life on earth. I believe that God does the same thing today with respect to those people living in “deepest Africa”... God judges them based on the information he allows them to receive.
- ▶ However, this is only my opinion... I do not know if I am correct on this issue.

Conclusion

- ▶ Hell is the place that God had created for Satan and his demons. It is now also to be used for all unsaved men and women. God has many wonderful attributes as we have noted earlier. He is love. Yet, He is also just. His love caused him to send His only Son, Jesus, to provide a pathway to heaven for anyone and everyone who would only accept His free gift of eternal life. His justice requires Him to reject and punish those people who reject Him and his Son. He will send those individuals to a place called hell where they will remain forevermore. It will be a place of eternal separation from God... but, will justly have varying degrees of punishment based on each person's works while he/she was alive.

Doctrine of Man's Free Will

- ▶ We must always keep in mind when discussing this topic that all people who will be saved have been elected by God. Those who are not of the elect will not be drawn to God (i.e. given the faith to believe) and therefore will be unable to choose to accept Jesus as Savior. There is very little doubt about the above statements.
- 

Bible Verses on Election

- ▶ *“Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”* (Romans 8:28–30)
- ▶ *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.”* (Acts 13:48)
- ▶ *“He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love⁵ He predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.”* (Eph 1:4–5)

- ▶ So, we see that God decides who will be saved and who will not be saved – mankind has no free will in this decision, it would appear. So where do men and women have free will? Recently, I heard John McArthur put it this way, “Man's will is free to choose the form of sin that most appeals to him, but that's the limit of his freedom. When you talk about free will, we're talking about the freedom that the sinner has to choose his iniquity. That's what his freedom is, that's the sum and substance of his freedom. The one thing he's not free to do is to choose salvation, or to choose righteousness, or to choose holiness, or to choose God.”

Free Will – Decisions we can make

- ▶ This idea can be expanded by adding that all people have the free will to make all sorts of choices every day. Of course, these choices are limited by internal and external pressures – e.g. a blind man cannot choose to see – but, people are still free to make an infinite variety of choices. People are free to choose according to their nature and character. However, we must remember that our original character is not capable of choosing Christ. We are dead in sin. Unless God “elects” a person, and gives him/her the faith to believe, he/she will not choose him.
- ▶ The domain of choosing who will be saved is God’s alone. So again, this important area of salvation is where the idea of free choice is strained markedly.

What about the paradox?

- ▶ Christians will use their free will while living for Christ, the unsaved will use their free will in every area other than choosing Christ as Savior.
- ▶ When John McArthur was asked how he understands the seeming paradox between preaching that the gospel is offered freely to all and recognizing that God has not elected all to be saved, he responded by saying... “I have the same problem that a baby Christian who doesn't know much who is listening to this discussion is having. I have the same problem the guy in the Q & A on a college campus has when he asks me this same question. I have all those problems. But I'm content to say that's not a problem for God. If it's in the Scripture, I take it at face value. I cannot harmonize it all.”

- ▶ John McArthur, as noted above, simply takes this intriguing “seeming paradox” at face value as he “cannot harmonize it all.”
- ▶ I have read some of those with the Calvinist philosophy attempt to harmonize God’s election with mankind’s free will – but, I did not see that they did it very effectively – because they still made God’s “election decision” completely independent of anything about the future individual in question.
- ▶ Although I may well not be correct in the way I understand this intriguing interplay between man’s free will and God’s election of some to salvation, it does make sense to me. Let me explain my viewpoint now...

My Conception of Election

- ▶ First of all, I do agree with my Calvinist friends that God does not look down from above (figuratively speaking) from eternity past and simply see who would have chosen him if given the freedom to do so, and then elect them into his family. The Bible makes it clear that election is his decision, not ours. However, *I do believe that God takes into consideration each person's attributes and character before he makes the decision to elect them or not.*
- ▶ When I suggest that *man's free will is taken into consideration* by God when he chooses his elect, it is important that I explain my concept of God's loving nature.

God is Love

- ▶ *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16)
- ▶ *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”* (1 John 4:8)
- ▶ *“For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”* (1 Sam 16:7)

- ▶ *“I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jer 29:11)*
- ▶ *“The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.” (Zeph 3:17)*
- ▶ *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.” (Psalms 103:8)*

Free Will to Love or Hate

- ▶ I believe that the most significant reason that God made mankind with free will was because he wanted to experience a mutual loving relationship with them. Of course, he did not require this relationship, but the evidence strongly suggests that God wanted one. As C.S. Lewis and others note, with the gift of free will men and women are given the choice to follow God or reject him. They now have the possibility to love God, ignore God, or even hate him.

We Are Not Robots

- ▶ I believe that the vast majority of people recognize that without the possibility to reject/dislike/hate another person, there is no real possibility for love as we know true love. If a person is created so that he/she can only choose to love and follow his Creator, many (including me) would suggest that the Creator made a “robot” of sorts.
 - ▶ Only when love is offered willingly, can it truly be called love.
 - ▶ By considering our nature before his decision on election, he would be, in some sense, considering our likely free will choice, before his momentous decision.
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Think about it...

- ▶ If a man chooses a woman to be his wife regardless of any personal characteristics noted in the woman, and then manipulates that woman into loving him and then marrying him, how can that be considered a true loving relationship?
 - ▶ The owner wants to choose people of excellent quality and he wants those individuals who want to be a part of his team. He will reject those who do not fit in with his team concept – actually, that is best for all concerned.
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Potter and Clay

- ▶ *“He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. ¹⁹ You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?’ ²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ ²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?”* (Romans 9:18–21)
- ▶ I will admit that if these were the only four verses in the Bible I would be hard pressed to suggest that God considers the free will choices/personality/character of man prior to making his election.
- ▶ However, I am convinced that all reasonable Bible students understand that we cannot simply take a few select verses out of the context of the entire Bible and build a Bible doctrine.

Taken out of context

- ▶ Doctrine of Prayer
- ▶ **“If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.”**
(John 14:14)
- ▶ Saved by Grace
- ▶ *“Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³ ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”* (James 2:21–22,24)
- ▶ *“For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother.”* (Lev. 20:9)

God Desires All Men to be Saved

- ▶ *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*
(John 3:16)
- ▶ *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”*
(2 Peter 3:9)
- ▶ *God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*
(1 Tim 2:3-4)

Election and Free Will

- ▶ The problem, then, is harmonizing verses like these with verses referencing God's elect and the "potter and the clay." Some folks, like John McArthur, have given up on harmonizing these apparent disparate verses. As I explained earlier, I believe that there is a reasonable way to bring these two concepts (election and free will) into harmony.
- ▶ Why did God choose this concept of election to carry out His will for the universe?

Summary

- ▶ I can think of only three reasonable options for how God chooses the elect:
- ▶ He did it purely through election and without considering any attribute or potential free will choices of men and women. [This is how I believe those adhering to the Calvinistic theology look at election]. Each person is elected in eternity past regardless of anything that may be known about their future nature or character, and without considering any of their potential future free will choices. Some are “elected” to an everlasting future in heaven; some to an everlasting future in hell. I have two problems with this idea:

- ▶ If God simply chooses people for heaven or hell without considering their nature/character/potential free will choices, it becomes apparent that he is creating individuals who must follow his direction – there is no other choice for a person in this most important area of salvation vs. damnation. The idea that a person could offer their love to God becomes absurd. There would be no real choice to accept God or reject God. He would have created us to do only one or the other. He would have created a type of robot, in my opinion.

- ▶ Secondly, since we know by several verses I quoted above, that God wants everyone to be saved (e.g. 1 Tim 2:3–4), it would not seem at all fair that an omnipotent and all-loving God would choose only some people for salvation and choose many others to spend an eternity in hell. Remember, if this explanation is correct, God is not considering anything in the nature/character or potential future free will choices of mankind when he makes his decision to elect someone or not. [If he were, it would make sense that he would not elect those who may want to reject him] It seems very odd that a loving God would not elect all mankind for salvation – since he wants all to be saved and he certainly has the power to do it... and we know that the individual's desires are irrelevant if this idea of election is correct.

- ▶ He elected individuals only after considering the nature, attributes, and potential future free will choices of each person. This is, of course, my choice for the likely way that election works.
 - ▶ He elected people after considering some mysterious factors that will remain inscrutable to us.
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- ▶ I do have a difficult time believing that a God of love would elect some people to spend an eternity in heaven and, by default, 'elect' the remainder to spend an eternity in a devil's hell without any reference to the desires and character of each person. For one thing, if God created people for destruction (the eternal destiny for all those that he did not elect), and he is not required to do this (which he isn't), he could not say he wanted all to be saved... in my opinion. That would be a lie... and God does not lie.

- ▶ The second choice above is the one I suggest is the most likely. Some say that allowing for this choice would take away from God's sovereignty, power, etc. Well, look what Jesus gave up while on earth – yet he remained fully God. He gave up *utilizing* some of his omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence to live the life of a human. God can choose to allow for mankind to influence his decisions on election (by virtue of their individual character traits and desires) in order to experience love – the love of a Father for and from his children. He still would remain very much our omnipotent God.

- ▶ The third choice is not at all unreasonable either. We all know that whatever God decides is best for his universe and his creation is, quite assuredly, best for us. At least with this third choice, we are saying that God has good and proper reasons for who he elects and who he rejects and condemns to hell.
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Conclusion

- ▶ Humans are given the free will to do whatever they are able to do based on their abilities and attributes. For the elect, this will include making choices that will move them toward their goal of sanctification once they become saved. Hopefully, each Christian will make good choices as they are led by the Holy Spirit. Those that are in the non-elect of God will be able to make any possible choice... except the choice to be saved. They will not want to make that choice, and, therefore will not make it.
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Doctrine of God's Providence

- ▶ The **last doctrine** to be discussed in this treatise is that of the providential care of God. I **saved this topic for last because** I believe that it encompasses much of all that we have previously covered and demonstrates God's complete control of everything that happens in his universe.
- ▶ Because of God's omnipotence and omniscience, his goals for the world will be infallibly realized. He has eternal plans for heaven, angels, the world and all its plants and animals. Of course, God has wonderful plans for mankind... for his elect.

Free Will

- ▶ **I believe that God gave man free will** when he decided to create them with the capability to give and receive love. Each person is given the choice to accept God's love and follow him as he commands or to reject God and thereby sin. God was aware of the choice that would ultimately be made by Adam and Eve. He was also acutely aware of the consequences of that first sin. Yet, he not only allowed Adam to exercise his freewill to sin, but provided a pathway for all men and women to gain redemption. God sent his Son to provide atonement for humanity.

Providential Care

- ▶ *God's sovereign guidance of all events that take place in the universe so that all things inexorably move toward their divinely predetermined end result.*
- ▶ Typically, God accomplishes this goal via an incredible series of miraculous interventions into the lives of men, animals, and nature. God typically accomplishes his goals for his creation in a subtle manner – he works through and around the free choices of men and women to accomplish his will. In other words, unless we are paying close attention, we may not recognize God's hand in the events shaping the future... the worlds, and each of the elect.

All Things Work Together for Good

- ▶ Normally he is able to use his omniscience and omnipotent power to weave human events and natural occurrence to come to his desired result.
- ▶ *“we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* (Romans 8:28)
- ▶ It is important to remember that prayer changes things. God instructs us to pray and make our desires known to him. *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”* (Matt 7:7)
- ▶ *“But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD; I say, “You are my God.” my times are in Your hand.”* (Psalms 31:14–15)
- ▶ *“O LORD my God, I cried out to You, And You healed me.”* (Psalms 30:2)

God's Plan Will Be Accomplished

- ▶ We have been given the freedom not to pray, but it certainly is to our advantage to pray while staying in the will of God. How each Christian enters into God's divine plan concerning his providential care of this earth will depend on how well people obey him and follow him. A Christian who truly dedicates his/her life to Christ will likely have a larger role in God's plan for the world than those that sit on the sidelines. However, regardless of what any particular individual chooses to do, God is able to use every event, those that are good and those that are bad, and lead his universe to its destined conclusion. Only an omnipotent, omniscient Being could accomplish such a task... that is why God alone can do it.

Biblical Examples

- ▶ The story of Joseph
 - ▶ Moses
 - ▶ The defeat of Israel and Judah
 - ▶ Judas
 - ▶ Saul becomes Paul
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- ▶ I really became aware of God's providential care of the universe when writing my book, *Fifty Signs of the End Times, Are We Living in the Last Days?* I noted that the Bible taught of there being approximately fifty intriguing signs that would become manifest in the world just before the Second Coming. Literally, all of these signs have come onto the scene over the last 70 years (actually one appeared about 90 years ago). Some might say, and some do say, that these signs have always been in the world if one just looked for them. Not true.
- ▶ These signs all coming to fruition at the same time are great examples of his providential care.

Further Discussion of God's Providential Care

- ▶ God is sovereign. *“God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.”* (Psalms 115:3)
- ▶ All things are possible for God. *“For with God nothing will be impossible.”* (Luke 1:37)
- ▶ God created the world and it is subject to him. *“Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it.”* (Deut 10:14)
- ▶ *“among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand.”* (Dan 4:35)
- ▶ God has an eternal plan for this world and all within it: *“The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations.”* (Psalms 33:11)
- ▶ *“The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, “Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed, so it shall stand.”* (Isaiah 14:24)

- ▶ It is impossible for mankind to completely understand God's actions and plan for his creation. *"Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty? ⁸ They are higher than heaven."* (Job 11:7-8)
- ▶ *"He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end."* (Eccl 3:11)
- ▶ *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.*" (Isaiah 55:8)
- ▶ Because of this fact, we should simply trust that God knows what he is doing and that it is for our ultimate good. *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."* (Prov 3:5-6)
- ▶ *"we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."* (Romans 8:28)

- ▶ When we speak of God's providential care, we are speaking of the mysterious manner by which God has formulated a benevolent, all-encompassing plan for his universe. It is being worked out according to this plan, day by day. This phenomenal power should provoke faith, praise, and worship in the believer.
 - ▶ God works through: Animals, Nature, The Heavens, The Nations, Human Activity, Human Suffering
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- ▶ God uses his infinite power, wisdom, and knowledge to infallibly accomplish his eternal goals for the universe and everything in it. These goals include the final destiny for everything in the world, including all of mankind. All of this is done to the glory of God. We can be thankful for all of this because we have a perfect and loving God and there is no doubt that he will use his omnipotent providential care to affect a wonderful future for all those who place their faith in him.

Conclusion

- ▶ I have just completed a brief review of forty important biblical doctrines. Actually, considering I combined a few doctrines every now and then as I wrote this treatise, more like forty-five doctrines were discussed. Although this book covers virtually every known Bible doctrine in the literature, it does so in a relatively concise manner. For example, this book is approximately 10% the size of most Systematic Theology books (those books that discuss Bible doctrine). The point of writing this book was to create a book that a person could reasonably expect to start and finish and still cover every doctrinal subject in the Bible that affects the followers of Christ.

- ▶ As you will have noticed, almost every point that was made was backed up by corresponding Bible verses. On the handful of topics on which fine theologians disagree, both sides of the arguments were always presented. The reader is encouraged to make up their own mind in these instances. None of these controversial areas have anything to do with the gospel message. I hope that by studying this concise encyclopedia of biblical doctrines, the readers will understand the Bible more completely and draw closer to Christ, our Lord and Savior.























































