

DOCTRINAL SYNOPSIS

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# PROLEGAMENA

*“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” – 1 Timothy 4:16*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most valuable and noble efforts that a man can pursue is that of studying God’s Word. Knowing what one believes and why he believes it, is clearly commanded in Scripture. What one believes will determine what one does and will shape his decisions in life. Sadly, in modern society, most do not have any idea why they believe something, and in many cases, do not even understand what they believe. Lack of individual thought has infected our society, leaving us, often times, with ignorant multitudes. Many just follow a group and are much like the mob in Acts 19:32 where the Bible states that *“the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.”*

In contrast to this modern attitude, we still find those who seek to understand sound doctrine. A man who desires to please God must study the Word of God. One must have a clear understanding of doctrine and biblical theology. The study of theology is in its most basic principles a practical study. What one learns through theology and what one believes in their doctrine must be applied to their lives to make them better servants of Jesus Christ. This doctrinal synopsis will explain many aspects of Christian doctrine and strives to be a well-thought-out, academic study. Its true nature and purpose, however, is to affect the daily lives of believers through the practical application of theology.

## **NATURE OF THEOLOGY**

C. Stephen Evans defines theology simply as, “The ordered, systematic study of God and of God’s relations to his creatures.”<sup>1</sup> This definition, while simple, does highlight the key element of theology, which is the understanding of God. Who God is and what His relation to man entails will shape how one lives their life and how he in turn responds to God. Therefore, the beginning of systematic theology will always be that of understanding the basic and necessary elements of the nature of God. Once this is established, theology can branch out to cover other areas. Abraham Kuyper declared that theology is knowing God.<sup>2</sup> This means that to study theology is not just an academic exercise, but rather a deeply personal one. There is no greater undertaking than that of knowing personally the Creator of the universe.

In order to have a relationship with God, one must be born again. The unbeliever who seeks to understand and study theology will be hopelessly confused and lost due to his unregenerate mind. In 1 Corinthians 2:14, the Bible speaks of the things of God being “spiritually discerned”. One’s own personal salvation is key to understanding theology. Many so-called Christian denominations struggle so much with sound doctrine because of their failure to believe in Christ alone for their salvation and experience the new birth.

## **PRESUPPOSITIONS**

An honest theologian will admit and recognize that he approaches theology with a certain point of view that is often determined by his background. What someone already believes often creates a certain bias toward a certain point of view. We often see doctrine through filters based

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<sup>1</sup> C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 114.

<sup>2</sup> John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 73.

on what we have already been taught. An honest student must recognize this and seek to minimize its effect on his own understanding of the Bible. The wise man will listen to and study even those points of views that differ from his own. While some of these filters may hinder one's understanding of Scripture, many can be helpful. For example, a basic presupposition of this thesis is that God is good and perfect in all that He does. This "filter" helps one interpret Scripture with an understanding that God cannot and does not commit evil. It also creates the presupposition that God cannot lie. This then leads one to conclude that His written Word is true. The author of this thesis is also a Baptist pastor and missionary. Ten years of full-time ministry experience and teaching other believers means that many of these doctrines are approached primarily from a traditionally Baptist perspective.

## **SOURCES OF THEOLOGY**

It is important to identify from what sources our theology is derived. The obvious primary source is (and rightly should be) the Scriptures. However, more than lip service must be given to the Bible as our primary source of theology. James Leo Garrett Jr. noted that "Paul Tillich stated that the Bible was the primary source for systematic theology, but one finds that he made only slight use of specific biblical materials throughout the three volumes of his systematic theology."<sup>3</sup> This is sadly the case for many theologians. Just stating that the Bible is our primary source of theology does not necessarily make it true, we must use the Bible in every aspect of our theology.

After one establishes the Bible as their primary source, they must specify to what that means. This thesis is based on the readings of the Hebrew Masoretic and Textus Receptus

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<sup>3</sup> James Leo Garrett Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, Fourth Edition., vol. 1 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 21–22.

contained in the traditional 66 books that are accepted canon of Scripture. The King James Version is also considered to be the preserved Word of God in the English language. This means that the theology contained in this thesis is not shadowed by the doubts of many as to the accuracy of the Biblical Texts.

Another source of theology contained in this thesis is tradition. Tradition must always be second to Scriptures, however, it is always wise to see what has been believed in the past and by whom. The book of Ecclesiastes teaches us that there is “no new thing under the sun.” Modern cultists often claim to be the first to discover some great truth in the Bible when in reality they are just re-exposing an old heresy. Some claim, for example, that the pre-tribulation rapture is a modern invention, yet one can find its mention in writings from some of the earliest church fathers. Tradition should not be the primary source of our theology, but one is foolish to not consult it.

A third source that can and should be consulted is logic. One might even say logic and experience go hand in hand. An example of logic in theology can be seen in the acceptance or the rejection of tongues as a modern spiritual gift. Many claim to possess this gift and try to prove it by uttering gibberish that no one understands. When one compares this logically to the gift of tongues as seen in Acts chapter two, he will certainly see a sharp contrast. The modern day “tongues speaker” is not speaking a known language as the apostles did in the Bible. Therefore, one may conclude both based on Scripture and logic, that the rejection of modern-day tongues is the accurate theological conclusion.

## **METHOD OF INTERPRETATION**

One final point and clarification needs to be made, and that is in regards to the method of biblical interpretation. This thesis uses the literal-grammatical-historical method of interpretation

and opposes the allegorical method. The *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* states well the problem with the allegorist when it observes, “for all allegorists the obvious, literal, objective features and meaning of a text are either irrelevant or of only secondary importance; the significant or true meanings may well be dissociated from objective statements or the historical setting. In more advanced applications of the method the external and obvious are irrelevant and even the historicity of an account is of no consequence. Indeed, the understanding and intention of the original author may count for nothing in determining the “true,” “spiritual” meaning of a biblical passage.”<sup>4</sup> This method has historically caused much confusion as the Bible ends up meaning whatever one wants it to mean. Therefore, in this thesis the Bible will be interpreted literally and in accordance with its grammatical and historical context.

## CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal of this thesis is to glorify the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is the hope of the author that it can be used in the future to help believers who are struggling with issues of doctrine, and also bring clarity regarding his own doctrinal views. Doctrine is indeed the foundation of all that one does in serving the Lord. It is the hope and prayer of the author that this thesis will indeed prove to be in obedience to the command of 2 Timothy 2:15 to “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God.*”

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<sup>4</sup> J. Julius Scott Jr., “Allegory,” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 54.



# THEOLOGY PROPER

## INTRODUCTION

The *Lexham Glossary of Theology* defines Theology Proper as “the study of God, his attributes and nature” and “His revelation in Scripture and relationship with the world.”<sup>5</sup> There is no subject of greater importance than that of God. It is a subject of deep and untouchable depth and profundity which can never be exhausted. It is a vain attempt for man to try to completely understand God, because His ways are so much higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:9). This being understood, it would be a terminal error to not pour immense energy into the study of God throughout one’s entire life. Indeed, knowing God is the greatest goal of this life (Philippians 3:10).

To define God completely is impossible due to our lack of understanding of His greatness. Edgar Young Mullins gives a definition that is at least comprehensible by our finite minds in his work *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*. He states, “God is the supreme personal Spirit; perfect in all his attributes; who is the source, support, and end of the universe; who guides it according to the wise, righteous, and loving purpose revealed in Jesus Christ; who indwells in all things by his Holy Spirit, seeking ever to transform them according to his own will and bring them to the goal of his kingdom.”<sup>6</sup> This Chapter will discuss the nature and attributes of God. While other Chapters will deal specifically with the second and third Persons of the Trinity, Theology Proper will deal with the Trinity itself.

## THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

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<sup>5</sup> Douglas Mangum, *The Lexham Glossary of Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Edgar Young Mullins, *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression* (Philadelphia; Boston; St. Louis; Los Angeles; Chicago; New York; Toronto: Roger Williams Press, 1917), 214–215.

The logical first step in the study of God is to affirm His existence. The Scriptures do not spend much time arguing the existence of God, but rather it is assumed. Those who deny His existence are considered fools and intentionally ignorant in the Bible (Psalm 14:1; 2 Peter 3:5). God is much greater than His creation, and He is distinct from His creation in contrast to the beliefs of Pantheism. Pantheists identify God with the universe and regard the universe as a manifestation of God.<sup>7</sup> God is indeed present in all His creation, yet He is distinct from His creation (Psalm 139:7-8). God is not limited even by time itself. The eternity of God is impossible to comprehend, yet it is a fact. James E Dolezal commented that “The incomprehensibility of divine eternity need not reduce believers to silence or hopeless agnosticism.”<sup>8</sup> God was not created, nor will He will ever cease to exist (Revelation 1:8). He exists outside of the constraints of time itself and is the Author of time itself.

Many arguments exist for the existence of God. It should be pointed out that the burden of proof lies not on one to prove that God exists, but rather for atheists to prove that God does not exist. One common argument is the one originally offered by Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas argued that everything that moves points to something else moving it. Every movement in the universe was caused by a prior mover. Following the trail of events leads eventually to a First Mover that is unmoved. This Unmoved Mover, Aquinas concluded, is God.<sup>9</sup> Other arguments are based on the need for a designer for an obviously designed universe. Moral arguments are

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<sup>7</sup> Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> James E. Dolezal, “Eternal Creator of Time” JIRBS 02:0 NA (2015): 127, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jirbs02-0-06?highlight=existence%20of%20God> (accessed February 15, 2019)

<sup>9</sup> Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 31.

also given based on the existence of morality in our universe. These arguments far overpower any arguments given by atheists against God's existence.

Often those who refuse to acknowledge God's existence will claim that the existence of evil in the world disproves God's existence or at least proves that He is not good. However, these atheists fail to see that evil in the world is a direct consequence of man's sin and that God has allowed it in order to give man a free will.

Some argue that God exists but refuse to acknowledge His interactions with the world. Doug Powell defines Deism as the belief "that holds that God is not known through religion but only through reason and nature."<sup>10</sup> While it is true that God has revealed himself through nature (Romans 1:20), it is also true that God has revealed Himself through His word and through the person of Jesus Christ. God is indeed actively intervening in the affairs of men as seen throughout the entirety of the Scriptures.

## **THE NATURE OF GOD**

While a definition of God has already been stated, it is important for man to understand that God is a Triune being. This understanding of God comes directly from the Scriptures and is necessary to understand God in the Bible. Peter Toon notes that "the indispensable starting point for any study of and reflection upon the Christian experience and knowledge of God as a plurality in unity must always be the Bible. There is no other place to start."<sup>11</sup>

The Trinity is a doctrine that is present throughout the whole Bible, although it is better understood in the Old Testament after the New Testament revelations. F. Leroy Forlines points

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<sup>10</sup> Doug Powell, Holman *QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2006), 112.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Toon, "Ways of Describing The Holy Trinity" RAR 10:3 (Summer 2001): 96, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/rar10-3-06?highlight=The%20Trinity%20in%20the%20Old%20Testament> (accessed February 2, 2019)

this out when he stated, “In speaking, God uses the plural pronoun “us” (Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7). Once the revelation of the Trinity has been made known, it seems clear that we should understand the “us” in these references as referring to the persons in the Trinity. Having seen the revelation of the Son in the New Testament, we would naturally interpret the Father and Son in Psalm 2:7 ... Having seen the Holy Spirit as a distinct person in the New Testament, we would interpret references such as Genesis 1:2; 6:3; and Psalm 51:11 as making references to the Holy Spirit.”<sup>12</sup>

Augustus Hopkins Strong clearly defines the Trinity in five statements in his *Systematic Theology*, These are stated as, “1. In Scripture there are three who are recognized as God. 2. These three are so described in Scripture that we are compelled to conceive of them as distinct persons. 3. This tri-personality of the divine nature is not merely economic and temporal, but is immanent and eternal. 4. This tri-personality is not tritheism; for while there are three persons, there is but one essence. 5. The three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are equal.”<sup>13</sup>

The Trinity is not Modalism. Modalism claims that the Trinity just represents three different aspects of God’s nature.<sup>14</sup> Modalism claims that verses such as John 10:30 prove that God is only one and not three Gods (Tritheism). The problem with this interpretation is that it ignores that the persons of God have objective relationships with one another, and all three members of the Trinity were present at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:16).<sup>15</sup> The only doctrine

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<sup>12</sup> F. Leroy Forlines, *The Quest for Truth: Theology for Postmodern World* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications; Worldwide Ministries, 2001), 88.

<sup>13</sup> Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907), 304.

<sup>14</sup> Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> F. Leroy Forlines, *The Quest for Truth: Theology for Postmodern World* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications; Worldwide Ministries, 2001), 87.

that allows us to interpret the whole Bible without contradiction is the Doctrine of the Trinity. God is one God in three distinct persons (1 John 5:7).

## **THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD**

The study of God requires a detailed look at the attributes of God. It should be noted that it is impossible to completely understand God or His attributes. That being said, studying them is of great help to the man who seeks to know God. Andrew AUCAMP echoes this point when he stated, “A complementary approach of describing God according to the broader, relational attributes found in Scripture provides a biblical context for the individual attributes, and adds a devotional quality to beholding our glorious God that the historic formulations often neglected.”<sup>16</sup> God’s attributes are divided into two distinct categories: communicable or moral attributes and non-communicable or natural attributes.

## **NATURAL ATTRIBUTES**

The natural and non-communicable attributes of God are not transferable to mankind in contrast to His moral attributes. They are unique to God as a Supernatural and All-powerful Being. The first of these attributes to be discussed is the **OMNIPOTENCE** of God. This simply means that God is Almighty and All-powerful without having limits on His authority or influence.<sup>17</sup> There is nothing that God cannot do, nothing that He cannot control, and nothing that He cannot defeat. It was beyond vanity for Satan to rebel against an Omnipotent God (Isaiah 14:14). This attribute should bring tremendous comfort to the believer in even the darkest moments of His life. One can always know that God is in control of each and every situation that

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<sup>16</sup> Andrew AUCAMP, “A Systematic approach to God’s attributes” *Conspectus*; 15:1, (March 2013): 39, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/conspectus15-1-02?highlight=attributes%20of%20God> (accessed February 18, 2019)

<sup>17</sup> Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Thesaurus* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

comes their way. God made clear His omnipotence and man's fragility in His conversation with Job. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:4). The power and might of God are limitless.

The **OMNISCIENCE** of God refers to his divine knowledge of events in the universe. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines omniscient simply as knowing everything.<sup>18</sup> There are no events that have taken place that took God by surprise. Even before the foundations of the world God has had divine foreknowledge of all thoughts, decisions, and events. The Bible clearly states that God "knows all things" (1 John 3:20). God also sees all events and nothing is hidden from Him (Proverbs 15:3). God is sovereign in all things. He controls all events and yet gives man the freedom to choose to obey Him. This great attribute has confused Calvinists into believing that God's sovereignty means man does not have a free will to receive or reject the gospel. William Evans comments, "We must not confound the foreknowledge of God with His foreordination. The two are, in a sense, distinct. The fact that God foreknows a thing makes that thing certain but not necessary. His foreordination is based upon His foreknowledge. Pharaoh was responsible for the hardening of his heart even though that hardening process was foreknown and foretold by God. The actions of men are considered certain but not necessary by reason of the divine foreknowledge."<sup>19</sup> The point is that God knows all decisions that men will make, yet gives man the free will to make those decisions. (Revelation 22:17).

The **OMNIPRESENCE** of God refers to God's presence everywhere and at all times.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 31.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 46.

Psalm 139 is the great Psalm that teaches the Omnipresence of God.<sup>21</sup> David states in Verse seven, “Whither shall I flee from thy presence?” This attribute of God in no way implies that God is one with His creation, but rather that God is present in His creation. The believer finds comfort in this doctrine, knowing that God is always with Him (2 Timothy 4:17).

The Final Attribute of God’s nature is that of His **IMMUTABILITY**. This simply means that God does not change (Malachi 3:6). The Immutability of God has brought much confusion to the Biblical passages that state that God “repented” of a decision that He made (Genesis 6:6). How could God repent if He is Omniscient and Omnipotent? The simple way to understand these passages is to understand that God does not change His character but rather his response to men based on man’s obedience or disobedience. His nature is immutable and, unlike man, eternally unchanging.<sup>22</sup>

## **MORAL ATTRIBUTES**

The moral and communicable attributes of God are the cause of the moral law of our universe. These moral attributes can and should be transferred to man. Love is a good moral attribute because it flows from God. God is **LOVE** (1 John 4:8). The opposite is love is hatred, and we are commanded not to hate others but rather love them as God has loved us. Therefore, hatred is bad and love is good. Almost all of even the most dedicated atheists will admit this. The foundation of all moral code flows from the moral attributes of God.

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<sup>21</sup> E.J Young, “The Background of Psalm 139” JETS 08:3 (Summer 1965): 101, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jets08-3-02?highlight=omnipresence> (accessed February 18, 2019)

<sup>22</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974)

Another moral attribute of God is His **HOLINESS** and refers to His separation from impurity and evil.<sup>23</sup> While it would be incorrect to say that God is more holy than He is loving, it can be said that His holiness governs His other attributes and therefore holds a special importance. Rolland McCune stated it profoundly when he said, “holiness makes penal suffering necessary; it is love that makes it voluntary and willing.”<sup>24</sup> Because of God’s holiness, He cannot tolerate unholiness. This leads to two other characteristics of God, His **RIGHTEOUSNESS** and **JUSTICE**. These refer to the fact that God will punish sin. His nature demands it. God’s perfect righteousness and justice requires that man cannot enter into his presence without the shedding of the blood of the spotless Lamb of God (Hebrews 9:22). Yet His **MERCY** and **LOVINGKINDESS** are seen clearly in His great sacrifice made for the salvation of mankind (John 3:16). Mercy is God not giving men the due consequence of their sin. Samuel A. Dawson beautifully relates God’s mercy when he states, “Through the dispensing of his salvation God highlights his amazing mercy toward poor, miserable sinners who deserve judgment, not mercy.”<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, it can be seen that God’s holiness governs His other attributes and yet never contradicts them. All of His nature functions together and perfectly embodies an incredible and moral Being that is beyond our comprehension of goodness and power.

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<sup>23</sup> Paul S. Karleen, *The Handbook to Bible Study: With a Guide to the Scofield Study System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 333.

<sup>24</sup> Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity: The Doctrines of Man, Sin, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, vol. 2* (Allen Park, MI: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 173.

<sup>25</sup> Samuel A. Dawson, “The Historical Outworking Of God’s Plan To Dispense His Mercy Illustrated In The Olive Tree OF Romans” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* Volume: DBSJ 21:0 (2016): 107, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/dbsj21-0-06?highlight=mercy%20of%20God> (accessed February 18, 2019)



## **CONCLUSION**

God is the Supreme and Perfect Being that governs the universe in complete power. He is a Triune Being, a Moral Being, and an All-Powerful Being. He is worthy to be praised, believed in, worshipped, and adored by all mankind.

# CHRISTOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

After studying the topic of Theology Proper and acquiring an understanding of God, one must then turn his attention to the Doctrine of Christology. Christology is the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Without Jesus, the doctrines of Christianity are empty and vain. Paul expressed this truth when he said “if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain” (1 Corinthians 15:17). William Evans noted the importance of Jesus in Christianity when he observed that one can take Buddha from Buddhism or Muhammad from Muhammadanism and still maintain the doctrine of these religions. But to remove Jesus from Christianity is to leave absolutely nothing.<sup>26</sup> Therefore it is important for the student of theology to have a clear understanding of the doctrines of Jesus Christ such as his humanity, deity, death, resurrection, and exaltation.

## THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

In studying this great doctrine, one must understand the humanity of Jesus Christ. The Incarnation and how God was made flesh is a mystery. The Bible states that “without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,” (1 Timothy 3:16). The incarnation of Jesus Christ is one of the great miracles and is beyond our understanding. Jesus was completely God but was also completely man. His humanity was key to His redemptive work.

The incarnation of Christ began with his virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14). The birth of Christ was supernatural as Jesus did not have a human father. Joseph and Mary did not have sexual intercourse until after the birth of Jesus (Matthew 1:25). This miraculous birth was necessary for

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<sup>26</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 53.

Jesus to be the second Adam, as Adam was not his father. Jesus did not have a sin nature. Jesus was not part of this sin nature because He was not born of man. Some would argue that Mary also had a sin nature and therefore it would not make a difference if Jesus did not have an earthly father because He had an earthly mother. However, the Bible tells us that the Adamic fall and the sin nature passes down from the man. “For as in Adam all die not, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 5:22). The virgin birth is a fundamental and necessary doctrine to the Christian faith, and to deny it is to deny the redemptive work of Jesus.

The humanity and deity of Jesus were united in what is called the hypostatic union. *The Lexham Glossary of Theology* defines this as “The union of human and divine natures in the person of Jesus.”<sup>27</sup> Jesus was completely God and completely man at the same time. Millard J. Erickson notes that “the union of the two natures meant that they did not function independently.”<sup>28</sup> Jesus was God and man at the same time and these natures did not conflict. Erickson goes on to note how at times Jesus emptied himself of His divine nature but never ceased to possess it. (Philippians 2:6-8).<sup>29</sup>

An important aspect of Jesus’ humanity was his ability to suffer and be tempted as a man (Hebrews 4:15). The author of Hebrews tells us that the reason for Jesus suffering was so that our High Priest could feel and understand our infirmities. We then can have boldness to come to Jesus in our time of need knowing that He understands deeply our trials. An example of this was Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. Jesus was tempted and suffered temptation even though He

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<sup>27</sup> Douglas Mangum, *The Lexham Glossary of Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology, 3rd ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 670.

<sup>29</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology, 3rd ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 670.

was God and could not sin. Some would argue that the temptation was without purpose if Jesus could not sin. Clarence Larkin offered great insight into this question when he wrote, “The purpose was simply to show that Jesus was a **PERFECT SAVIOUR**, and that there was **NO SIN IN HIM**, nor possibility of failure.”<sup>30</sup> Jesus was completely sinless (1 John 3:5) and yet He was tempted for us.<sup>31</sup>

## **THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST**

The Deity of Jesus Christ is a fundamental doctrine that has been consistently attacked since the days of the Apostles. The apostle John spoke of many deceivers who would come into the world and deny the Deity of Christ (2 John 7:7). It is of utmost importance that each and every believer understand and be able to defend the Deity of Jesus Christ.

The denial of the Deity of Christ usually begins with the belief that Jesus was a created being. Many cults today believe and teach this, with some even suggesting that Jesus is Michael the archangel (Jehovah’s witness doctrine). However, these doctrines did not begin with modern day cults. Arius was an early church heretic who taught that Jesus was created and his doctrine became known as Arianism.<sup>32</sup> Often those that teach this doctrine will put much emphasis on verses such as Hebrews 1:5 and the phrase, “this day have I begotten thee,” claiming that this verse proves the creation of Jesus by God the Father sometime in eternity past. However, this contradicts other Scripture such as Revelation 1:8 where the Bible clearly states that Jesus is the “Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” Statements such as the one found in

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<sup>30</sup> Clarence Larkin, *Rightly Dividing the Word* (Philadelphia, PA: Clarence Larkin, 1921), 173.

<sup>31</sup> John E. McKinley, “Jesus Christ’s Temptation: SBJT 16:2 (Summer 2012): 56, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/sbjt16-2-05?highlight=temptation%20of%20Jesus> (accessed February 19, 2019)

<sup>32</sup> Major Contributors and Editors, “Arianism,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

Hebrews 1:5 are speaking directly of the incarnation of Christ. Christ Himself spoke of His existence prior to His incarnation and His Deity when He stated, “before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58). This statement was clearly meant to indicate that Christ was God and was understood as such by the Jews who then took up rocks to stone Him for blasphemy.

Jesus’ Deity is stated by God the Father in when He stated, “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God,” (Hebrews 1:8). If Jesus was a created being, how could God the Father call Jesus God? The only way to understand these passages is to believe in the Trinity. All other attempts to explain the nature of God and Jesus Christ that deny the Trinity place the Bible in contradiction with itself and should be rejected. The Trinity is the only way to understand the Bible and the nature of God.

Another evidence of the Deity of Christ is His receiving of worship. Jesus was worshipped by men, and yet He never rebuked them as did the apostles (Acts 10:26), and even the angels (Revelation 19:10). Thomas worshipped Jesus and said, “My Lord, and my God” (John 20:28). Jesus did not rebuke Thomas or correct Him. The Bible tells us that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11).

Jesus also validated His Deity through His miracles. He raised the dead, made the lame to walk, caused the blind to see, and healed multitudes. When John the Baptist began to doubt if Jesus was really the Christ, Jesus pointed out His miracles as evidence of His Deity (Luke 7:20-23). The ultimate miracle and proof of Deity is His resurrection from the dead.

## **THE DEATH OF CHRIST**

The ministry of Jesus Christ from the beginning was designed to end at the cross (Revelation 13:80). Only through His death could men have life. The apostle Paul, in his letters, reminded the churches just how important the death of Christ is to the Christian faith (1

Corinthians 15:14).<sup>33</sup> Yet how could Jesus die if He was God? Jesus was able to die because he was fashioned as a man (Philippians 2:8). Jesus put aside aspects of His Deity in order to fulfill His earthly mission. The death of Jesus was voluntary and necessary for the life of the world (John 6:51). His death fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies and in great detail completes the prophecies of Isaiah Chapter fifty-three. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross completed the Jewish animal sacrifices and thus made them unnecessary.<sup>34</sup> The apostles argued daily the Messiahship of Jesus based on these fulfilled prophecies (Acts 17:1-3). The mode of death on the cross was also important because it fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah (Psalm 22:6).

It is important to note that Jesus was completely dead when He was taken down from the cross. Those that deny the resurrection often teach that Jesus was only unconscious and later regained consciousness in the tomb. This theory has been clearly disproven by the clear evidence of death on the cross when water and blood came out of his body (John 19:34). The Roman soldiers were professional killers and would not have been fooled by an unconscious man. This is the reason that the soldiers did not break his legs (John 19:33). Jesus was completely dead when He was placed into the tomb.

## **THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**

The ultimate miracle that proves that Jesus is God is His resurrection. Many men have claimed to be the Messiah, but only the tomb of Jesus is empty. The Bible teaches that Jesus was

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<sup>33</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, "Pauline Theology Relative to the Death and Resurrection of Christ" *Bibliotheca Sacra*; BSAC 095:379 (Jul 1938):291, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac095-379-03?highlight=death%20of%20Christ> (accessed March 3, 2019)

<sup>34</sup> William Hayes Ward, "The New Testament Doctrine of the Relation of Christ's Death to the Old Testament Sacrificial System" *Bibliotheca Sacra*; BSAC 051:202 (April 1894): 246, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac051-202-04?highlight=death%20of%20Christ> (accessed March 3, 2019)

three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40).<sup>35</sup> While His body was resting lifeless in the tomb, Jesus was in the “heart” of the earth. While Jesus did not suffer in hell fire, He did liberate the souls of the Old Testament Saints in Abraham’s bosom who awaited His perfect sacrifice on the cross (Ephesians 4:8, 1 Peter 3:19, Luke 16:22-24). This can be clearly seen when Christ told the thief on the cross that “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). This paradise no longer exists in the heart of the earth, it is now in the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:4).

After three days and three nights, Jesus was raised physically from the grave. The stone was rolled away and the soldiers guarding the tomb fled in terror. Jesus emerged in a resurrection body, still bearing the marks of the cross in His hand and side (John 20:27). It is clearly evident that Jesus did not appear as a spirit after the resurrection but rather with a physical body. Jesus Himself clarified this point to His disciples (Luke 24:39). The resurrection of Jesus was a physical resurrection and not spiritual. This is an important theological point as it means His children will one day experience the same type of resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:53-54).

## **THE ASCENSION AND EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST**

After His resurrection, Jesus spent forty days appearing to His disciples and hundreds of other witnesses (Acts 1:3, 1 Corinthians 15:6). This period of time established an irrefutable testimony that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead and was the Savior of mankind. At the end of these forty days, Jesus brought His disciples to the Mount of Olives and gave them His final commands to go and preach the gospel to all the world (Mark 16:15). He also commanded them to wait in Jerusalem for the empowering of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49). After this, Jesus

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<sup>35</sup> L. S. Potwin, “Christ’s Descent In To Hades” *Bibliotheca Sacra*; BSAC 050:199 (Jul 1893): 541, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac050-199-07?highlight=death%20of%20Christ> (accessed March 3, 2019)

ascended into the clouds to be exalted at the right hand of His Father (Acts 2:33). Kenneth Alan Daughters points out that “A proper understanding of the ascension is necessary to maintain the truth of the gospel. If he is not on the right hand of God the Father, he does not reign, and we have no King.”<sup>36</sup> Yet Jesus did ascend and therefore reigns over the affairs of man and cares for His church.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Doctrines of Christology are of utmost importance to the Christian believer. If Jesus is not God, if He was not sinless, if He did not rise from the grave, if He did not ascend, then all of Christianity falls apart. The good news is that these doctrines are true, and there is no firmer foundation in which to rest one’s faith than on the Lord Jesus Christ.

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<sup>36</sup> Kenneth Alan Daughters, “The Theological Significance of the Ascension” *Emmaus Journal*; EMJ 03:2 (Winter 1994):163, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/emj03-2-04?highlight=ascension%20of%20Jesus> (accessed March, 3, 2019)



# PNEUMATOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest needs today among Christians is a doctrinally sound understanding of the Holy Spirit. Modern times have seen a rise in religious groups that deny the deity of the Holy Spirit and completely misinterpret His purpose in the church age. J. D. O'Donnell observes how that the Jewish apostles did not seem to have difficulties recognizing the divinity of Jesus nor that of the Holy Spirit. He notes that it was later that the doctrine of the Trinity became the subject of attack.<sup>37</sup> A correct understanding of the Holy Spirit is essential to a correct understanding of the Trinity, as these doctrines affect each other. Each Christian believer should be equipped to not only explain this doctrine to others, but also to defend it from the inevitable attacks of cults and false teachers.

The word for spirit is translated in the Greek from πνεῦμα (**pnēuma**), and is defined by James Strong as “a current of air, breath or a breeze; a spirit, the rational soul, vital principle, mental disposition, or an angel, demon, or God, Christ’s spirit, the Holy Spirit.”<sup>38</sup> Charles Hodge explains the significance of the term in his systematic theology stating, “The πνεῦμα bloweth where it listeth;” then any invisible power; then immaterial, invisible agents, as the soul and angels; then God himself, who is said to be a Spirit, to express his nature as an immaterial, intelligent being; and finally, the Third Person of the Trinity is called “The Spirit” by way of eminence, probably, for two reasons. First, because He is the power or efficiency of God, *i.e.*, the person through whom the efficiency of God is directly exercised; and secondly, to express his

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<sup>37</sup> J. D. O'Donnell, *Free Will Baptist Doctrines* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 2004), 63.

<sup>38</sup> James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 58.

relation to the other persons of the Trinity. As Father and Son are terms expressive of relation, it is natural to infer that the word Spirit is to be understood in the same way.”<sup>39</sup> It is clear then that even in His name the Holy Spirit shows His purpose, He is the person of the Trinity who accomplishes the work of God on the earth. A correct understanding of the Holy Spirit will therefore include an understanding of His work in relation to the church, the lost, and the individual believer. These topics will be explored, but first, it is crucial to examine the nature of the Holy Spirit.

### **THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

It is essential to understand and believe that the Holy Spirit is a person, that He is Deity, and that He is the third person of the Trinity. He is not just a force that God uses to accomplish His will, nor was He created. The Holy Spirit is God just like the Father and the Son.

This doctrine is attacked constantly by many religious groups such as the Jehovah’s Witness organization. In their website they state, “By referring to God’s spirit as his “hands,” “fingers,” or “breath,” the Bible shows that the holy spirit is not a person (Exodus 15:8, 10). A craftsman’s hands cannot function independent of his mind and body; likewise, God’s holy spirit operates only as he directs it (Luke 11:13). The Bible also compares God’s spirit to water and associates it with such things as faith and knowledge. These comparisons all point to the impersonal nature of the holy spirit.”<sup>40</sup> Deniers of the Holy Spirit as a person go on to state that 1 John 5:7, 8 is not legitimate Scripture and that the personality of the Holy Spirit in Scripture is

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<sup>39</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 522.

<sup>40</sup> Jw.org.<https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/what-is-the-holy-spirit/> (accessed December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009).

not true because the Bible speaks of wisdom and sin in Proverbs as having personality. They also suggest that the Bible provides no evidence that the apostles considered the Holy Spirit a person.

These attacks are not limited to modern times but have been consistent throughout the history of the church. John F. Walvoord notes in his article on the person of the Holy Spirit, “The personality of the Holy Spirit has been attacked by Socinius and his followers ancient and modern who have held to the general position that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal energy proceeding from God... While the variations in the views of doctrine on the Person of the Holy Spirit have been many, the great body of orthodox and conservative theology has held to the personality of the Spirit, the proofs of which may be here considered.”<sup>41</sup>

While it is true that in comparison to the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit can seem impersonal, it is an error to ignore the Biblical evidence of His personhood in Scripture. It is important to note that the view of the Holy Spirit is just an impersonal force is heresy and should be firmly refuted. The following evidence has traditionally been used to show the clear personhood of the Holy Spirit.

#### *Names that are given to the Holy Spirit*

William Evans explains in *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* that Christ calls the Holy Spirit the “Comforter” and speaks of Him taking His place (John 14:16). The same word is used to describe Jesus in 1 John 2:1. **Paraklētōs** is defined in *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* as an “intercessor, consoler: advocate, comforter.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> John F. Walvoord, “The Person of the Holy Spirit Part 1;” *Bibliotheca Sacra* Volume: BASAC 097:386 (apr 1940): 167, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac097-386-03?highlight=The%20Person%20of%20the%20Holy%20Spirit> (accessed December 10, 2018)

<sup>42</sup> James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 55.

Evans points out that this is not a word that can be used to describe an impersonal force and take the place of Jesus Christ Himself.<sup>43</sup>

#### *Personal Pronouns used of the Holy Spirit*

Evans goes on to note that the Greek masculine pronoun *ekeinos* is used twelve times to describe the Holy Spirit in John 16. The same word is used of Christ many times in the book of 1 John.<sup>44</sup> While those that deny the personality of the Holy Spirit deny the importance of this, to do so is simply foolish. The Bible is clearly trying to communicate personality in its use of the masculine pronoun with a neutral noun.

#### *The Holy Spirit identified with the Father and the Son*

The church is commanded to Baptize believers in the name (singular) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. One cannot substitute the Holy Ghost for “wind” or “breath” in this statement. Evans points out that the use of “name” as singular implies that all three persons are equal.<sup>45</sup> This and other examples in Scriptures shows that the Holy Spirit is a person and not an impersonal force.

#### *Personal characteristics of the Holy Spirit*

Acts 15:28 states, “For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost.” This is not something that can be said of an impersonal force. The spirit gives gifts (1 Corinthians 12), can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), makes intercession (Romans 8:26), calls missionaries (Acts 13:2), and commands evangelists (Acts 16:6). Additionally, the Holy Spirit can be lied to (Acts 4:3), insulted (Hebrews 10:29), and sinned against (Matthew 12:31). These personal characteristics cannot be attributed to an impersonal force by any reasonable person.

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<sup>43</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 109.

<sup>44</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 109.

<sup>45</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 110.

## **THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Having established the personhood of the Holy Spirit, the next step is to confirm His Deity and equality with the Father and the Son. The doctrine of the Trinity is essential to understanding the Deity of the Holy Spirit. The Bible provides much evidence in this regard. In Acts 5:3-4 the Bible clearly calls the Holy Spirit “God.” This is an unmistakable proof of His Divinity. Evans points out that the Holy Spirit possesses divine attributes such as being omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10), omnipotent (Luke 1:35), and omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10,11).<sup>46</sup> Charles Hodge takes note how that the language of God is quoted as being the language of the Holy Ghost (Jeremiah 31:31, 33, 34; Hebrews 10:15).<sup>47</sup> Divine works are attributed to the Holy Ghost in creation (Genesis 1:2, Job 33:4), regeneration (John 3:5-8), and resurrection (Romans 8:11). In addition to all of these clear proofs the truth is clearly stated in the Scriptures that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost are one (1 John 5:7). The Holy Spirit is not merely a person, He is God, and part of the Holy Trinity with the Father and the Son.

## **THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Once a believer has a firm understanding of the nature of the Holy Spirit it is then important to study the Spirit’s work on the earth as it affects many practical aspects of the Christian life. The following is a brief summary of the work of the Holy Spirit.

### *The work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Scriptures*

The Bible states in 2 Peter 1:21 that the Holy Scriptures were given by the power of the Holy Ghost. Jerome L. Ficek states the following in his article *The doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Contemporary Thought*, “Thus, being illumined by His power, we believe, not on the strength of

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<sup>46</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 111.

<sup>47</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 527.

our own judgment or that of others, that Scripture is from God; we establish it with a certainty superior to human judgment (just as if we actually beheld the presence of God Himself in it) that Scripture came to us, by the ministry of men, from the very mouth of God. (*Institutes*, Bk. I, Chapt. 7, #4). Traditionally this was taken to mean that the Reformers were saying that the Holy Spirit confirms to the reader that the words of Scripture are the very words of God.”<sup>48</sup> The Holy Spirit not only inspired the human authors of Scripture, but also illuminates each believer as they seek to understand the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 2:13,14).

*The work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the sinner*

John 16:8-11 the Holy Spirit is said to be at work reproving the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement. The Spirit convicts the sinner of his sin and helps him understand the gospel. Calvinist doctrine teaches that the grace of God is irresistible and that the Holy Spirit only performs this work on the elect. Terrell Suggs clarifies this when he states, “The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God’s grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.”<sup>49</sup> It is important to refute this error. In Acts 7:51 the Bible says, “ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.” The Scriptures are clear that the Holy Spirit is at work on all sinners, even those that resist Him (Acts 7:51; John 12:32; John 5:39).

*The work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the believer*

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<sup>48</sup> Jerome L. Ficek “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Contemporary Thought” *Journal of the Evangelical Theology Society* JETS 03:3 (Summer 1960): 71  
<https://www.galaxie.com/article/jets03-3-03?highlight=the%20doctrine%20of%20the%20Holy%20Spirit%20in%20Contemporary%20Thought> (accessed December 10, 2018).

<sup>49</sup> Terrell D. Suggs, *My Journey in Grace* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2008), 19–20.

In addition to the conviction and drawing of every sinner, the Spirit works many incredible miracles in those that believe the gospel and are saved. The Holy Spirit regenerates and renews the believer (John 3:3-5; Titus 3:5), indwells the believer (1 Corinthians 6:19; Romans 8:19), and seals the believer until the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13,14; 4:30). This sealing happens at the moment of salvation and functions as the earnest of our salvation. The Holy Spirit also empowers the believer for service by giving him power in his testimony (Acts 1:9), providing the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), and spiritual gifts for edifying the church (1 Corinthians 12). Each and every believer is commanded to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16) and look to the Spirit for guidance in every area of his life.

#### *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit*

1 Corinthians 12:13 states that all believers are baptized by the Spirit into one body. This is often referred to as the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 3:11). John F. Walvoord writes of the confusion of many in regards to this doctrine, “Of the various works of the Holy Spirit related to the salvation of the believer, the work of baptism is most difficult to present. While in its nature it is far more simple than the work of efficacious grace, it has been given such divergent interpretation that its essential character is widely misunderstood.”<sup>50</sup> It is important to note that every believer is indwelt with the Holy Ghost at the time of salvation and not as a separate experience. A believer may be filled or not filled with the Spirit during his Christian life (Ephesians 5:18), but the Spirit always indwells every true believer (1 John 4:13). This indwelling also prohibits a believer from being possessed by a demon as is possible in

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<sup>50</sup> John F. Walvoord, “The Person of the Holy Spirit Part 7 The Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation” *Bibliotheca sacra* Volume: BSAC 098:392 (OCT 1941): 421, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac098-392-03?highlight=The%20Person%20of%20the%20Holy%20Spirit%20Part%207%20The%20Work%20of%20the%20Holy%20Spirit%20in%20Salvation> (accessed December 10, 2018).

unbelievers. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is also permanent and cannot be lost (Ephesians 4:30).<sup>51</sup>

### *The Fruit and Gifts of the Holy Spirit*

The believer who is walking in the power of the Holy Spirit will produce spiritual fruit which are listed as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23). This fruit is not to be confused with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. John Walvoord defines Spiritual Gifts as “divinely given capacities to perform useful functions of God, especially in the area of spiritual service.”<sup>52</sup> All gifts of the Holy Spirit are not all available to every believer but rather are given out as the Spirit sees fit. These gifts can be divided into two categories, temporary and permanent gifts. Permanent gifts are available now and can be seen in believers and churches today. Examples of permanent gifts are faith, serving, giving, administration, mercy, exhortation, and others. Examples of temporary gifts are prophecy, tongues, healings, miracles and various other sign gifts. The Bible teaches that the sign gifts were only necessary until the completion of the New Testament and after such would cease to be available to the believer (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).

### **CONCLUSION**

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is an important and fundamental doctrine of the Bible. To fall into error in regards to this doctrine is to fail to understand the nature of God himself. One

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<sup>51</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, “The Baptism of the Holy Spirit” *Bibliotheca Sacra* BSAC 109:435 (July 1952): 201, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac109-435-02?highlight=baptism%20of%20the%20Holy%20Spirit> (accessed March 19, 2019)

<sup>52</sup> John F. Walvoord, “Contemporary Issues in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Part IV: Spiritual Gifts Today” *Bibliotheca Sacra* BSAC 130:520 (Oct 1973): 315, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac130-520-03?highlight=Gifts%20of%20the%20Holy%20Spirit> (accessed March 18, 2019)



cannot follow sound doctrine without understanding correctly the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Those that take the time to learn these doctrines will enjoy a greater understanding of their Bible and personal Christian experience, as well as be capable of giving an answer to those that attack the personhood and Deity of the Holy Spirit.

# ANTHROPOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of man is an extremely important topic in the Bible because it directly affects the understanding of the gospel. If one does not have a correct view of himself and all of the human race, he will not understand or believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. Millard J Erickson noted the importance of anthropology when he stated, “Our anthropology will determine how we understand ourselves and, consequently, how we do theology, or even what theology is, that is, to the degree that it is thought of as a human activity.”<sup>53</sup> The biblical view of mankind is constantly attacked in both the secular and the religious world. Atheists view man from a purely humanist point of view and consider him just another animal on the earth. The Bible teaches that man is not an animal, but a unique being created by God for a specific purpose. Leander Keyser describes this when he stated, “It is evident that the Biblical writer meant to teach that God took a peculiar interest in the making of man and brought him into being by a special act and for a special purpose.”<sup>54</sup> The Bible states clearly Many religions view man as basically good and merely in need of improvements here and there. However, The Bible tells us the reality that mankind is fallen and condemned due to his sin. These truths point us to Jesus Christ, and the redemption that He purchased for all men.

## THE ORIGIN OF MAN

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<sup>53</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 425.

<sup>54</sup> Leander S. Keyser “The Problem Of Man’s Origin” *Bibliotheca Sacra* BSAC 082:326 (April 1925): 147, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac082-326-02?highlight=DOCTRINE%20OF%20MAN> (accessed March 18, 2019)

The study of the doctrine of man must begin with the origins of man. The Bible tells us plainly that man was created on the sixth day of creation (Genesis 1:26-31). When one examines biblical genealogy, it is apparent that man was created around six thousand years ago. The Bible is clear that man was created a fully intelligent being with the same mental and physical capabilities than modern men possess today (if not greater). However, modern atheistic science has cast doubt on the creation story mainly since the time of Charles Darwin. Most evolutionists claim that the world came about by a series of accidents over billions of years and that life unexplainably appeared and developed from single-celled organisms into animals and eventually into man. Today, many Christians attempt to merge evolution with the Bible using the theories of deistic or theistic evolution. James Leo Garrett Jr. describes these terms as meaning, “the view that “God began the process of evolution” and then withdrew to become “Creator emeritus” and reserving the latter for the view that, whereas “man’s physical nature is a product of the process of evolution,” “God specially created the spiritual nature of Adam.”<sup>55</sup> Those that believe in theistic evolution inevitably allegorize much of the book of Genesis and try to force the Bible to adapt to the atheistic evolution narrative. In doing so, they create many problems in their theology as noted by John Thomas Gulick in his article *Evolution and the fall of man*. He writes, “I cannot allow the present communication to appear in these columns without again recording my conviction that the writer is the most profound of living thinkers upon Darwinian topics, and that the generalizations which have been reached by his twenty years of thought are of more importance to the theory of evolution than any that have been published during the post-Darwinian period.” If it should eventually appear that man ascended from lower animal life

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<sup>55</sup> James Leo Garrett Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, Fourth Edition., vol. 1 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 366.

(which I suppose is still an open question), how are we to understand the story of the fall? A fall into sin and death, instead of a gradual rise out of animalism, with many stumblings backward?”<sup>56</sup> It is clear that a biblical view of creation and an evolutionistic world view simply cannot coexist.<sup>57</sup>

The true believer of the Bible, however, will not back down when someone simply says the word “science.” In fact, there is much scientific evidence that points to a young earth and absolutely no conclusive evidence in favor of the evolutionary narrative. This topic cannot be justly explored in this paper, but suffice it to say, the Biblical narrative of mankind’s origins must be taken literally if one is to claim to believe the Scriptures are the Word of God.

Man was created from the dust of the earth and God breathed in him the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). Woman was then taken out of the man and then she became his wife (Genesis 2:21-23). Man was created directly by God, and therefore is accountable directly to God. The purpose of man’s creation was to bring glory and pleasure to God (Revelation 4:11).

## **THE NATURE OF MAN**

Having established the origin of man, it is necessary to now examine his nature. Many view man as just another type of animal. The Bible tells us however, that man is separated from the animals in that he is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), and is to have dominion over all animals. The meaning of the image of God in man is something that has been understood differently by many throughout history. Gordon H. Clark writes of his belief that the image of

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<sup>56</sup> John Thomas Gulick, “Evolution and the fall of man” *Bibliotheca Sacra* Volume: BSAC 049:195 (Jul 1892): 516, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac049-195-08?highlight=evolution%20and%20the%20fall%20of%20man> (accessed December 10, 2018).

<sup>57</sup> Charles L. Surret, “Creation Stands; Evolution Falls” *Central Bible Quarterly* CENQ 14:1 (Spring 1971): 22, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/cenq14-1-02?highlight=evolution> (accessed March 18, 2019)

God in man is not physical but rather spiritual. He states, “This image cannot be man’s body for two reasons. First, God is spirit or mind and has no body. Hence a body would not be an image of him. Second, animals have bodies, yet they are not created in God’s image. If anyone should suggest that man walks upright, so that his bodily position could be the image, the reply is not merely that birds also walk on two legs, but that Genesis distinguishes man from animals by the image and not by any physiological structure. In fact, man himself is the image, as I Corinthians 11:7 indicates, in spite of the antithesis between man and woman found there, so also the other references quoted at the beginning. The image therefore is not an extra gadget attached to man after he had been created not a *domum superadditum* - nor a suit of clothes that he could take off. It is rather the unitary person. If the body is to be somehow included in the notion of image, it cannot be the body as such, for God has no body, but the body only as controlled by the spirit.”<sup>58</sup> While it could be argued that man could share physical resemblance to God (Exodus 33:20-23), it seems wisest to understand the image of God not as physical but rather as spiritual.

The image of God is likely in relation to the spiritual nature of man. Man is said to possess a body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23), and this distinction separates him from the animals. Norman Shepherd notes in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* that some argue that God’s image was lost during the fall and can only be reclaimed in salvation (Romans 8:29).<sup>59</sup> This argument does not consider that even fallen man is said to possess the image of God since God prohibited their murder based on those merits (Genesis 9:6). While it is likely true that man

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<sup>58</sup> Gordon H. Clark, “The image of God in Man;” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Volume: JETS 12:4 (fall 1969): 215, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jets12-4-03?highlight=the%20image%20of%20God%20in%20man> (accessed December 10, 2018).

<sup>59</sup> Norman Shepherd, “Image of God,” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1020.

lost part of God's image when he fell and became a sinful being, it is not true that he is no longer created in the image of God. Man is a spiritual being, created in God's image, that will exist eternally in either in heaven or in hell (Hebrews 9:27).

Each and every man possesses a body, a soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The body comes from the natural biological process of reproduction. The soul is created by God and united with the body at the time of conception. The creation of the soul is defended by Ryrie's *Basic Theology* when he noted, "creationism teaches that God creates the soul at the moment of conception or birth and immediately unites it with the body. The soul is sinful not because its creation was somehow defective, but because of its contact with inherited guilt through the body."<sup>60</sup>

## **THE FALL OF MAN**

In discussing the fall of man and resulting curse on all of creation, it is important to note that everything that God created originally was perfect (Genesis 1:19). Every problem that mankind and this world have are a result of sin. Every murder, every war, every disease, and every death, is a direct result of man's unprovoked rebellion against his Creator (Genesis 3:17-19). There are those that seek to blame God for the suffering that is experienced in this world, but this is simple foolishness. Man is the guilty party, not God.

Some have suggested that God should never have placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden, because He knew that man would disobey Him. It should be noted that God has always offered man a choice to obey or not (John 5:40). This is called a free will. In this way when man chooses to obey God it is out of love, not force. The same is true when man

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<sup>60</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 221.

chooses eternal condemnation, it is his decision to reject God's mercy. This point is important as Calvinism makes God the author of sin when it says that God is sovereign and does not allow man a choice to be saved or not. God is sovereign, but He gives man a choice to obey him (Joshua 24:15). The result of man's choice was indeed the knowledge of good and evil. Adam now knew evil personally and would pass on his sin nature and resulting consequences to all men who would be born after him (Romans 5:12).

### **THE FUTURE OF MAN**

This fallen nature affects all men and not only destroys us here on the earth as we live in sin and resulting consequences but also in eternal condemnation.<sup>61</sup> The consequences of sin will be most terribly felt in eternity. Mankind is not a temporary being but rather an eternal one and apart from salvation will suffer eternally as a consequence for his sin. (Revelation 20:9, 21:8). The judgement of God against man's sin is just and righteous. One must understand that rebellion against the Holy Creator is a tremendous crime.

Although God would have been just to allow all mankind to suffer eternal condemnation without any intervention or salvation, He chose to show His great love and provide man a way of salvation. It should be noted that the fallen angels were not given such a merciful offer. God's plan of redemption required that justice be given for man's offense (Romans 5:5). The only way that man could be redeemed was for the Son of God to come to earth and pay the penalty for man's sin with His own blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). Jesus was born of a virgin and He thus bypassed the lineage of sin passed down from Adam (Romans 5:12). He lived a sinless life and then

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<sup>61</sup> James F. Myers, "Mark 16:16-18: An Alternative" *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal CTSJ* 07:1 (Jan 2001): 8, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/ctsj07-1-01?highlight=eternal%20condemnation> (accessed March 19, 2019)

offered himself up as the final sacrifice for man's sin (Romans 5:8). Through Christ, salvation is offered to all men who will come to Christ by faith (Romans 5:1).

Through Jesus Christ mankind can avoid eternal condemnation and enjoy eternal salvation. The Bible tells us that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things God hath prepared for them that love him (1 Corinthians 2:9)." Jesus promised a mansion for His children (John 14:2), and that one day many would reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12). The Bible describes a new heaven and a new earth and a new Jerusalem (Revelations 20) where the redeemed will pass eternity with their Lord Jesus Christ. All tears and pain and sorrow will be wiped away and there will be no more suffering or pain for all eternity (Revelation 21:4). Most glorious of all is that the throne of God is in heaven. Paul tells the Thessalonian church that when Christ comes back they will thereafter ever be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* reminds us that "Heaven most commonly refers to the dwelling-place of God. Heaven is where the glory of God is expressed in pristine clarity."<sup>62</sup> This blessed eternity is awaiting all those that by faith receive the free gift of salvation that they are offered through Jesus Christ.

## **CONCLUSION**

For a Christian to have a correct understanding of Biblical Theology, it is imperative that he correctly understand the doctrine of man. This includes that creation of man by God not some evolutionary system. It includes a correct understanding of the fall of man and the means of redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian should be prepared to defend the doctrine of man from attack by the false doctrines of humanism and those that attempt to

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<sup>62</sup> Bradford A. Mullen, "Heaven, Heavens, Heavenslies," *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 333.



proclaim man's innocence and God's guilt for the evils that are present in this world. For one to truly come to Christ for salvation, he must first recognize his guilt before a Holy God. Those that recognize their sinful state will find abundant mercy through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

# HAMARTIOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

The Doctrine of Sin is of utmost importance to the student of the Bible as it will form his understanding and beliefs of other key doctrines. Among the doctrines affected by our views of sin are the doctrine of God, the doctrine of salvation, and the doctrine of man. Millard Erickson points out this direct relation when he said, “Our approach to the problems of society will also be governed by our view of sin. On the one hand, if we feel that humanity is basically good or, at worst, morally neutral, we will view the problems of society as stemming from an unwholesome environment. Alter the environment, and changes in individual humans and their behavior will follow. If, on the other hand, the problems of society are rooted in radically perverted human minds and wills, then the nature of those individuals will have to be altered, or they will continue to infect the whole.”<sup>63</sup> This is indeed the root of many problems in modern society, men simply does not understand the doctrine of sin. Without this understanding and admission of one’s own sinfulness, he cannot accept the gift of salvation. This chapter will deal with the various aspects of the doctrine of Hamartiology.

## THE NATURE OF SIN

To begin to understand Hamartiology, one must begin by examining the nature of sin. What exactly is sin? Millard J. Erickson provides the following definition of sin in his *Christian Theology*, “Sin is any evil action or evil motive that is in opposition to God. Simply stated, sin is failure to let God be God and placing something or someone in God’s rightful place of

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<sup>63</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology, 3rd ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 515.

supremacy.”<sup>64</sup> The Bible calls sin by many names, and at times these names can emphasize different aspects of sin. Some of these names include, evil, abomination, perversion, treachery, rebellion, iniquity, transgression, and error. The *Lexham Bible Dictionary* defines sin simply as human activity that is contrary to God’s will.<sup>65</sup> Sin is the breaking of God’s law (1 John 3:4)<sup>66</sup>. Often times men view selfishness or personal desire as the true nature of sin.<sup>67</sup> This definition is not accurate because even loving another person unselfishly, yet more than God (as Adam did Eve) is sin. Sin is loving anything above God and stealing His rightful place of priority and prominence in our lives.<sup>68</sup> All men have a natural understanding of sin because the Law of God is written in the heart (Romans 2:15), and man is aware when he breaks that Law. Even the atheist will admit that murder is wrong. He may not be able to explain why it is wrong, but the truth of sin is obvious to him.

## **THE SOURCE OF SIN**

While modern philosophies contend that sin is a result of man’s environment or social status, the Bible teaches that man’s sin is a result of his fallen nature. The Bible teaches us that the first to sin was not Adam but rather Satan (Ezequiel 28:15). Satan was present in the form of a serpent and tempted Eve when she first ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and

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<sup>64</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology, 3rd ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 513.

<sup>65</sup> J. Jordan Henderson, “Sin,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

<sup>66</sup> J. H. Fairchild, “The Nature Of Sin” *Bibliotheca Sacra*; BSAC 025:97 (Jan 1868): 31, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac025-97-03?highlight=nature%20of%20sin> (accessed March 4, 2019)

<sup>67</sup> Miss Olive M. Winchester, “Sin In The Light Of To-Day” *Bibliotheca Sacra* Volume: BSAC 076:302 (Apr 1919): 155, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac076-302-02?highlight=DOCTRINE%20OF%20SIN> (accessed March 4, 2019)

<sup>68</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology, 3rd ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 530.

evil. However, Satan's sin would have had no bearing on the human race if Adam himself had not sinned. Adam's sin is known as Original Sin. Charles Hodges describes original sin when he stated, "The effects of Adam's sin upon his posterity are declared in our standards to be, (1.) The guilt of his first sin. (2.) The loss of original righteousness. (3.) The corruption of our whole nature, which (*i.e.*, which corruption), is commonly called original sin."<sup>69</sup> Man's original sin was a result of a direct disobedience to the boundary that God had given him.<sup>70</sup> Sin was imputed to man when he broke God's law (Romans 5:13). The moment that man disobeyed, he lost his innocence and sin entered into the world. (Romans 5:12). The world was cursed and death for the first time was present as a consequence of sin (Romans 6:23; Genesis 3:17). Another result of the fall was the spiritual death of man (Ephesians 2:5). Man became a sin-corrupted being and with a fallen or depraved nature. This sin nature has been passed down to every generation and as a result each and every man is born sinful.

While men are naturally sinners at birth, sin is by no means natural. God created all things good originally and is not the creator of sin.<sup>71</sup> The guilt and culpability of sin rest solely on mankind. While Satan was involved in the temptation of man, the guilt of man's sin is his own. This is why it is so important to recognize the free will of man. Without it, God becomes the author of sin. John S. Feinberg points out that the Calvinistic denial of free will puts him in line with atheists who claim that man could not be at fault for sin if he had no free will.<sup>72</sup> This is

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<sup>69</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 227.

<sup>70</sup> John A. Aloisi, "Jacob Arminius And The Doctrine Of Original Sin Journal;" Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal DBSJ 21:0 (2016): 185, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/dbsj21-0-10?highlight=nature%20of%20sin> (accessed March 4, 2019)

<sup>71</sup> James Leo Garrett Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical, Fourth Edition.*, vol. 1 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 534.

<sup>72</sup> John S. Feinberg, "And The Atheist Shall Lie Down With The Calvinist: Atheism, Calvinism, And The Free Will Defense;" Trinity Journal TRINJ 01:2 (Fall 1980): 142,

indeed truth. It is blasphemy to claim that Adam was not to blame for his sin. While the Bible does teach total depravity in the sense that all men are wicked by nature (Jeremiah 17:9), it does not teach that man is incapable of choosing to believe in Christ (Revelation 22:17). The Calvinist theologian will defend his belief by pointing out that God must draw a sinner to repentance (John 6:44). This point is refuted by observing that the Bible teaches that God attempts to draw all men unto Himself (John 12:32).

### **THE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN**

The Bible clearly states that the consequence of sin is death (Romans 6:23). There are two types of death taught in the Bible. While physical death is indeed very real and present, the most horrible consequence of sin is that of spiritual death, also known as the second death. Rolland McCune defines the second death as, “the permanent and final separation of the person from God. It is an irrevocable continuation of spiritual death, spoken of as “the second death, the lake of fire” (Rev 20:14) and “the lake of fire and brimstone” (Rev 21:8).” He also notes that “there is no remedy for the second death.”<sup>73</sup> Although man is worthy of this second death due to his sinful and corrupt nature (Psalm 51:5), man is not held accountable for his sin until he reaches a certain age of accountability (Romans 7:9). This is God’s means of shewing mercy to the very young or mentally handicapped incapable of receiving the gospel. After this point of understanding, all men must put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ or they will be condemned to a lake of fire. There is only one way to escape the consequence of sin, and that is through Jesus Christ.

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<https://www.galaxie.com/article/trinj01-2-02?highlight=atheist%20lie%20down%20calvinist> (accessed March 5, 2019)

<sup>73</sup> Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity: The Doctrines of Salvation, the Church, and Last Things*, vol. 3 (Allen Park, MI: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 305.

A popular theological trend is to attempt to walk around clear biblical statements and teach that the second death is not an eternal punishment of the wicked but rather annihilation. Edward Fudge clearly states this viewpoint, “Both the OT and NT instead clearly teach a resurrection of the wicked for divine judgment, the fearful anticipation of a consuming fire, irrevocable expulsion from God’s presence into a place where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth, such conscious suffering as the divine justice individually requires—and finally, the total, everlasting extinction of the wicked with no hope of resurrection, restoration or recovery.<sup>74</sup> Those that hold to this belief often try to point to Old Testament language that seemingly indicates the destruction of the wicked. These theologians are forced to completely ignore or try to explain away clear Biblical teaching such as “everlasting fire” (Matthew 25:41), “everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46), and “tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Revelation 22:5). One need only examine the story of the rich man in hell to understand the foolishness of believing in the annihilation of the wicked (Luke 16:19-31).

While the second death is no longer to be feared by the believer, it is important to understand that sin brings consequences to the saved as well. The Bible teaches that son will suffer chastisement from his Father (Hebrews 12:8). Sin can also cause a believer to lose rewards in heaven (2 John 8). While the believer is eternally secure and need not fear losing his salvation, he should fear the consequences of sin on his present life and that which is to come. The believer can damage his fellowship with his Father by allowing unconfessed sin in his life (1 John 1:6).

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<sup>74</sup> Edward Fudge, “The Final End Of The Wicked” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Volume: JETS 27:3 (Sep 1984): 334, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jets27-3-08?highlight=lake%20of%20fire> (accessed March 4, 2019)

Even those things done for Christ, but with a selfish motive can result in the forfeiture of the reward (1 Corinthians 3:15; Hebrews 4:12).<sup>75</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

A correct understanding of the doctrine of sin will prepare the sinner for the presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to save sinners, and to falsely believe that one is righteous will inhibit a man from understanding and receiving the salvation of Christ through faith. All men must kneel before the cross in humility and admission, that without the mercy and blood of Jesus, they are eternally and hopelessly lost.

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<sup>75</sup> Wesley L. Gerig, "Reward," *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 686.

# SOTERIOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

Having a firm understanding of the doctrines of God, Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit, Man, and Sin, it is now possible to examine the immensely important doctrines of Salvation. The aforementioned doctrines must be understood prior to understanding salvation. If one does not know who Jesus Christ is, how can they believe in Him? If one does not understand their sinful condition, why would they desire a Savior? The salvation of man is the greatest love story ever told and all three persons of the Godhead are clearly seen in the work of salvation. God the Father gave His only begotten son to be the Savior of the world (John 3:16). God the Son became the Lamb of God, and offered Himself up on the cross to take the sin punishment for all mankind (2 Corinthians 5:21, John 1:36). God the Holy Spirit works to convict and draw the sinner to Christ and regenerates and seals the believer (Ephesians 1:13, Titus 3:5).<sup>76</sup> In this chapter, the great doctrines of Salvation will be examined.

In studying the doctrines of salvation, it is important to make the dispensational distinction between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of the Grace of God that is preached during the church age. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of Christ's coming kingdom and the restoration of Israel. R. C. Sproul wrote in his commentary of *Mark*, "when the Old Testament speaks of the coming kingdom of God, it refers to God's personal visitation to this fallen world to manifest redemption. The people of Israel in the Old Testament looked

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<sup>76</sup> W. Madison Grace II, "Through The Holy Spirit: His Work In Salvation" Journal for Baptist Theology & Ministry Volume: JBTM 06:1 (Spring 2009): 90, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jbtm06-1-07?highlight=Trinity%20in%20salvation> (accessed March 5, 2019)



forward to the day when God's rule would be manifest here on earth in the coming of His Anointed One. So, following in the footsteps of John the Baptist, who had announced the coming of the kingdom, Jesus declared the gospel of the kingdom of God."<sup>77</sup> Peter referenced the coming kingdom of Christ in Acts 3:19 when he said, "when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." While the Gospel of the Kingdom called for a national repentance and receiving of Christ as Messiah, the Gospel of the Grace of God is focused on individual salvation. The Gospel of the Grace of God was the proclamation of the apostles after the rejection of Christ by Israel. The apostles changed their focus in the book of Acts after Israel continued to reject Christ as their Messiah stating, "seeing ye put it from you...we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46). The gospel of the Kingdom will come into prominence again after the rapture of the church as God's focus will once again return to the nation of Israel. Ethelbert W. Bullinger explains further, "The Gospel of the Kingdom was the proclamation by and concerning the Messiah made by John the Baptist and Himself, and is the subject of the Four Gospels. The Gospel of God is the proclamation concerning the same Messiah, made by the Twelve, the apostle Paul, and "them that heard" the Lord, during the dispensation of the Acts of the Apostles, and is the subject of their testimony and of their writings and the earlier Epistles of Paul. Seeing it was good news sent after the resurrection of Christ, it is all of pure grace and favor, and hence is the Gospel of the Grace of God".<sup>78</sup> The focus of this chapter will be the gospel of the Grace of God.

## **JUSTIFICATION**

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<sup>77</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Mark, First Edition., St. Andrew's Expository Commentary* (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2011), 17.

<sup>78</sup> Ethelbert W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible: Being the Authorized Version of 1611 with the Structures and Notes, Critical, Explanatory and Suggestive and with 198 Appendixes*, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2018), 168.

The Doctrine of Justification is important because it clarifies one's state before God after Christ saves their soul. William Evans defined justification clearly when he said, "Justification does not mean to make one righteous but rather to declare one righteous in a legal sense."<sup>79</sup> The purpose of the Old Testament Law was to show a man clearly that he had broken God's law, and was therefore guilty in a legal sense and worthy of death (Galatians 3:10). This realization was then intended to bring the sinner to Jesus Christ for salvation (Galatians 3:24). It is impossible for a man to be saved by keeping the law. First because no man could keep the law, and second because there is no law that can give life (Galatians 3:21). The law simply shows ones need for Christ.

Man's guilt demanded a payment. God's justice must be satisfied and therefore an offering for sin was required (Hebrews 9:22). Jesus became the propitiation for our sins. The word propitiation is defined as "means of forgiveness, a sacrifice of atonement, place of forgiveness, atonement cover."<sup>80</sup> Christ provided atonement for our sins and therefore reconciled us to God (Ephesians 2:16). When man receives the gift of salvation through faith, this reconciliation is applied to him. The righteousness of Christ is given to the believer (Romans 10:4) and in the sight of God he is not just forgiven, but is seen as innocent because he bears the righteousness of Christ and not his own righteousness.<sup>81</sup> He is then declared justified. Justified in a sense means "just if I had never sinned." Without the sacrifice of Christ on the cross of

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<sup>79</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 156.

<sup>80</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>81</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, "Justification: A Doctrine In Crisis" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society JETS* 38:1 (Mar 1995): 61, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jets38-1-07?highlight=justification> (accessed March 5, 2019)

Calvary, this justification would not be possible. The demands of the justice and holiness of God had to be filled.

## **REPENTANCE**

Having established that the sacrifice of Christ makes Justification possible, the attention now turns to the method of applying this justification to an individual soul. While faith is the means of receiving salvation, repentance goes hand in hand with faith. The apostle Peter wrote in his second epistle that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). In recent years there have been arguments regarding the necessity of repentance in salvation with some groups asserting that salvation is by faith alone and therefore repentance is not necessary. While salvation is indeed by faith alone, true faith cannot come without a change of the mind. This change of mind is repentance. The Bible clearly states that repentance is part of salvation (2 Corinthians 7:10, Romans 2:4). Repentance is not a work and to understand this one must begin by examining the definition of repentance. The word simply means a change of mind which results in a change of life.<sup>82</sup> The “change of life” is the fruit of salvation which is received by faith alone. But the change of the mind necessary to believe in Christ. Often times this doctrine is misconstrued and a form of “Lordship salvation” is preached. Lordship salvation is works based, and therefore is in contradiction to the Bible (Ephesians 2:8). Repentance should be viewed as a change of the mind that allows someone to put their faith in Christ.<sup>83</sup> For example, without repentance (turning from) of one’s faith in Mary for salvation,

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<sup>82</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>83</sup> Robert N. Wilkin, “Does Your Mind Need Changing? Repentance Reconsidered” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society JOTGES* 11:1 (Spring 1998): 38, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jotges11-1-03?highlight=repentance%20salvation> (accessed March 5, 2019)

how could he believe in Christ? Faith and repentance can be seen as two sides of the same coin. One cannot be saved by having their faith in Christ and also their faith in their good works. They must repent of the old erroneous belief in order to truly believe in Christ. F. Leroy Forlines explained the concept clearly when he said, “I believe the answer is found in looking at repentance and faith as one condition because both are presented in the Scripture as the only condition of salvation. They both speak of the same experience...To change the mind in repentance refers to the change of the mind, heart, and will. One viewpoint is exchanged for another viewpoint.”<sup>84</sup>

## **FAITH**

The Doctrine of Faith describes the mode in which salvation is received. Having changed one’s mind in regards to his former erroneous beliefs (repentance), the sinner must now believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9) and receive the free gift of salvation (John 1:12). The Bible is absolutely clear that salvation is not of any merit of one’s own works, but only through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5).<sup>85</sup> The moment a sinner truly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, he is saved. Paul speaks in Romans chapter 10:9-13 of a “calling” upon the name of the Lord for salvation, this passage is the basis for a sinner praying and asking Christ to forgive His sins and receiving Him as their Savior. This is of course only possible through faith in the Christ and His finished work on the cross.

## **REGENERATION**

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<sup>84</sup> F. Leroy Forlines, *The Quest for Truth: Theology for Postmodern World* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications; Worldwide Ministries, 2001), 254.

<sup>85</sup> Norman P. Shepherd, “Justification by Faith Alone” *Reformation and Revival* RAR 11:2 (Spring 2002): 78, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/rar11-2-05?highlight=faith> (accessed March 5, 2019)

At the moment a new believer places his faith in Jesus Christ, several wonderful things happen to him spiritually. The new believer is regenerated and renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5), passes from death unto life (John 5:24), and is sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). The Holy Spirit then dwells permanently in the believer and becomes the earnest of his salvation (2 Corinthians 1:22). This sealing by the Holy Spirit is the basis of the believer's eternal security. The Bible clearly teaches that a believer cannot perish after he has been saved (John 10:28). This eternal security is not dependent on a believer's faithfulness to Christ but rather Christ's faithfulness (2 Timothy 2:13). While a believer may lose his rewards, suffer chastisement, and lose his fellowship with the Father, he cannot lose his salvation (1 Corinthians 3:15).

It is important to note that this regeneration takes place at the time of faith in Christ and not when a believer is baptized, as is often erroneously believed. Believer's baptism is one of the two ordinances of the church and is the first step of obedience for a believer. It does not, however, have anything to do with regeneration or salvation. Paul was clear that baptism and the gospel are two separate doctrines (1 Corinthians 1:17).

## **ADOPTION**

The doctrine of adoption describes the marvelous fact that a new believer is made a "son of God" at the moment of salvation (John 1:12). He is therefore given the privilege of calling God his Father and experiencing his Father's guidance and care as a son and not a servant.<sup>86</sup> The biblical doctrine of adoption differs from a civil adoption in that a believer is born into the family

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<sup>86</sup> Maarten Kuivenhoven, "Calvin's Practical View of Adoption: Its Privileges And Duties" Puritan Reformed Journal PRJ 06:1 (Jan 2014): 46, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/prj06-1-04?highlight=doctrine%20of%20adoption> (accessed March 5, 2019)

of God (John 3:5). He is given the legal privileges of a natural born son and is made an heir with Christ (Romans 8:17).

The Bible states that a believer's adoption was predestined before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-5). This predestination does not teach that God decided for all men whether they would be saved or sent to an eternity in hell. It should be viewed as part of God's foreknowledge. God knew before the foundation of the world, who would receive His gift of salvation and who would not. To teach that man does not have a choice to receive or reject the gift of salvation is to contradict the teachings of the Bible (1 Timothy 2:4).

Those who believe in unconditional election (Calvinism) also teach that Jesus died only for the Elect. This is clearly refuted in Scripture. Christ is the "Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." (1 Timothy 4:10). While only those that believe will be saved, Christ is the Saviour of all men, meaning He died for all.

## **SANCTIFICATION**

The Doctrine of Sanctification refers to the process of a believer being conformed the Image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). The *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* makes the following distinction between Sanctification and Justification, "justification is a once-for-all, declarative act of God as Judge, whereas sanctification is a progressive change in the character of the person justified."<sup>87</sup> Sanctification has three phases, past, present, and future. It begins at the moment of salvation (past), continues throughout a believer's life (present), and is completed at the time of glorification (future). Paul describes the process of sanctification in 2 Timothy 2:21. He states that, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified,

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<sup>87</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Sanctification," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1898.

and meet for the master's use.”. Each Christian should strive to become more and more like Christ throughout his life.

## **GLORIFICATION**

The Doctrine of Glorification describes the final result of salvation, the glorification of the believer. Elwell and Beitzel state, “regeneration refers to the beginning, sanctification to the middle, and glorification to the end in the order of salvation.”<sup>88</sup> When a believer dies, his soul and spirit are immediately present with the Lord in heaven, but his body remains on the earth awaiting resurrection (2 Corinthians 5:8). At the time of the rapture, the believer will be reunited with a new resurrection body. Those that are alive at the time of the rapture will be instantly changed and will also receive this new resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:52). The new body will be incorruptible and suited for all eternity (1 Corinthians 15:54).

## **ETERNAL CONDEMNATION OF THE LOST**

While an eternity of joy and peace awaits the redeemed believer, the opposite is true for those who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ. The unbeliever at death will leave his body in the grave, but his soul will awake in the flames of hell (Luke 16:23). There he will suffer and burn in torment until the final judgement of the lost, known as the Great White Throne Judgement (Revelation 20:11-15). During this judgement, those in hell will be brought out to be judged according to their works (Revelation 20:13). As the blood of Christ is the only payment for sin, all those judged by their works and not the righteousness of Christ will be cast into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the eternal place of torment for the unbelieving. The Bible indicate that

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<sup>88</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Sanctification,” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1898.

the condemned will have some type of resurrected body in which they will suffer for all eternity (Daniel 12:2; Mark 9:44).

## **CONCLUSION**

The doctrines of salvation must be understood and defended by every believer. The modern world is filled with false religions preaching lies and deceit. Many are trusting in their good works for salvation and must come to a saving faith in the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Each Christian should be faithful to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout all the world.



# ECCLESIOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

Having examined the doctrines of salvation, one must turn his attention to the Doctrine of the Church, and its special dispensation of grace. There have been many who have undervalued the church and ignored its importance. William Evans makes a clear point when he said, “It is well to remember that Jesus Christ positively identifies Himself with the Church (Acts 9) and not with Christendom.”<sup>89</sup> Christ promised to build His church, not some para-church organization. A correct understanding of the doctrine of the church is important because it helps the student of the Bible place the correct emphasis on importance of the local New Testament church that many seem to have neglected.

## THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

The word “church” in the New Testament comes from the Greek word ἐκκλησία (ēkklēsia), and means a called-out assembly.<sup>90</sup> The word almost always refers to a local and earthly congregation of believers. In Hebrews 12:23 the Bible state, “to the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven.” In this case, the word church refers to the entirety of believers who have placed their faith in Christ and whom will one day all be assembled together in heaven. The first official assembly of this “church of the firstborn” will be on the day of the rapture, and it is this body that will be the bride of Christ. The vast majority of the other uses of the word in the New Testament refer to autonomous congregations located in different cities of the world. A church then is defined as a local congregation of saved and

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<sup>89</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 181.

<sup>90</sup> James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 26.

baptized believers, who have joined together for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission and the commandments of Christ.<sup>91</sup> Jesus Christ wrote to seven different congregations in Revelations 2-3, and spoke to them as individual churches as opposed to one “catholic” or “universal” congregation.<sup>92</sup>

It is popular among modern Christian theologians to emphasize the general assembly of Hebrews 12:23 not in the future, but in the present time, calling it the “Universal Church”. Many believe that because they are part of this “Universal Church”, they have no need of a local congregation. This theology is flawed in that it is taking out of context the Church of the Firstborn and forgetting the immense importance the Christ places upon the institution of the local church. A believer should view the local New Testament church as the institution by which Christ operates on the earth today and which carries His authority and power. To neglect the local church is to sin against God, and neglect the perfect plan of Christ in the local congregation (Hebrews 10:25). One might view the local believer as the soldier, and the church as the army.

## **THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH**

The exact moment of the founding of the church is heavily debated amongst theologians. The Bible does not clearly define its beginning. This author believes that the church was founded by Jesus Christ during the First Advent and empowered at Pentecost. The transition from the dispensation of the Law to that Church began with John the Baptist (Luke 16:16) and continued through the book of Acts. The cross is the central event in the founding of the church and Pentecost is its empowerment by the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>91</sup> Anonymous, “International Mission Board, Definition Of A Church” *Journal for Baptist Theology & Ministry* JBTM 05:1 (Spring 2008): 93, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jbtm05-1-08?highlight=church%20government> (accessed March 5, 2019)

<sup>92</sup> Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

The Lord Jesus Christ made it clear that He was the foundation of the church, and would build his church (Matthew 16:18). The Roman Catholic church has misinterpreted Matthew 16:18 and believes that the apostle Peter is the foundation of the church. A simple Bible study and comparison of other Scriptures easily shows that this is not the case. Jesus is the chief cornerstone of the church, not Peter (Ephesians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:6).

## **THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

The biblical mode of church membership is by salvation, believer's baptism, and unity in the fundamental doctrines of the Bible (Acts 2:41, Romans 16:17). While baptism is not necessary for salvation, it is the first step of obedience after salvation. Baptism is a public confession of faith in Christ, and pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Romans 6:3-4). The new believer identifies with Christ in this picture by being completely immersed in water and then raised out of it (Acts 8:39). Because of this picture given during baptism, the only biblical mode is by immersion. Sprinkling, and other methods of baptism are completely without biblical support and perversions of the ordinance.

The candidate for baptism must be a born-again believer. Acts 10:47 makes clear that those who are baptized must already be saved.<sup>93</sup> Because of this fact, infant baptism and baptism of unbelievers is unbiblical. Baptizing someone who believes that baptism is part of salvation is also unbiblical because it is adding works to salvation and thus invalidating their potential faith in Christ (Galatians 5:4; Ephesians 2:8-9). A new believer who experienced an unbiblical mode of baptism in the past should be rebaptized (Acts 19:3-5). Being baptized unbiblically is not true baptism, it was just getting wet.

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<sup>93</sup> Roger L. Peterson, "Baptist Distinctives Among Other Denominations" Central Bible Quarterly Volume: CENQ 03:2 (Summer 1960): 16, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/cenq03-2-03?highlight=church%20government> (accessed March 5, 2019).

## THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH

The church has three missions on the earth. First, to evangelize the lost (Mark 16:15), second, to edify the Saint (Ephesians 4:12), and third, to glorify the Savior (Ephesians 3:21). The evangelization of the world is completed through preaching the gospel locally and globally (Acts 1:8). A church should always be involved in outreach that attempts to win souls in their city, surrounding cities, and globally through support of world-wide missions. The Book of Acts provides a model for churches ordaining and sending out their members to other parts of the world for the purpose of preaching the gospel (Acts 13:1-4). The church should also support financially missionaries who are taking the gospel to other cities or lands (2 Corinthians 8:4; Philippians 4:18).

The second function of the church is to edify the Saints through fellowship, worship, and preaching. The Saints are also edified through the administration of the two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper. An ordinance is simply something ordained or commanded.<sup>94</sup> The Lord's supper and the baptism are two commands that Christ gave to the church to be obeyed and performed by the church. There are no biblical examples of baptism or the Lord's supper being administered by anyone outside of the authority of the church. As such, one should only be baptized by a New Testament church and receive the Lord's supper from one as well. It should be noted that different churches have different standards for who may partake in the Lord's supper. Some churches allow anyone in the service to partake (open communion), some churches allow only members of like-minded churches (close communion), and some only members of that church (closed communion). Those who hold to close and closed communion usually do so

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<sup>94</sup> Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

in an effort to avoid defiling the Lord's supper by having unbelievers partake (1 Corinthians 11:27). This author pastor's a church in Colombia, a nation that is over ninety percent Catholic. His church practices closed communion in an effort to avoid Catholic visitors mistaking the Lord's supper for a Christian form of mass. It is important to avoid dishonoring the Lord's table in how the supper is administered.

The final function of the church is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. This is accomplished by fulfilling the first two functions. It is also accomplished during corporate worship. It should be noted that the apostolic church worshipped on Sunday and not Saturday (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). The Jewish Sabbath is not required to be observed by the New Testament believer as it was part of the ceremonial Law (Colossians 2:16).

## **THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHURCH**

The Administration of the church begins by recognizing Jesus Christ as its Head (Colossians 1:18). As such, the final authority of faith and practice should be the Bible as it is Christ's written instructions on how the church ought to be governed. The church should not be governed by a denominational hierarchy but rather should be autonomous. Jesus Christ treat the seven churches in Revelation as separate and autonomous churches (Revelation 2-3). This example should be followed today in maintaining autonomous church government.

Although Christ and the Scriptures are the final authority of faith and practice for the church, Christ has also given the church human leadership to guide the congregation. Ephesians 4:11 teaches that the church has been given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to edify the body. An apostle was one who was commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ and an

early leader in the church.<sup>95</sup> Prophets were those who had the temporal gift of prophecy.<sup>96</sup> The offices of apostles and prophets were temporal, becoming unnecessary after the completion of the New Testament (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Revelations 22:18). As such modern-day leaders who teach that they are apostles and prophets should be rejected. The third leader mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 is that of an evangelist. A biblical example would be Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8). Philip was the first missionary to Samaria (Acts 8).<sup>97</sup> A modern day equivalent would be missionaries who carry the gospel to other lands and help churches complete the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).<sup>98</sup> The final two are pastors and teachers. The office of Pastor is given three titles in the New Testament. Pastor, bishop, and elder all describe the same office. These leaders are commanded to feed the flock of God and lead but not lord over it (1 Peter 5:2-3). It should be noted that all believers have direct access to God through Christ (priesthood of the believer) and do not require a church leader to be a mediator between them and God (1 Timothy 2:5).

The administration of the church has historically been accomplished through three types of church government. The first is the Presbyterian church government. This is defined by Nathan P. Felmeth as “a rule by elders who are elected by vote of the congregation... The elders in a local church, or session, sit regularly with other elders in their area to form a presbytery,

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<sup>95</sup> Robert Duncan Culver, “Apostles And The Apostolate In The New Testament” *Bibliotheca Sacra* BSAC 134:534 (Apr 1977):134, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac134-534-05?highlight=apostle> (accessed March 5, 2019)

<sup>96</sup> Gary Gromacki, “The Foundational Gifts Of Apostle And Prophet In Ephesians” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* JMAT 17:2 (Fall 2013): 8, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jmat17-2-01?highlight=apostle> (accessed March 5, 2019)

<sup>97</sup> Ronald D. Roberts, “Philip the Evangelist,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

<sup>98</sup> William W. Combs, “The Biblical Role Of The Evangelist” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* DBSJ 07:1 (Fall 2002): 47, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/dbsj07-1-02?highlight=evangelist> (accessed March 5, 2019)

which supervises all aspects of church life in that locale.”<sup>99</sup> The second form of church government is the Episcopal church government. Feldmeth again defines it as, “The traditional rule of bishops in the church ... In this form of governance, the bishop oversees all local churches, priests, presbyters, \*deacons, etc. in his diocese or episcopal. This is the government used by the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and many Protestant groups, including \*Anglicans, Episcopalians, Methodists and Lutherans.<sup>100</sup> The final form of church government is that of Congregational church government. In this form of government, congregations elect their pastors and deacons and those leaders are responsible to the church alone.<sup>101</sup> This is the biblical model of church government as it stresses the autonomy of the local church and allows that autonomy to be unfringed by denominational hierarchy.

## CONCLUSION

The church is indeed the institution by which Jesus Christ accomplishes His work here on the earth. Each and every believer should find a Bible-preaching New Testament church to be serve the Lord in. To neglect the church is to neglect the institution that Christ has chosen to be His body.

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<sup>99</sup> Nathan P. Feldmeth, *Pocket Dictionary of Church History: Over 300 Terms Clearly and Concisely Defined*, The IVP Pocket Reference Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 115.

<sup>100</sup> Nathan P. Feldmeth, *Pocket Dictionary of Church History: Over 300 Terms Clearly and Concisely Defined*, The IVP Pocket Reference Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 57–58.

<sup>101</sup> Nathan P. Feldmeth, *Pocket Dictionary of Church History: Over 300 Terms Clearly and Concisely Defined*, The IVP Pocket Reference Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 42.

# BIBLIOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of the Holy Scriptures is the foundation of all Christian belief and is therefore of incredible importance. John Witmar notes, “A survey of theological literature during the first half of the twentieth century will substantiate the accuracy of this prediction.

Bibliology has been a dominant area of interest in theological study and controversy.”<sup>102</sup>

The Fundamental Baptist Minister boldly proclaims that the Bible is his one and only source of Authority in matters of faith and practice. However, not all who make this proclamation have a solid foundation or understanding of Bibliology. It is important to understand what Scripture is, where it came from, how it was given, and how it has been preserved. The latter point is of special significance as many Christians do not believe in a perfectly preserved Bible. They rather consider themselves “textual critics” who pick and choose what they believe the Bible contains. If the Scriptures are not from God, then the Christian faith is in vain. If the Scriptures are not preserved today, then the Christian faith is also in vain, being invalidated by the false promise that God would preserve His Word (Psalm 12:6-7; Matthew 5:18).

This chapter will deal directly with the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. The purpose is to explain what the Scriptures are, how they were inspired, and how they were preserved. The last section will deal with the subject of preservation and its direct implications to the modern textual issue.

## THE DEFINITION OF SCRIPTURE

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<sup>102</sup> John A. Witmer “The Twentieth Century—Battleground of Bibliology” *Bibliotheca Sacra* BSAC 111:442 (Apr 1954): 105, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac111-442-02?highlight=bibliology> (accessed March 9, 2019)



The first step to a correct understanding of Bibliology is to understand the nature of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are a collection of sixty-six books of special revelation given to man by God. A distinction must be made between special revelation and general revelation. F. Leroy Forlines defines the two clearly in his work, *The Quest for Truth: Theology for Postmodern World*. He writes, “General revelation refers to the revelation of God in the created order and the basic nature of man. In special revelation, God communicates, in a direct way, knowledge of Himself and His plan to a particular person or group.”<sup>103</sup>

Special revelation is given either by the direct words of God (See Exodus 32:16 for example), or the inspiration of human authors by the Holy Spirit. This special revelation was then perfectly recorded in written form and passed down through the generations. While the Bible clearly teaches that man can know of God through general revelation and is therefore without excuse for his sin (Romans 1), it is through special revelation that man learns the clear and specific message of God for humankind.

The Bible is therefore a collection of sixty-six books, written over thousands of years that contain God’s special revelation for mankind. These sixty-six books are said to be the “canon” of Scripture. The *Hollman Bible Dictionary* explains, ““Canon” originally meant “reed” and came to signify a ruler or measuring stick. In this sense the Bible is the rule or standard of authority for Christians. The concept of “canon” and process of “canonization” refers to when the books gained the status of “Holy Scripture,” authoritative standards for faith and practice.”<sup>104</sup> The

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<sup>103</sup> F. Leroy Forlines, *The Quest for Truth: Theology for Postmodern World* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications; Worldwide Ministries, 2001), 32.

<sup>104</sup> Archie W. England with Warren Bill, “Bible Formation and Canon,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 200.

sixty-six books of the Bible are what have traditionally been accepted by most Christian groups as Scripture.

Some groups, have included the Apocrypha books in their canon of Scripture. The catholic church recognized the seven books of the Apocrypha as Scripture as canon at the Council of Trent in (1545-1546). The Apocrypha books should not be considered Scripture for the following reasons: 1. Jesus limited the Old Testament to the books written prior to the four-hundred-year period of silence (Matthew 23:34-36). 2. There are not completed prophecies to validate their authenticity. 3. The Apocrypha Books are not cited as Scripture in the New Testament. 4. Historically, they have not been considered Old Testament Canon. 5. They contain doctrines that contradict traditional canon of Scripture (Tobit 6:7-8; 4:10-11; 2 Maccabees 12:43-44;). 6. They contain historical errors (Judith 1:1; Baruch 6:2).

## **THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE**

The Bible states directly and clearly that it is inspired of God (2 Timothy 3:16). The word inspiration has its roots in the word *inspiratio* which means “to breath in”.<sup>105</sup> William Evans clearly defines what is meant by “Inspiration”, “Inspiration, then, as defined by Paul in this passage, is the strong, conscious inbreathing of God into men, qualifying them to give utterance to the truth. It is God speaking through men...The Scriptures are the result of divine inbreathing, just as human speech is uttered by the breathing through a man’s mouth.”<sup>106</sup> The Holy Spirit acts upon man during inspiration and the result is divine revelation.<sup>107</sup> It is important to note that the

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<sup>105</sup> W. H. Griffith Thomas “Inspiration” (Bibliotheca Sacra BSAC 118:469 (Jan 1961)

<sup>106</sup> William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974),

<sup>107</sup> Merrill F. Unger Journal, “The Inspiration Of The Old Testament” Central Bible Quarterly Volume: CENQ 01:4 (Winter 1958): 1, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/cenq01-4-01?highlight=inspiration> (accessed March 27, 2019)

very words written down by the biblical authors were inspired (Matthew 4:4). God did not just inspire the ideas or thoughts of the authors, but intentionally guided the words they wrote down. This is called plenary verbal inspiration. Bruce Corley explains further, “The plenary verbal perspective describes Scripture as being the Word of God. “Plenary” means “fully,” and “verbal” emphasizes that inspiration extends to the very words themselves, so that every word of the Bible is inspired. God supervised the process of inspiration so that every word is as God would have it.”<sup>108</sup> Verbal inspiration guards the Scriptures from any error or omission.<sup>109</sup> This view of Scripture is important in Bible translation practices. One must translate the words of Scripture as opposed to just the ideas (dynamic equivalency). The plenary verbal view of inspiration is also taught by Jesus when he promised that not one jot or tittle would be lost from the Scriptures (Matthew 5:18).

There are many external evidences that validate the Bible’s claims in regards to inspiration. Archeological evidence has consistently proven that the Biblical stories really did happen as they were recorded. Nelson Glueck stated, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference.”<sup>110</sup> Another powerful external evidence of inspiration is that of prophecy. Geisler and Nix state in *A General Introduction to the Bible* “No unconditional prophecy of the Bible about events to the present day has gone unfilled. Hundreds of predictions, some of them given hundreds of years in

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<sup>108</sup> Bruce Corley, Steve Lemke, and Grant Lovejoy, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 180.

<sup>109</sup> Warren Vanhetloo, “Various Evidences Of Verbal Inspiration” *Central Bible Quarterly* CENQ 01:4 (Winter 1958): 5, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/cenq01-4-02?highlight=inspiration> (accessed March 27, 2019)

<sup>110</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Rev. and expanded. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 195.

advance, have been literally fulfilled.”<sup>111</sup> One particularly powerful fulfillment is the prophet Isaiah named Cyrus as the conqueror of Babylon long before he was born (Isaiah 45:1-3). Many other religious books claim to be inspired, but only the Bible has the fulfilled prophecy to validate its inspiration.

The Scripture also has many internal evidences that validate its inspiration. One powerful evidence is the unity of the sixty-six books of the Bible. These books were written by nearly forty authors over a period of about fifteen hundred years in several languages. Despite this, they all agree with one another, build upon and complement one another, and tell one truly Divine story. Another powerful internal evidence is the life-changing power of Scripture. The Bible claims to be sharper than any two-edged sword and able to change the heart (Hebrews 4:12). There are millions upon millions of people throughout history and living today who can testify to the Bible’s transforming power.<sup>112</sup>

The Inspiration of the Bible also results its inerrancy and infallibility. Inerrancy is the belief that Scripture is completely free of error.<sup>113</sup> Infallibility is the declaration that the Bible is incapable of failing to accomplish its predetermined purpose by God.<sup>114</sup> The Bible directly claims to be inerrant in Psalm 12:6 and Psalm 119:160. This doctrine is of great importance because if the Bible is not completely truthful, then none of it can be trusted. The infallibility of the Scriptures is taught in Isaiah 55:11 where the Bible states that the Word will accomplish that

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<sup>111</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Rev. and expanded. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 196.

<sup>112</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Rev. and expanded. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 194–195.

<sup>113</sup> Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 66.

<sup>114</sup> Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 66.

which God pleases and will not return to Him void. These doctrines are constantly attacked by Bible critics in an effort to discredit the Bible and its direct statements and echo the attack of Satan in the garden of Eden when he asked Eve, “yea hath God said?” Those who do not like what the Bible says should realize that there is nothing wrong with the Scriptures, but there is something wrong with them.

## **THE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE**

The doctrines of inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy mean nothing without the doctrine of perseveration.<sup>115</sup> After the completion of the New Testament, special revelation from God was completed (Revelation 22:18). This means that all extra-biblical writings or prophecy that claim inspiration are not to be believed (Book of Mormon, etc.). The original manuscripts have all been lost over time, but God has fulfilled His promise to preserve His Word through the careful copying and reproduction of the manuscripts. The first copies of the Bible were done by hand and quickly circulated across the ancient world. Many of these copies still exist and are called manuscript witnesses. Today, there still exist thousands of manuscripts that are almost completely in agreement with one another. These manuscripts have historically been used by the church and are known as the “Majority texts” or the *Textus Receptus*. These texts were translated into English and in 1611 a perfect English Translation was achieved with the King James Version of the Bible.<sup>116</sup> The King James Translators carefully compared the manuscripts of the *Textus Receptus* to avoid any textual errors or corruption from possible errors in individual

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<sup>115</sup> William D. Barrick, “Ancient Manuscripts And Biblical Exposition” *Masters Seminary Journal TMSJ* 09:1 (Spring 1998): 26, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/tmsj09-1-03?highlight=Preservation%20of%20Scripture> (accessed March 27, 2019)

<sup>116</sup> William W. Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal DBSJ* 05:1 (Fall 2000): 4, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/dbsj05-1-01?highlight=Preservation%20of%20Scripture> (accessed March 27, 2019)

manuscripts. It is the authors belief that the resulting work, the KJV, is the pure and perfect Word of God and one can have confidence that every word in both the English translation and its textual basis is the preserved Word of God.

In 1881 Brook Westcott and Fenton Hort published a new Greek New Testament that was based on other less used and credible manuscripts known as the Alexandrian textual family. The manuscripts used were not historically used by the churches and made up a small percentage of textual witnesses. These manuscripts contain thousands of differences between themselves and as a result, Westcott and Hort laid the foundation for textual “criticism”, which basically is the practice of picking and choosing what one thinks should be in the Bible based on corrupt manuscripts that contradict one another. Their 1881 Greek New Testament is the textual basis for most modern versions of the Bible. For this reason, modern translations should be avoided, as they do not come from a belief or practice in the doctrine of preservation. The Bible can and has been translated into thousands of languages around the world. All translations in other languages should be completely based in the *Textus Receptus* and not in the critical text.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Fundamental Baptist believes in the doctrines of Inspiration, Inerrancy, Infallibility, and Preservation of the Holy Scriptures. As a result, the Bible is and shall remain the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. In areas where the Bible is silent, biblical principles should be followed. The Bible alone is the authority of Bible-believing churches. Tradition, opinion, and religion should have no power to contradict the perfect and pure Word of God. The Bible is under constant attack in modern times from both the world and Christendom. May every true student of the Word stand firm in their commitment to love and defend the perfect Word of God.

# ESCHATOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

Having examined the other major eight doctrinal categories in theology, it is now time to examine the doctrines of the last things. Many churches today tend to avoid teaching and preaching about end time doctrines to avoid debates or conflicts in regards to different points of view.<sup>117</sup> Werner Petersmann stated the problem when he said, “There has always been a certain characteristic lack of eschatological perspective and tension in ecclesiastical Protestant theology and preaching.”<sup>118</sup> This is a very wrong approach to preaching in from the pulpit. The necessity of doctrinally sound eschatology cannot be overstated. Merrill C. Tenney noted that, “eschatology is necessary, for all of our life is governed by the future that lies before us.”<sup>119</sup> The Bible offers detailed descriptions of future events and the student of the Bible should have a firm understanding of biblical prophecy. How end time events are viewed often depends on one’s theological glasses that he is looking through. This author is a dispensationalist and therefore sees the Church and Israel as separate as opposed to a Covenant theologian. This distinction is important, and to not understand it will lead to great doctrinal errors as have been overwhelmingly present in modern times. This chapter will examine the major future prophetic events such as, the Rapture of the Church, the Great Tribulation, the Millennial Reign of Christ, and the Great White Throne Judgement.

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<sup>117</sup> Stephen J. Wellum “Thinking Biblically And Theologically About Eschatology” Southern Baptist Journal of Theology SBJT 14:1 (Spring 2010): 2, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/sbjt14-1-01?highlight=eschatology> (accessed March 9, 2019)

<sup>118</sup> Werner Petersmann, “The Rediscovery of Eschatology” *Bibliotheca Sacra* BSAC 089:354 (April 1932): 218, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac089-354-07?highlight=eschatology> (Accessed April 8, 2019)

<sup>119</sup> Merrill C. Tenney, “Eschatology and the Pulpit” *Bibliotheca Sacra* BSAC116:461 (Jan 1959): 31, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac116-461-03?highlight=eschatology> (accessed April 8, 2019)

## THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

The rapture of the church is the next event on God's prophetic calendar. The word comes from the Latin term *rapio*, which means to "snatch away" or "carry off."<sup>120</sup> David Olander describes the rapture as, "literally the coming of the Lord from heaven to meet with the saints in Christ (the church)."<sup>121</sup> During the rapture, the Lord Jesus will descend to the earth and the saints will ascend to meet him in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The souls of the dead in Christ will be reunited with a new resurrection body, and the bodies of the living will be instantly transformed to possess this new body as well (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Immediately after the rapture, believers will then be judged for their works done in the body and receive reward, or suffer loss depending of their stewardship of their life (1 Corinthians 10:11-15). This judgement is called "The Judgment Seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10) and is distinct and separate from the "Great White Throne Judgment" of the lost (Revelation 20:11-15). Although, some believers will receive no rewards (2 John 8), all believers will be saved eternally in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:15).

To correctly understand the rapture, it is important to understand the distinction between the Church and Israel. Failure to make this distinction (Covenant Theology) will lead to the false doctrine of a mid-tribulation or post-tribulation rapture. The Bible clearly states that the nation of Israel and the Church are two distinct groups (1 Corinthians 10:32). The importance of this distinction is clearly seen when considering the promises made to Israel and to whom the rapture is for. God will one day fulfill all His promises made to Abraham and David, and Christ will one

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<sup>120</sup> Pete Schemm, "Rapture," ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1366.

<sup>121</sup> David Olander, *The Greatness of the Rapture: The Pre-Day of the Lord Rapture*, ed. Kenneth R. Cooper and Christopher Cone (Ft. Worth, TX: Tyndale Seminary Press, 2009), 24.



day rule and reign on the earth with Jerusalem as His capital. The Church, however, is not part of this prophetic plan. The Great Tribulation is not for the Church, but rather to judge the lost and to prepare Israel for the second coming of Jesus Christ (Jeremiah 30:7). With this distinction clearly made, the timing of the rapture as rescuing the Church from the Great Tribulation is clearly understood (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

It is important to understand that the rapture was a biblical mystery only revealed by special revelation to the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:51). The rapture is not mentioned in Matthew chapter twenty-four and to attempt to teach the rapture in that chapter will lead to great error. If the rapture had previously been revealed by Jesus Christ, then it would not have been a mystery when Paul wrote of it. Paul spoke of the rapture as a rescuing from the wrath of God that was coming to the world (1 Thessalonians 5:9). The rapture is the Christians “Blessed Hope” and Paul instructed the believers to comfort one another with the hope of this event (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

The book of Revelation contains many references to the church in its first three chapters and yet never mentions the church afterwards. Richard Mayhue noted, “It is remarkable and totally unexpected that John would shift from detailed instructions for the church to absolute silence about the church in the subsequent 13 chapters if, in fact, the church continued into the tribulation.”<sup>122</sup> The silence of the Scriptures in regards to the church during the events of the Great Tribulation support the position of a pre-tribulation rapture.

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<sup>122</sup> Richard L. Mayhue, “Why A Pretribulation Rapture?” *Masters Seminary Journal* Volume: TMSJ 13:2 (Fall 2002): 244, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/tmsj13-2-06?highlight=rapture%20of%20the%20church> (accessed April 8, 2019)

Opponents of the pre-tribulation rapture err in their theology because of their flawed interpretation of the phrase “Day of the Lord”.<sup>123</sup> They fail to see that the term “Day of the Lord” can refer to the specific day of the Revelation of Christ and the Second Coming, or it can refer to the end time events in general. The apostle Peter included events that will happen at the end of the millennial reign of Christ in the term “Day of the Lord” (2 Peter 3:10). Therefore, to limit the biblical use of the term to one specific 24-hour period is mistaken. The rapture is distinct from the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ. At the rapture, Jesus will only return to the clouds to receive his Saints. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives and wage the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-19). The timing of the rapture should then be understood as taking place immediately prior to the tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:4-8).

## **THE GREAT TRIBULATION**

The Great Tribulation is a future period of time in which the world will be judged by God’s wrath. *The Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* states, “The Bible speaks of a time of great anguish or tribulation, which will come upon the earth, exceeding anything that has ever occurred before.”<sup>124</sup> The Great Tribulation will last for seven years and will be the most horrible time in the history of the earth (Matthew 24:21; Daniel 9:24-27). The descriptions of the Great Tribulation in Revelation are and should be interpreted literally unless when the context shows

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<sup>123</sup> John F. Walvoord, “Posttribulationism Today Part VI: Posttribulational Denial of Imminency and Wrath” *Bibliotheca Sacra* BSAC 133:530 (Apr 1976): 109, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac133-530-02?highlight=the%20great%20tribulation> (accessed March 27, 2019)

<sup>124</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Eschatology,” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 716.

otherwise. Attempts to spiritualize all references to the Tribulation will result in skewed doctrine.<sup>125</sup>

The Great Tribulation will begin after the rapture of the church. Once the influence of the Holy Spirit during the church age through the church is removed, the antichrist will come to power (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8). He will rise to world domination through peace (Daniel 8:25) and will eventually sit in the temple of God and proclaim that he is god (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The antichrist is referred to as the first “beast” in Revelation chapter thirteen. His power and authority come directly from the devil himself (Revelation 13:2). The antichrist will be mortally wounded and will be healed miraculously, causing most to believe and be deceived. The second “beast” during the tribulation is the false prophet (Revelation 13:11-14) who will deceive the world into worshipping the antichrist and a miraculous image of the antichrist. The dominance of the forces of darkness in the world during the Great Tribulation will be such that the world has never seen before.

There are multiple divine purposes for the Great Tribulation. The first is to prepare the nation of Israel to receive their Messiah, Jesus Christ (Zechariah 13:8-9; 12:9-10; Revelation 7:1-8). The Tribulation is described as a time of “Jacob’s Trouble” and will prepare the nation to receive Christ whom they have rejected (Jeremiah 30:7). The second purpose for the great tribulation is for the gentiles to be judged for their wickedness and treatment of Israel (Isaiah 26:21; Revelation 9:20). Oftentimes the wickedness of the world can seem to go unchecked by God, but during the Tribulation God’s wrath will be poured out on the wicked.

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<sup>125</sup> John F. Walvoord, “Millennial Series: Part 22: Premillennialism and the Tribulation” *Bibliotheca Sacra* BSAC 111:443 (Jul 1954)

The Great Tribulation will end with the second coming of Jesus Christ. Christ will descend from heaven with a heavenly army and will destroy Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet (Revelation 19). The antichrist and the false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20), and Satan will be chained and imprisoned for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1). The living nations of the world will then be judged (Matthew 25:31-36), and Jesus Christ will begin his one-thousand-year reign upon the earth.

The Great Tribulation, as a part of dispensational theology, should be considered the period of judgment at the end of the church age. It is of this Author's opinion that it is not in and of itself a separate dispensation as it lacks many of the marks of the seven dispensations.

### **THE MILENIAL REIGN OF CHRIST**

The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus Christ will return to and establish His millennium kingdom here on the earth. The view that Jesus will return Himself to inaugurate and establish this thousand-year period is called Premillennialism.<sup>126</sup> Premillennialism stands in clear contrast to Amillennialism (the view that the thousand-year reign of Christ is only metaphorical<sup>127</sup>) and Postmillennialism (the view that a thousand-year period of great spiritual peace will precede the return of Christ<sup>128</sup>). The Biblical literalist will most certainly be a premillennialist as the other two views require intense allegation of key prophetic passages such as Revelation Chapter 20. The Bible clearly states that the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints will begin after His

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<sup>126</sup> Abner Chou, "Millennialism," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

<sup>127</sup> Abner Chou, "Millennialism," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

<sup>128</sup> Renate Viveen Hood, "Revelation, Book Of, Critical Issues," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

second coming and judgement of the antichrist (Revelation 20:6). These passages teach clearly that the reign of Christ on the earth will be physical and literal.

The millennium will include a resurrection of the tribulation saints (Revelation 20:4-6) and the presence of the now glorified church age saints (2 Timothy 2:12). There will also be present non-glorified men who survived the tribulation and the judgement of nations who will reproduce and populate the earth during the Millennium. It will be of this population that Satan is able to gather an army of rebellion against Christ at the end of the thousand-years after he is loosed (Revelation 20:7-8).<sup>129</sup>

The earth will be physically transformed during the millennium. The Bible tells us that the nature of animals will revert to their pre-curse state (Isaiah 11:6-9). The plant world will experience regeneration (Ezekiel 34:25-31). The people of the world will also receive a united and pure language which appears to be a reversal of the tower of babel (Zephaniah 3:9).

The millennial reign of Christ is the seventh and final dispensation in the Bible. It is the seventh day of rest and symbolizes the principal of the Sabbath for the earth (Zechariah 1:11). A dispensation is defined by Merriam-Webster as “a general state or ordering of things *specifically*: a system of revealed commands and promises regulating human affairs”<sup>130</sup> A dispensation is characterized by commandments given by God to men, the failure of man to guard the commandment, and an ensuing judgment for the failure. The seven biblical dispensations are Innocence (Creation-Fall), Conscience (Fall-Flood), Human Government

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<sup>129</sup> David L. Jeffrey, *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992).

<sup>130</sup> Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

(Flood-Babel), Promise (Babel-Moses), Law (Moses-John), Grace (Christ-Millennium), and Kingdom (Millennium-New heaven and earth).

## **ETERNITY FUTURE**

At the conclusion of the millennium, Christ will destroy the rebellion of Satan and cast him into the lake of fire for eternal punishment (Revelation 20:10). The Lord will destroy the heaven and earth with a fervent heat that will melt even the elements themselves (2 Peter 3:10). It is at this time that the wicked in hell will be resurrected and sent to the final judgement known as the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15). They will be judged according to their works and cast into the lake of fire for their failure to appear in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The Lord will then create a new heaven and a new earth, and eternity future will begin. The righteous will experience the joy of an eternity with Christ. The city of New Jerusalem will descend from heaven to the new earth and there will be no more tears, sickness, pain, suffering, sin or corruption (Revelation 21:1-4).

## **CONCLUSION**

The understanding of the last things depends on a verbal-literal interpretation of the Scriptures. When the Scriptures are allowed to mean what they say, a clear end time theology and timeline is seen. When the Scriptures and especially biblical prophecy are allegorized, the Bible is twisted to say whatever the theologian chooses. The Lord clearly wants the world to know of the coming events and therefore has warned and clearly shown what is to come through Bible Prophecy. All men are commanded to be ready, and the believer can safely and joyfully echo the final words of the Book of Revelation, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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