

A Simplified Systematic Theology - Truth Series



With information being easily accessible, the journey of discovery through study can seem like an intimidating and impossible task. A Simplified Systematic Theology is compiled from modern scholarship and acclaimed theologians. This work is intended to assist you on your climb to the heights of truth, while stripping away the chaos of unnecessary information.

Systematic Theology - Simplified

Introduction

These are the four points that I will be hitting on as an introduction to this series:

1. What is Doctrine and Theology?
2. Does Doctrine and Theology matter?
3. False Doctrine vs Misunderstandings.
4. Doctrines that we will cover in this Series.
5. *Define Doctrine and Theology.*
 - The word “**Doctrine**” means “teachings or, something that is taught”. The amount of times this word can be found in the Bible varies on the translation that one may be using, but it means the same thing in all translations of the Bible. This word can be presented as “a body or system of teachings relating to a particular subject” (Dictionary.com). Our beloved brother, the Apostle Paul, instructs Timothy in this manner concerning this word, “***All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works***” (1Tim 3:16-17 KJV). From the Christians perspective, this word would signify “teachings or instructions from God’s word”.
 - The word “**Theology**” on the other hand is not found in scripture. The term “Theology” comes from two Greek words "theos" meaning "God," and "logos" meaning "word" (“logos” is also where we get our English word for “logic”). Therefore, “theology” essentially, and primarily means "the word about God," or the more common definition is "the study of God or the things of God".
 - Essentially these two words are referring to the same thing in the realm about God and His word even though, by definition, they may slightly differ in meaning.
1. *Does Doctrine of Theology matter?*

Introduction

You bet it does!

Doctrine/Theology

matters very much! What we believe determines how we will behave, or better yet: how we will live. Whatever beliefs a person may have will also help produce the individual's conduct and even will help cultivate his or her character, especially if a person is taught

Correct-Doctrine

or

Biblical-Theology

! The apostle Paul informs Timothy concerning this very thing,

“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers

” (1 Tim. 4:16 NIV). Also we see in the book of Acts that “

They

(the believers)

devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching

(Doctrine)

and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer

” (Acts. 2:42 NIV). We would also like to mention that there is a difference between 1) False Doctrine, 2) Sound Doctrine and, 3) Misunderstanding!

Introduction

1. False Doctrine:False Doctrine is
2. heretical
and also known by the general term

Heresy

! Dictionary.com defines Heresy as such “1) an opinion or doctrine contrary to the orthodox tenets of a religious body or church, 2) any opinion or belief that is or is thought to be contrary to official or established theory”. This kind of “stinking thinking” will lead a person away from the truth that has the power to set them free.

2. Sound Doctrine: **Sound Doctrine**

is teaching or a set of instruction that undergird true spirituality and that is in-line with what God's word teaches in its proper place, context, and thought.

Sound Doctrine

can be also known as

Biblical-Theology

or

Exegetical Theology (

exegesis is coming to an understanding by proper study methods of what the author is conveying so that we can then interpret the book or text correctly vs eisegesis which is the method of bringing one's own thoughts, ideas, and understandings into the text to make it say something other than what is truly being conveyed by the author). The phrase Sound Doctrine is mentioned four times in the entire Bible and can only be found in the New Testament and all four times come from the mouth of Paul:

3. "For the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine" (1Tim. 1:10 NIV).
4. "For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (2Tim 4:3 NIV).
5. "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (Tit. 1:9 NIV).
6. "You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine" (Tit. 2:1NIV).

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7. Misunderstandings: Misunderstandings

are what this word means: mis-guided or mis-understood texts or truths of God word. The challenging thing here is that misunderstandings can cause someone to see or develop a swayed lens or view of certain doctrines. They even develop bad theology because of a curved lens from appropriating things or teaching in the scriptures that that a person doesn't properly comprehend. This is not necessarily a bad thing because no "one-person's theology" is perfect per-se. In fact, all of our theology is incorrect to some degree! Paul tells the Corinthians in his letter to them that "

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known

" (1 Cor. 13:12 KJV).

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8. *False Doctrine vs Misunderstandings:*

There is a difference between

False Doctrine and Misunderstandings

False Doctrines

are a set of beliefs or teachings from the word of God in an inappropriate and antithetical way. A few false teachings are as such: 1) Jesus is not God, 2) Salvation is by faith plus works, 3) Water baptism is necessary for salvation, 4) You're not Born again with the Spirit unless you speak in tongues, 5) The Lake of fire is not real and everyone will be saved, 6) God gets angry at Believers over sin, 7) The Blood of Jesus does not cover all of our sins! These are a few examples of what false teachings are and how they are in opposition to what the Bible states about these very truths.

Misunderstanding

on the other hand are different. They are simply unintended views that have been developed and here's the truth: all of God's children have these. Here are just a few examples of what misunderstanding concepts in the Bible may look like: 1) God is more gracious because of Christ, 2) Believers will be in heaven at the end of all things, 3) I have to pay tithes, 4) God is more compassionate and finally 5) God is different under the renewed covenant. These are just a few of the misconceptions that believers have concerning with the word of the God.

9. The Doctrines we will cover in this Series:

10. Doctrine of: "*The Knowledge of God* (How can God be known)".

11. Theology Proper: "*Doctrine of God*".

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12. Anthropology: "*Doctrine of Man*".
13. Doctrine of "*Covenant*".
14. Hamartiology: "*Doctrine of Sin*".
15. Christology: "*Doctrine of Jesus the Christ*".
16. Soteriology: "*Doctrine of Salvation*".
17. Pneumatology: "*Doctrine of Holy Spirit*".
18. Ecclesiology: "*Doctrine of the Church*".
19. Born Again: "*Doctrine of Regeneration*".
20. Doctrine of "*Justification*".
21. Doctrine of "*Sanctification*".
22. Eschatology: "*Doctrine of Last Things*".

Knowledge of God

"How God is and can be Known"

As we proceed, we want to recommend four-points to ponder on as references for us to have as vital points for understanding this doctrine. In saying what was just mentioned: we want to add that there are more aspects in this doctrine that may not be cited, but the points that we have selected are for the purpose of presenting some truthful pillars for us to become acquainted with in this theological study of the "The Knowledge of God". We also want to mention that this is not an indebt study, but rather just a brief introduction! The four-points for meditational thought are as followed:

1. The "Way" in which God is known.
2. Finite (Human) vs Infinite (God-Creator).
3. God is knowable—Revelation.
4. God's Mysteriousness.

Doctrine of the Knowledge of God

In the opening division of John Frames book titled “The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God”, he start with this, “*What is the 'object' of the knowledge of God? In knowing God, what do we know? Well, God, of course! So what remains to be said? Much*” (Frame Pg. 9)! The questions and statements that he presents in what was just mentioned are profound matters to ponder on! What will we gain or benefit from knowing the Creator, or even having the ability to distinguish His presence? If all forms of “knowing’s” about particular subjects of study are still expanding, how much more the knowledge of God? God is the only person we know that someone could have a decent amount of knowledge concerning Him and still yet not fully know Him because the knowledge of God is inexhaustible! J. Rodman Williams phrases it this way “*The primary question in theology is that of the knowledge of God*” (Williams Pg. 29). What is it that we mean by “the knowledge of God”? Well, from reading the Bible, we know that God is beyond our knowing i.e. our finding out! In this, we mean that God is never discovered, but always revealed. In order for us to know anything about God, He must always reveal Himself to us first. Another way of restating the phrase “knowledge of God” would be to say the “knowing’s of God”. Whatever the “knowing” or “knowledge” of God we have, must be understood in the context that, “all information concerning anything about Yahweh God has been revealed to us, by Him. He has done this (revealed Himself) for his glory and for our benefit and joy! “*Christian faith claims to have knowledge of God—, not fantasy, imagination, or guesswork, but knowledge*” (Williams Pg.29). It is not our endeavor to create a theological-manifesto manuscript on the epistemology of “The knowledge of God”, but rather to explain how God is known, so that we may be satisfied with Him and be able to enjoy Him fully!

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!” Romans 11:33 NIV

Points to Ponder:

- The “WAY” in which God is known
- Finite (Human) vs. the Infinite (God)
- God is Knowable—Revelation
- God’s Mysteriousness

Doctrine of the Knowledge of God

- Yahweh! In the opening chapter of the Bible that deal with the creation narrative we see not a name, but a title—*God* (in English it says God, but in Hebrew it says “Elohim”). In chapter 2:4 of Genesis, we come across a title, followed by a name “the LORD God”. “LORD” here is the word *Yahweh* in Hebrew. He reveals to us His name which signifies that he is a personal Being and not just some force, power, or entity that needs or demands something. We also observe this about Him from listening-in on the conversation that both Moses and Yahweh-God are having in Exodus chapters 33-34. Moses’ request of Yahweh was to see His glory and the LORD answers his request:
 - By revealing His name “Yahweh” to Moses, He is illuminating the truth to humanity of the fact that He (Yahweh) is a personal-intimate-person!
 - Although He is the transcendent Being (we see this in Isaiah 6:3 where Yahweh is said to be “Holy” “Holy” “Holy” i.e. other than, other than, other than or, separate, separate, separate from all of His creation), He is also very imminent, signifying that he is very near to us! Other words to describe His imminence would be to use words like approachable, mingling, public, adjacent, close, friendly, kind, near, nearby, neighboring, Sympathetic, and warm.
 - God, whose personal and intimate name is Yahweh is known by and through INTIMACY i.e. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP! He declares in Jeremiah that *“but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the Lord*’ (Jer. 9:24).
- The personal name of God which is rendered as “LORD” in our English Bibles, but in the Tanakh (Old Testament) is Yahweh is mentioned approximately 7000 times.

Doctrine of the Knowledge of God

“Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.” (Exodus 34:5-7 NIV).

- The word “*Finite*”:
- The word “*Infinite*”:
- According to Dictionary.com this word finite means “having bounds or limits, measurable”. It also means subject to limitations or conditions, as of space, time, circumstances, or the laws of nature”.
- Another word for the term “finite” is “creaturely” and even “humanity”! All humans are creatures created by the Creator and with so, we are designed to have a limited capacity and understanding! We are temporal! The human mind cannot fully grasp nor understand the Divine Being! Solomon hits it right on the marker by saying “*He (being Yahweh God) has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom can God has done from beginning to end*” (Eccles. 3:11NIV). Paul comments by saying that we all see through the glass darkly, meaning that: it’s not that we do not see, but truthfully: we cannot see translucently!
- J. Rodman Williams mentions this “*But God cannot be discovered, no matter how diligent the effort. Can a man “by searching find out God?” The answer is no, for the search is disproportionate to the seeker. The finite is not capable of the infinite. The highest achievement of the human mind and spirit fall short of arriving at the knowledge of God. God always remains beyond*’ (Williams Pg.31).

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- This word conveys the concept of being “immeasurably great, indefinitely or exceedingly great, unlimited or unmeasurable in extent of space, duration of time, etc.: unbounded or unlimited; boundless; endless” (Dicntionary.com).
- We as created Beings with a limited capacity must conclude and understand that God is **Infinite** (Eternal) and not **Finite** (temporal and created).
- He is not like Humanity!
- He is not a created being, but rather: He always has been and will always be God. *“God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you”* (Exodus 3:14 NIV) and *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come”* (Rev. 4:8 NIV).
- The Bible mentions in the letter to the Hebrew that God “*is*”. *“For he who comes to God must believe that He is”* (Heb. 11:6 NSAB).
- The trice holy sayings found both in Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8 signify that God is beyond human comprehension not only by leaps and bounds, but by chasms so vast because He is beyond our comprehension!
- *“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom”* (Isa. 40:28.)
- What does one call an infinite Creator who is beyond anything that one could think, contemplate, or even imagine! Simple, He is what He is. Or as He Himself states “I AM that I AM”! There is no way of fully expressing the infiniteness of Yahweh other than Him conveying to us this “I AM that I AM”.

(Both “*Infinite*”) and “*Finite*”) are adjectives which are used to describe something. Therefore, we know that humanity has limits, but God is limitless! In fact it is He who establishes the limits of all things).

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- *“All knowledge of God comes by way of revelation. The knowledge of God is revealed knowledge; it came from Him and it is He who gives it”* (Williams Pg.32). We have now arrived at the section of which that deals with the truth that God can be known by information and our senses (notice, that I didn’t use terms like comprehensible, or understandable! I believe that we can use both words as it pertains to how He is revealed in the degree that He has manifested certain aspects about Himself to us for the very reason of deep relationship and intimacy which requires both, but for the sake of us experiencing God I chose the word knowable). The word Revelation means “unveiling”. The image of the word is like being blinded by a sheet and then having someone come and remove the sheet that was covering one’s eyes from seeing clearly. The biblical account affords us two means of Revelation that Yahweh has decided to reveal and expose Himself to us and they are what the theologians call 1) General Revelation (that which can be known by observing creation—Nature) and 2) Special Revelation (the word of God/Holy Bible). Before we get into the two means of revelation, let’s look at the meaning of this word for a clear and concise definition of the word.
- According to J. Rodman Williams *“God is the “Mysterium Tremendum”, a vast mystery not possible to comprehend in any ordinary manner”* (Williams pg.31). As human beings, we must admit that there is mystery about God and the doings of God. Again the apostle Paul mentioned that God ways are beyond finding out! Another way for this to be stated is that His ways (just His ways alone) are unsearchable!
- *“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out” by Paul* (Rom 11:33 NIV)!

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- ***“Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below—what can you know?”*** by Job (Job 11:7-8 NIV).
- ***“But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets”*** (Rev. 10:7 NIV). We want to conclude this by saying that even though, we have God’s word, nature, and human morality, none of these were designed to give us full understanding of Yahweh God! Beloved he is a mystery all by Himself! To add further simplicity to this point: Special Revelation is actually an understanding of Yahweh’s word to His people by His Spirit! Again, Special Revelation is from the indwelling of God’s Spirit given to those who have accepted Jesus as Messiah. It is insight into the mysteries of God’s written word concerning sin, love, God, Jesus, the world, Satan etc.... It is eyes to see and ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to those who are called by God. Jesus says this concerning this subject ***“At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do”*** (Luke. 10:21 NIV)
- *Apokalupsis!* This word has a few potent meanings.
- *Two Types of Revelation:*
 - Laying bear.
 - Manifestation, appearance.
 - Making naked, a disclosure of truth, instruction:

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- concerning things before unknown.
- used of events by which things or states or persons hitherto withdrawn from view are made visible to all.
- General Revelation.
- Special Revelation.
- This type of revealing can be noticed in creation! *The psalmist declares “the heavens declare the glory of the God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge”* (Psa. 19:1-2 NIV). Paul mentions this to the Church at large in the city of Rome “*For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse”*

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- (Rom.1:20 NIV). “General Revelation” or rather what can be deemed “Natural Revelation” is the evidence of God without anyone needing to discover it in a book or some other source or means, but rather, creation informs the viewer of its Creator and His glory. The bible informs us that God does not leave Himself without a witness. The first witness in creation is the heavens and the earth and their speech never stops and no one can silence their claim! (Another aspect of General Revelation is what is known by most as the “Moral Law”. I am not talking about that which is found only in the commands of God through the Law of Moses, but rather that which is (mostly) universal due to the fact that man (humankind) was created in the IMAGE and LIKENESS of God. Therefore, mankind possesses a morality of what is generally right and wrong. The truth factor of this statement can be discovered all over the globe, in different cultures, and in various places wherever mankind resides)! One last aspect of General Revelation is the flow-of-time which we call History! From viewing history, a person can see the workings of the Creator throughout time and even perceive His involvements in certain situations concerning nations and peoples! A great example of this is when the nation of Israel became a legalized nation and people group in the year of 1948! The United Nations came to a vote and in a single moment Israel became a legal nation again, in the land that was promised by God, to them. The verdict is out and conclusion is as such “
- *The premise of natural theology is that there is a certain basic and objective knowledge of God that can be explicated, and that any rational person who is willing to think clearly will arrive at this truth*” (Williams Pg.36).

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- Unlike “General Revelation”, “Special Revelation” (when spoke about in theology) primarily consists of the Word of God! Why, one might ask: because it is to those who have the Spirit of God living in them that are able to glory from knowing Yahweh in a more intimate way due to the Spirit in them that causes believers to live out the reality presented in the Bible (which is God’s written account of His love towards those who have a more possessive relationship with Him---His peculiar people). We see this with the nation of Israel “*For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession*” (Deut. 7:6 NIV). The Apostle Peter uses what was once for Israel and brings it forth, proclaiming it to the church as an encouragement: “*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Pet. 2:9)*” Special Revelation is progressive, meaning, that as time goes by more and more truths concerning God and His oracles become more and more evident through the manifestation of what has been declared and spoken by Yahweh through His word. The content of Special Revelation is primarily God Himself. It is the removal of the veil so that through his word, His people can see the beauty and glory of Him more clearly. “*The content of Special Revelation, finally, is the declaration of God’s ultimate purpose. God wants people to know His plan for the world---the end towards which everything moves. There are limits, of course, both because of man’s finite comprehension and capacity and God’s own ways that are far beyond human comprehension. Nonetheless, God does draw back the veil and points unmistakably to the final consummation*” (Williams pg.43).“

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- *However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”—the things God has prepared for those who love him—these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God” (1Cor.2:9-10 NIV)*

Theology Proper - Doctrine of God

Definition: It is quintessential, before the study of this incredible doctrine, to define the doctrine of God. The Doctrine of God, also known as theology proper, is the specific identification of the Person, nature, and attributes of God. This teaching, taking the entire scope of Scripture into consideration, attempts a consolidated discussion on God.

Explanation: As J. Rodman Williams states about Christian theology, “it is never a question of whether God exists, but of who He is and what He does.” This clearly seen in Scripture. The Bible does not seek to prove His existence; rather, it determines to present God for who He is. His heart, His ways, and His dealings with mankind. That is the point of this lesson. The goal is to present a simplified understanding of the primary Christian Doctrines, and, today, the esteemed privilege lands on the topic of God.

While this can be a seemingly endless study, the Doctrine of God can be divided into 4 main points: the identity of God, the perfections of God, the transcendence of God, and the Character of God.

• Identity of God

1. Firstly, it is essential to note that God is living. He is the Living God. Over and over, it is perpetuated through God's revelation of Himself. He is the Living God. This is made obvious in the regularly uttered oaths in the Old Testament, "as the Lord lives" (1 Sam. 14:39; etc.) (ESV). This incredible truth is offered by God, through the mouths of His prophets, in some of the most emphatic ways. Jeremiah 10:5-10 states, "Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk... But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King." This is so truly important to the Identity of God; it is the very fact that separates Him from any, and all, other false gods. God highlights the reality of His living to contrast the measureless chasm between Himself and contending gods. Contrastingly, all other gods are "gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell" (Deut. 4:28-29). They are dead. God is alive. Secondly, to the identity of God, God is personal. As J. R. Williams states, "[God] declares Himself to be the personal God. He wills to be known by personal names; He shows Himself to be the One who enters into personal relations with man; He is revealed uniquely in the person of Jesus Christ; and His character is deeply personal." This is truly foundational to the identity of God. Lastly in the "identity of God," Scripture states that God is Spirit (John 4:24). This truly challenges one's limited understanding of God. Wayne Grudem writes, "Thus, we should not think of God as having size or dimensions even infinite ones... We should not think of God's existence as spirit as meaning that God is infinitely large, for example, for it is not part of God but all of God that is in every point of space (Ps. 139:7- 10)

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2. Nor should we think that God's existence as spirit means that God is infinitely small, for no place in the universe can surround him or contain him (1 Kings 8:27)
 - Thus, God's being cannot be rightly thought of in terms of space. However, we may understand his existence as 'spirit.'" As Grudem demonstrates, the grandeur of this reality is nearly unfathomable. This, perhaps, must best be understood spatially
 - God is not to be understood as material, or having a material body. "the being of God is non-material: His reality is totally spiritual" (J. R. Williams). This implies that God is both separate from created things and that He is able to dwell amidst the corporeal. (For more information, see the teaching on God's omnipresence.)
 - **Perfections of God**

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- The first of God's perfections is His omnipotence. This is derived from the Latin "omni" (meaning "all") and "potens" (meaning "power"). This communicates the fact of God's power; God is all-powerful. This truth is seen as early as creation (Gen. 1:1) and it is attested all the way through Revelation, with the re-creation of the heavens and the earth (Rev. 21:1-22:5). God is most certainly seen as all-powerful in His ability to creatio ex nihilo (create something from nothing). This is a task that can only be reserved for God – for the One who possesses all-power. There is no wonder why God is entitled Almighty! The second facet under the perfection of God is His omniscience. This, again, comes from the Latin "omni" (meaning "all") and "scientica" (meaning "knowledge"). This is the teaching that God is all-knowing. "In many ways the Scriptures attest to God's omniscience. His knowledge is universal: 'He knows everything' (1 John 3:20). His knowledge is perfect: He is 'perfect in knowledge' (Job 37:16). There is no limit: 'His understanding is beyond measure' (Ps. 147:5). Truly 'the Lord is a God of knowledge' (1 Sam. 2:3)" (J. R. Williams). He knows everything; there is nothing He does not know! Lastly, God's Omnipresence must be addressed. Like the other perfections of God, this has to do with the nature, or essence of His being. In this case, omnipresence has to do with God as all-present. From the furthest galaxy to the nearest atom, God is equally present to each. God's omnipresence should not be understood spatially, because God is incorporeal. God is Spirit, which means he does not have a body to occupy space. Rather, God (in His fullness) occupies all space equally. For example, God is not partially present with you and partially present with others. He fully and entirely present in all places equally. It is not enough to state that God is everywhere. It must be understood that God is fully and equally everywhere simultaneously. The grandeur of this truth, indeed, surpasses one's ability to completely understand it

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- The Psalmist writes, "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:7-10).
- **Transcendence of God** ("Incommunicable Attributes")

Theology Proper - Doctrine of God

- The first item of this study is God as infinite. By definition, this means that God is without limit or measure. "He is infinite in that He is not subject to any of the limitations of humanity, or of creation in general. He is far greater than everything He has made, far greater than anything else that exists" (Wayne Grudem). It goes without saying that God is untethered to the normal limitations of creation. While time, space, and matter can be measured and understood to exist within limits, God cannot. He surpasses, in every way, any such limitation or measurement. Job 11:7-9 challenges one's finite understanding of God. "Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven[c]—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." It may, perhaps, be stated that this facet of God's transcendence leads to worship. The very fact that God is without measure or limit reminds the heart of the Believer that God "is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). It is a grand reality that man worships a God who is unbound by natural restraints. The second key feature to the transcendence of God is His eternity. God is eternal. This attribute identifies God as having no beginning or end. He always was, and He always will be. While the life and understanding of mankind is bound to the plane of temporal, timed existence, it is easy to see how this truly transcends the familiar construct of time. As with His being Infinite, God as eternal is equally impossible to comprehend. This is important, firstly, because it separates God from anything else that might be worshiped. Only the eternal God could create the fabric of time and the very matter from which everything was created. Understanding that this is an attribute that God does not share with anything, or anyone, else further elevates God to the rightful place of supreme-over-all. The last main point to God's transcendence is His Immutability. That is, God does not change – He is unchanging

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- The fact of this has been described as follows: "the universe is constantly undergoing a transition from one stage to another, and human existence is marked by continuing alteration. With God, there is no such mutability... God is the Rock. He does not fluctuate from one event to the next. There is consistency and stability in all that He is and does" (J. R. Williams). In Scripture this is seen regularly, and it is regularly tied to His eternity. This communicates that there was not one single moment that birthed God's immutability. Rather, He was always (and will always be) unchanging. Malachi 3:6 declares, "For I the Lord do not change."
- **Character of God (Moral Nature/“Communicable Attributes”)**

Theology Proper - Doctrine of God

- One of the main features to the Character of God is Holiness. God is Holy. This characteristic is non-contested. God is described as Holy regularly, throughout the Bible. Isaiah 43:2-3 states, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior..." Again, it is decreed, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3). About God's holiness, J. R. Williams writes, "Holiness is the foundation of God's nature; it is the background for everything else we may say about God." The second main aspect of God's character is love. As stated above, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). This, truly, is at the very heart of who God is. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, the revelation of God's love is seen in deliverance and redemption. From the act of creation, to the deliverance from slavery in Egypt (Deut. 7:8), to the deliverance from the consequences of sin by the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:22-23), God has loved the world. "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10). Note: it is important that "the love of God is spontaneous. God loves because love is His very nature; the world does not necessitate that love" (J. R. Williams). God's love (ἀγάπη - agapē) is based upon His own sheer-will choice. God, Himself, appropriates His decision to love. It is not earned or conditional. God loves because it is at the center of His person and character. The last main communicable attribute of God is truth. Central to His person and character is truth. "God is the God of truth

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- He is the only true God; He is One of complete integrity, dependability, and faithfulness; He bids all mankind to walk in His truth" (J. R. Willaims). This is important, because it shows that God is true and the Possessor of truth. Truth, Biblically then, is objectively founded upon the Person, character, and work of God. Psalm 141:6 states, "the word of the Lord is true/[truth]
- " And also, "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind." (Num. 23:19).

This aspect of theology proper seeks to disclose how God identifies Himself. While it is important to ascertain a personal identification of God, it only seems fair to begin this study with a look at what God reveals specifically about Himself. This portion of the Doctrine of God is entitled the "identity of God" because it deals with His Being. It is important to begin this study with a look at the core nature of His Person.

i. Also, it is crucial to note that even in understanding God as living, His living cannot be understood from an earthly perspective. The Living God does not live as man lives. Numbers 23:19 demonstrates the uniqueness of God as living in contrast to man. "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?" While it can be understood in part, the Living God is "alive" well beyond the scope of human understanding. J. R. Williams writes regarding this, "As the Living God, He has life in Himself. His life did not come from another source." In other words, while the life and living of mankind can be measured and timed, God as living must be understood as infinite and eternal.

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ii. Lastly, and more importantly, one must not separate living from action. This powerful designation of God is inextricably tied to action. “We move on to note... that the action of God in the whole drama of creation, redemption, and glorification is that of One who, as living, gives life and breath to all things, brings life back to that which is dead, and constantly renews with life what has been restored” (J. R. Williams). Joshua 3:10 clearly demonstrates the connection to action: “Here is how you shall know that the Living God is among you and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites.” (note: it is never a meaningless, haphazard, and spontaneous action; the actions of the Living God are intentional and purposeful. Perhaps, this may better be understood as meaningful interaction with humankind.) And also, Hebrews 9 states, “how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (vs. 14). Yet again, it is clear the identification of God as living cannot be separated from action. This is of extreme importance and comfort to God’s people. The Living God is to be known as active and alive to care for His own.

i. In the beautiful drama of creation, the heart of God is revealed as personal. The idea of God desiring personal relationship with mankind is the very reason for the creation of the galaxies, the vacillating oceans, the snowy mountains, green plains, and vibrant colors of the flowers. God created the heavens and the earth as the very stage upon which to set His most treasured creatures – humankind (Gen. 1:1-2:3). This is the very purpose of the creation account. God is personal, and He desires relationship with man.

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While God does not communicate His motives for creation, it is clear the creation of mankind was the purpose. First, humankind was the climax of the creation account; on the sixth, and final, day of God's masterful creation, man was formed (Gen. 1:31). Secondly, no other part of creation was formed in "the image of God" (Gen. 1:27). This shows an intense intentionality. God's resolve was for mankind. Lastly, no other part of His creation received special blessing (Gen. 1:28). The Divine blessing of dominion was entirely reserved for humankind. This not only seems to demonstrate mankind to be the climax of creation, but it also reveals the objective of creation was man.

ii. Furthermore, God reveals Himself to be personal through His titles and names. "He does not will to be called 'God' only, but to be known also, for example, as 'Yahweh' or 'the Lord.' This is His personal self-designation... God is also variously 'king' (e.g. 1 Sam. 12:12), 'judge' (e.g. Judges 11:27), 'shepherd' (e.g. Ps. 80:1), and 'husband' (e.g. Jer. 31:32) – all personal epithets" (J. R. Williams). Of course, the relational zenith of all God's names and titles is seen in the designation "Father."

For God to elect the title of "Father," God is emphasizing that He is deeply personal. This communicates the fact of relationship and knowing. It was not enough that God knew His creatures; He desires to be known by His Children (Eph. 1:17). It goes without saying that God as Father demonstrates the personal care of raising and parenting children. This simply emphasizes the fact that God is personal, relational, and accessible to mankind.

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i. Understanding God as Spirit can be understood, primarily, in two ways: independence and freedom. Being that God is Spirit, one should understand that this communicates God's independence. God, in every way, is independent from creation and natural order. As a Spirit, God is not bound to, or limited by, the laws of nature. He is independent from His creation. He is entirely self-sufficient, He is self-governed, and He is dependent upon nothing but Himself. Wayne Grudem states, "the implication is that God's existence and character are determined by Himself alone and are not dependent on anyone or anything else. This means that God's being has always been, and will always be, exactly what it is. God is not dependent upon any part of creation His existence or His nature."

ii. The second implication to God's identity as Spirit is freedom. This relates not only to His identity but also to His ability to act. As Spirit, "He is free, first, to do as He wills. There is no obstacle or hindrance of any kind within Himself" (j. R. Williams). Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3:17, communicates this very fact, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." While Paul is intending only to give an application to the believer, it can still be understood that God (as Spirit) is so completely free that He is even able to delegate freedom. If God was restrained and trammled, it would be impossible for Him to offer freedom to others.

iii. Lastly, He is free to act as He so desires. There is nothing that is able to limit His ability to act, but Himself. God has the complete freedom to do as He wills; however, it is clear God governs Himself. Despite absolute freedom and sovereignty, God's actions are never spontaneous and haphazard. All of the Lord's actions are motivated and guided by His character. God never acts against His character or His will.

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This section of the doctrine of God deals with “omni’s” of God. God, without debate, is perfect (1 John 1:5; 4:8b). This perfection, however, must not only be understood in relation to His character. This must also be understood in regard to His nature. The very nature, or essence, of God is “all” or “universally” perfect. Unlike mankind, there are no restraints to His power, knowledge, or presence.

i. Also, God’s omnipotence is further demonstrated in “His providential activity wherein He sustains the universe, ‘upholding the universe by the word of His power’” (Heb. 1:3). This is important, because it makes clear that God’s power is not limited to creation. God did not simply set the earth into motion. He watches over it. His omnipotence tends to and cares for that which His hands have made.

ii. It is important to note that God’s omnipotence is governed by His character and His will. It is simply not enough to understand that God can do anything. Rather, it **MUST** be understood that He can do anything that aligns itself with His character and will. God will not do anything that contradicts His own character or redemptive plan.

iii. Lastly, God’s omnipotence must not be separated from salvation. J. R. Williams states, “God is all-powerful to fulfill His covenant blessing; it will surely be accomplished.” Even as early as the fall of mankind (Gen. 3:21), the omnipotence of God is witnessed in the most tender and gracious of ways. He is always working toward the good of mankind, constantly proving His power through the redemption of man. From Sinai to the Cross and from Abram to the culmination of all things, the omnipotence of God is seen in making a way for mankind to be saved.

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i. While this reality is truly beyond grasp for the finitude of humankind, God's omniscience should also be understood on a deeply personal level. Omniscience should not only be understood as an all-inclusive knowing of all things in totality. It must also be comprehended as including each thing individually. In other words, God does not have an indifferent understand of all of the facts. He knows each and everything thing individually and intimately. This is seen Psalm 139:13-16. The Inspired text goes to great lengths to explain God's omniscience, while directly connecting it to a very personal God. It says, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. ^{Wonderful are your works;} my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance, in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." While it is clear God's omnipresence (which will be discussed in length) is also in view, the above Passage highlights the personal and intimate nature of God's omniscience. He knows all things as a whole, but He also knows each thing individually.

i. Note: While God is everywhere present, this must not be understood as God dwelling within everything. This concept comes from a type of pagan worship called animism. It is clear throughout Scripture that God only indwells His people, and His residence begins with a confession of faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:13). Beyond that, God does not dwell in all things. He is everywhere present.

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In this section, it will be seen how God is transcendent. Being that God is the Inventor and Creator of the heavens, the earth, and time, it only makes sense that God transcends mankind's natural order of operation. In the doctrine of God, the ways in which God is greater than the common order of nature are called the transcendence of God, or the incommunicable attributes of God. **The following study will highlight the attributes of God that He alone possesses.**

It is important to add caution to one's understanding of God's infinitude. Any understanding of this incommunicable attribute that limits God is wrong. Attaching some finitude to God's infiniteness is dangerous. In the name of understanding God from a human perspective, some have attempted to ascribe God finite characteristics. While the temptation to do so likely comes from a sincere desire to know God, it is wrong. It must remain that God is infinite; He is unable to be measured or limited in any way.

While this may simply be beyond man's ability to understand, this is an important attribute of God. It is given as a name for God in Genesis 21:33. Also, it is regularly ascribed to God as an attribute; Psalm 90:2 states, "*before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*" It is important to see this attribute as inextricably tied to His Person. God does not simply possess eternity; He is eternal.

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ii. Secondly, this is important because God's eternity is regularly tied to His covenants. (For more information, see our session on Covenant). This is very important – only an everlasting God could fulfill the promise of eternity. While this could be discussed at great length, please suffice it to say that an eternal God will be the fulfiller of an eternal covenant. (Reference: Gen. 9:16; Gen. 17:7; 2 Sam. 23:5; 1 Chron. 16:17; Isaiah 55:3; Jer. 32:40; ect...).

i. This attribute, while possessed by God alone, must be understood as deeply personal. One of the main facets of this attribute is that He is unchanging in response to the behavior of mankind. Because He never changes, God is consistent in His dealings with mankind. This is a truly an encouraging truth. God's unchanging motivation is for the salvation and redemption of mankind, and the believer can know that this will continue to be God's main motif.

In relation to the character of God, this section of the doctrine of God deal with the moral nature of God. This is, perhaps, one of the most important aspects of this doctrine. It deals entirely with "what is God like" (J. R. Williams), or what is at the heart of God that drives His actions, His choices, and His will.

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This characteristic can be defined as the sanctity, or perfect separation from sin or wickedness, of God. In other words, God (in being and character) is "set apart" in every way, from everything that is worldly, evil, or wicked. Some have even gone to describe the holiness of God's character as "other than" (Gary Thompson). His character is completely "other than" that of the world. 1 John states, "*God is light; in him there is no darkness at all*" (1:5), and, also, it declares that "God is love" and in Him there is no hate at all (4:8). God is holy; His holy character, seen throughout Scripture, drives and motivates Him to work redemption, grace, and mercy.

In fact, twice in God's divinely inspired revelation, God highlights His loving character by saying, "[God] *who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Tim. 2:4), and "*The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance*" (2 Peter 3:9). These statements, and the ultimate demonstration of love in the sacrificial death of Messiah, illuminates the paternal love and care of God.

This attribute is directly connected to dependability and faithfulness. J. R. Williams writes, "the faithfulness of God, while related to His lovingkindness (or 'steadfast love'), conveys the note of God's unwavering commitment to maintain His relation to His people: to stay with them through 'thick and thin.' **Because of God's faithfulness and truth, He will not break His covenant relationship.**" This does not change. God is true through-and-through. Because He is the God of truth (Rom. 3:4), He only speaks what is true; He only acts in truth; He only performs for His people in a way that is true to His character.

The consequences of this fact are great. This demonstrates some potent realities. This reminds believers that what God reveals about Himself, in His Word, is true. It, also, encourages the tired soul that what God has spoken is founded upon His own truthfulness, and He will accomplish what He has promised.

Biblical Anthropology - "What is Man?"

As we proceed, I want to give four-points of dialogue for us to have as focal points for understanding man's original intent and purpose in which to think and understand the fashion and purpose Man was created in. In saying what was just mentioned: I want to add that there are more points i.e. things up for discussion in this doctrine that will not be mentioned, but the points that I've selected are for the purpose of displaying the beauty of assisting us in comprehension of the splendor of Man and man's creative relationship with his Creator. The four-points are as such:

- Man created in God's image and likeness.
- Man created to reflect God.
- Man created purposefully to have dominion.
- Man created to enjoy unhindered, unbridled, and unbroken fellowship with Yahweh God.

"Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Gen. 1:26-27)

Points to Ponder!

Anthropology

- Man created in God's Image:
- Man was created to reflect God in:
- Man was purposefully created to have Dominion:
- Man created to enjoy unhindered, unbridled, and unbroken fellowship with Yahweh God:
- Man Formed!
- "Image" and "Likeness"

In the creation account of Genesis chapter one, we see that after God creates trees, animals, stars, sun, and moon: He then proceeds to make man after the earth is ready and all things are produced. The unique factor here that separates Man in its distinctiveness is not only that mankind was created in the “

image
” and “

likeness
” of God, but also that while God spoke everything else into existence, He formed the man. “

Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being

” (Gen. 2:7 NIV). All the way through the creation narrative, we notice that the Bible clearly states that God said, God said, God said, but when it came to making Man (in Hebrew it's the word

Adam

), the Bible switches its tone, to now God formed! This would imply that everything else God spoke into life and or existence, but with Man, He formed him. It was the psalmist who declared with joy, “

Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture

Anthropology

” (Psalm. 100:3 NIV). Man was created out of love! The God of the universe formed us. He could have spoken us into existence. He could have even simply said a few words and Man would have been fashioned from the dirt of the ground, but rather than just speaking to the earth to bring Man forth: He formed Man! Bruce Waltke in his “An Old Testament Theology” clarifies, “

In that representation of the event, God uses the ground to make the human body, but life comes directly from God, and so does his nature and function as the image of God

” (Waltke Pg. 212). Bruce is speaking on two glorious facts! The first is that God formed us! But the second is even greater in the fact that not only did God fashion us i.e. our body, but He also gave life to an empty shell! What an amazing heart wrenching fact! After creating man’s structure, Yahweh-God then proceeds to breathe into the fashioned empty shell: giving an earthly structure life from Himself which caused the created image bearer to be animated with movement! So then, by knowing this, we come to find out that man was never designed to be out of relationship with the One who gave him Life from Himself. The sum total is as such: up until the point that Yahweh-God formed the man, He spoke to everything else and it was so! Yahweh (the Creator of all things) breathes into a mold of what He wanted and Man becomes a living being! God formed man at the pinnacle or apex of creation! Keep in mind that Yahweh-God did not form man until everything else in creation was completed and seen too be good. Also, it was God who formed the body! Therefore, God knew exactly what he wanted the human body to look like and he did this for his glory and good pleasure.

“

The God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creepy thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them

.” (Gen. 1:26-27 NIV).

- “Image of God”:
- “Likeness of God”

Anthropology

- In dealing with the “image of God. Bruce Waltke sheds light for us on this subject in two profound statements. 1) *“Image of God” is used uniquely with reference to human beings and so sets them apart from other creatures*” (Waltke. 215). 2) *“A human being is not said to have or to be the image of God, such as God’s immaterial essence, but each is said to be in his or her own entirety be the image of God”* (Waltke. 215). The first statement hits on the unchanging point that humans were fashioned to be above all other creatures! The second reinforces the first by adding that both men and women are image bearers of God in their own created place. Man (mankind) possesses a psychosomatic unity of image bearing. What this means is that Man was creatively shaped to be like God in both his mind (immaterial substance) and his body (material substance). I am not saying that God has a physical body, God is a spirit, but Man in his complete unity within himself as created by God bears this in both mind and body as one. To further this, the Hebrew word for “image” in the Genesis account is the word *Selem*. *“This word refers to a physical image, and having a formed body”* (Waltke 215).
- *“Likeness” (demuth) distinguishes the image from its Creator or begetter, underscores the notion that the image is only a faithful and adequate representation of God’* (Waltke 219). When the Bible uses the term “likeness” to describe man as being an “image bearer” of God, it is formally speaking of the way in which Man is an adequately created representation of God and not God Himself! *“Likeness” defines and limits the meaning of the word “selem (image)”* (Waltke 219). Although man is created in the “image” and “likeness” of God, Man is not and will never be God Himself, neither was Man created to be gods (to be worshipped)! This statement is speaking of the way in which Man resembles his Creator. We must also keep in mind that it was Yahweh-God who gave us this “image” and “likeness” of Himself. The word *“Likeness”* furthermore denotes that one is not perfectly or exactly identical to that which it may be fashioned after, but possess similarities to it or even of it.

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- As being made in the “image” and “likeness” of God: Man was created to rule! The Hebrew word is *radah* and it means to rule, have dominion, dominate, tread down, and also to reign or rule over. The analogy would be that if God made Man king then his kingdom would be over the entire earth and his subjects would be all living creatures that live upon the earth. David goes on to express this thought provoking truth in Psalms, “*What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field, The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas*” (Psalms. 8:4-8 NIV). What we are speaking of in this area of theology is known as the Cultural Mandate. Also, let us keep in thought that the dominion aspect was seen when man named all the animals! We find this in Genesis 2:19-20a, “*Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field*” (NIV).
- Plurality
- Communicable Attributes
- Relationship

Anthropology

- As God reveals Himself in the scriptures as a God of plurality within Himself, so Man also has this in the fashion of being created with the name Man or mankind (*Adam*), which connotes to be both male and female. “*The creation of man and woman in this ontological relationship is thus a creaturely repetition of being of God, whose inner life is one of relationship and mutuality*” (Willaims. 204).
- (Another way of saying communicable attributes would be to say that the things in which God shares with Man i.e. His qualities, characteristics, and or properties). Here is just a small list of attributes in which God has creatively invited Humanity to share with Him; love, knowledge, mercy, happiness, joy, peace, truth, goodness, kindness, and anger.
- As a being or creature created in the “image” and “likeness” of Yahweh, Man was made (in the area of relationship) to give love like God and not *need* to be loved by another creature! God is love and Man was created to share in this attribute of the Divine Nature. Not saying that Man has the capacity or ability to love on the same level as God does, but rather Man has the ability to love and not be in need of love from another human.

“

The God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creepy thing that creeps on the earth.”

(Gen. 1:26b NIV).

Let us recount all the specifics that only pertain to God and Man.

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- Yahweh's proclamation of creating Man in His "image and likeness" (Gen. 1:26)
- Yahweh gives Man dominion over everything on the earth that He created (Gen. 1:27)
- Yahweh-God formed the body of Man rather than just speaking to the earth to produce forth a shell (Gen. 2:7).
- Yahweh-God breathed into Man from His being and Man became a living being (Gen. 2:7).
- Yahweh-God walks with Man in the garden in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8). Yahweh-God created, formed, and fashioned Mankind to have unhindered, unbridled, and unbroken fellowship with Himself. We say this to state that Man's fellowship with His Creator was designed to be a fruitful and joyous one. One without any hindrances and deep intimacy. Out of all the creaturely order created by Yahweh-God, Man's purpose and design was one of specialty and possessed a uniqueness from all others. It was God who formed us for His pleasure! The evidence is translucent---Man was designed to have a distinctive intimate relationship with His Creator that was different and unique from anything else that God created, even-though God has connection to every other fashioned creature. We see that from the very onset: Man was set apart and made to walk, live, commerce, and personally enjoy Yahweh-God Himself! Man wasn't created just to serve, but for a personal experiential-relationship with the Living God!

Christology

This discussion deals solely with the study of the Person of Christ. While this is a vast study, this study will present an overview of the Person, role, and nature of the Jewish Messiah. As this will provide you with a general overview of this incredible topic, be encouraged to continue to further study this yourselves.

This is one of Christendom's one most important doctrines. Mark Jones of Ligonier Ministries declares, "There is no more important question than the one Jesus asked His disciples: 'Who do you say that I am?' ([Matt. 16:15](#)). No question has been more hotly debated, completely and partially misunderstood, ignored to one's peril, and answered correctly to one's great gain. The correct answer to that question is, in some respects, simple enough for a child to be saved, but also complex enough to keep theologians busy for all eternity. If eternal life is to know Jesus Christ ([John 17:3](#)), we cannot afford to be ignorant about the one who is 'chief among ten thousand' ([Song 5:10](#))." The importance is great, and the consequences immense. This study will require one's undying reverence, humility, and gratitude.

Words and Terms:

Christology

The word Christ (Χριστός - Christos) is the Greek term for the Hebrew Messiah (מָשִׁיחַ - mashiach). They are synonymous. (As an aside, the connectivity of these words are seen very clearly in the Septuagint: Lev. 6:22, Hab. 3:13, and Amos 4:13.) Both Messiah and Christ mean anointed, or anointed one. While "anointed" (or "anointed one") are terms far removed from the understanding of the modern reader, it must be kept in mind that this not only references the Person of Christ, but it also speaks to the office of Christ. New Testament inspiration demonstrates flawlessly that Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophesied Person; He is the anointed one that was promised to come (John 20:31). On the other hand, "In the Old Testament anointing with oil was associated with the Lord's appointing a person to the office of priest, king, or prophet to save and preserve Israel" (Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology). This was the exact expectation of the Person of Christ, as He would fill the office of anointed Savior. Like any that filled the offices of priest, king, or prophet, the Messiah was expected to establish His office and bring salvation and preservation to Israel (Amos 9:11-15; Zeph. 3:17; Acts 4:12; etc...). In reference to the Person and Office of the promised Messiah, Jesus perfectly fulfills the Old Testament prophecies. (There is, of course, a bit more to be discussed regarding Jesus and prophecy. See notes on Eschatology for more on this.) Therein, Jesus was anointed by God (Matt. 3:16-17) as the Person for the Office of Savior.

The next matter of absolute importance is the discussion about His identity or nature. This facet of Christology has been allocated the coinage "hypostatic union." This was championed by early church father Athanasius. *"Athanasius used the term 'hypostatic union' to describe the teaching that these two distinct natures (divine and human) co-existed substantively and in reality [sic] in the single person of Jesus Christ. The aim was to defend the doctrine that Jesus was simultaneously truly God and truly man"* (theopedia.com). This is of undying importance! Many cults and heresies have arisen out of a misunderstanding of this fact. To remove the deity of Jesus, or the humanity of Jesus, removes one of Christendom's essential and most precious truths. Jesus Christ was both God and man - it must not be understood any other way.

Christology

John 1:1-2 and verse 14 states, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" And also in Phil. 2:5-11, "*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*" Pairing these two passages together, it is clear that Jesus was both God and man. The Eternal Son took "human form" so that He could accomplish the work of salvation. He needed to become man – flesh and blood – so that He could live a perfect life, die a substitutionary sacrificial death, and resurrect to new life as a firstfruits of the coming age.

Next, this study can be broken down into two main points: the humiliation of Christ and the exaltation of Christ. These deal primarily with the "states" of the Messiah. The Old Testament prophesies the Person of Messiah in one of two ways; it prophesies either a humiliated (suffering) servant or an exalted (glorious) king. These have become known as the prophetic states of Christ. These are the general "conditions" (or positions) of His prophetic role, which He fulfilled, or is fulfilling, as found in Scripture. Christ's humiliation deals not with becoming humble or adding humility to His character. It deals with the lowering of Himself from one state to another. This must be understood in the following manor: "The incarnation of the second person of the Trinity, while NOT involving the 'giving up' of any divine attributes, entailed Christ's willing submission to the limitations and weaknesses of humanity, being actually found as a servant among men. His suffering in terms of spiritual hardship, physical deprivation, and emotional pain are all part of his sufferings in humiliation" (Bible.org). Christ's humiliation can be demonstrated and summed up in these four areas: His incarnation, suffering, death, and burial.

Christology

Lastly, a look at the exaltation of the Messiah. This facet of Christology isolates and identifies the exalted "state" of Christ as He fulfills His prophetic role. This looks at how the Jesus Christ fulfilled (or is fulfilling) the Old Testament prophecies that point to His exalted kingship. Within the realm of Christ's exaltation, there are four main aspects: His resurrection, His ascension, His session, and His return in glory. This deals primarily with events that follow Christ's death and burial and is of equal importance to the elements of His humiliation - both "states" are needed to fulfill Scripture. Again, this is a simple overview and it is highly recommended that you continue this study on your own.

Hamartiology - "Doctrine of Sin"

As we proceed, I want to suggest four-points of thought as references for us to have as vital points for understanding this doctrine. In saying what was just mentioned: I want to add that there are more points i.e. things up for discussion in this doctrine that may not be cited, but the ideas that I've selected are for the purpose of displaying some truthful comprehension for us to become acquainted with in this theological study of Sin. I also want to mention that this is not an indebt study, but rather just a brief introduction! The four-points are as such:

- What is Sin (in definitional terms)
- The "How" question about Sin.
- The nature of Sin.
- The effects of Sin.

*To assist us in understanding this word, we will do our best to bring forth a simple, but forward definition. The word "Hamartiology" is a two part word (Hamartia/ology) "Hamartia" and "ology. The word Hamartia originally means "bad shot" or "err" while on the other hand, the term "ology" comes from the word logos which means word. *

- What is Sin---Definitionally?
- The "How" question about sin:
- The Nature of sin:
- The Effects and of Sin:
- Old Testament:
- New Testament:
- Summary:

Hamartiology

- “The OT’s principle word for sin is *hata*, which means “to miss the mark” (cf. Jdg 20:16; Pr. 19:2). In the OT, this word group, which is used some 580 times, typically speaks of missing the standard that God sets for man”. “Thus, the structure of human nature and the revelation of divine expectations both provide valid standards for humanity. Violation of these standards, by falling short of performing what is expected, is sin” (NIV and NSAB Encyclopedia of Bible words Pg. 566).
- “*Pesa* (“rebellion,” “transgression”) indicates a revolt against the standard” (Encyclopedia of Bible words Pg. 566).
- *Awon* (“iniquity,” “guilt”) is a deviation from a twisting of the standard” (Encyclopedia of Bible words Pg. 566).

Hamartia

(This word in the NT sums up all three of the words describe in the OT and also assumes a divine standard or norm and portrays humanity as missing the mark).

- “The OT views sin as the term of human response to falling short of the divine standards. People fall short, deviate, and rebel against the norms that God has established” (Encyclopedia of Bible words Pg. 570).
- “In the NT, sin is still viewed as deviation form divinely established norms. But sin is more than that. It is deeply rooted in the nature of the fallen race, a reality that holds human beings in slavery to hostile spiritual powers to baser passion and desires” (Encyclopedia of Bible words Pg. 570).
- The “how” question really focuses on the root question about sin, “how did sin or falling short of God’s original purpose and standard come into play with humanity”?
- What really happened in the one act of rebellion?

Hamartiology

- We find the starting point of reference in Genesis 3:6-7, where the Bible informs us, ***“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves”*** (NIV). To further focus on the question presented: although both disobeyed God's command “not to eat”, it was the man (male) who sin entered into the world through because he wasn't deceived, but simply disobeyed. The apostle Paul explains it this way to us, ***“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned”*** (Romans 5:12 NIV). Not only was there rebellion against God's command, but by this one act of willful rebellion--- death entered the world!
- As we look into this, we ponder greatly on the “what” question. Let us explain what we mean: Adam! When Adam came into existence the first thing he knew and saw was God because God had formed him and breathed into him life from Himself. (Although the Bible doesn't imply this, but we take the road of believing that the Man and Yahweh walked and communed in the garden for a time that is not given or referenced in the scriptures). Yahweh grants the Man a gift called Woman that comes from the Man's own flesh and now there are two humans walking with God for an unknown amount of time not mentioned in the Bible. (To make a long story short) at the moment of disobedience, what happened in the Man's heart towards his Creator? What happened in a moment's time that could have given the Man fortitude to accuse God for the good gift that God gave him? Rebellion happened! Sin or missing the mark is due to rebellion of and against God's standard for Man!

Hamartiology

- Nature is defined as such according to Dictionary.com
“the particular combination of qualities belonging to a person, animal, thing, or class by birth, origin, or constitution; native or inherent character”.
It is also defined as *“the instincts or inherent tendencies directing conduct”*.
- According to J. Rodman Williams, in his systematic theology, he observes the nature of sin in three components; 1) unbelief, 2) pride, and 3) disobedience.
- Unbelief
- Pride
- Disobedience

Hamartiology

- In the Genesis 3 narrative of the fall, we notice that God told the Man not to eat from the Tree of knowledge of good and evil. Man then proceeds to listen to the voice or words of a stranger and thereby not exuding enough confidence or belief in what God explained—Man fell. In a similar story, when God brought the nation of Israel out of Egypt they rebelled against Him through their unbelief. The story is recorded in the book of Numbers 14:36-45. Instead of having faith in God’s command and also keeping in mind what the LORD had accomplished for them already—the nation gave into unbelief. The cost for unbelief was so severe that they had to wander in the desert for thirty-eight years and all of those who did not believe died. The author of Hebrew tells us, “*So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief*” (Heb. 3:19 NIV).
- Again in Genesis 3:5, it is the serpent who makes this supposition to the woman concerning the forbidden fruit, “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”. Williams focuses on the fact of the statement from the human point by mentioning that the issue was to “be like God”. “Here is the temptation to pride, ambition and self-exaltation in the highest degree: to be “like God” (Pg. 233). In understanding this we must step back and define the word “pride”. Pride is defined as, “*a high or inordinate opinion of one's own dignity, importance, merit, or superiority, whether as cherished in the mind or as displayed in bearing, conduct, etc*”(Dictionary.com). “*Man was not made to “play God” but to worship Him, love Him, and serve Him gladly and freely*” (Williams 234).

Hamartiology

- All humans know and understand what the meaning of this word is. It simply means to disobey! *“Lack of obedience or refusal to comply, disregard or transgression”* (Dictionary.com). In Genesis chapter 3, the record is clear: humanity fell from its God give glory because the Man disobeyed the command or voice of Yahweh God and listened to another—his wife! We also see this same example of Israel while they were in the wilderness approaching the promise land. ***“Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief”*** (Heb. 3:16-19 NIV). They were lead out of bondage to go into a land that “flowed with mife and honey” and yet they did not come into what was originally planned because of their “disobedience”. He concludes with a stern warning to all those who would later read their history of a tragic end, ***“So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief”*** (Heb. 3:19 NIV).

The effects of sin

Hamartiology

- The word effect means the cause, result, or consequence of something that has already transpired.
- When the Man rebelled against God in Genesis chapter 3, something immediately happened because of the Man's actions towards his Creator that has lasted from that point forward. Here is the result after the Man ate the fruit, "***When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves***" (Gen. 3:6-7 NIV). The immediate response by his action was that their eyes were open and they noticed that they were both naked! Let's look a little further at this story as it unfolds. "***Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden***" (Gen. 3:8 NIV). The reason they were hiding from the presence of Yahweh was that their eyes were open and they were naked clothed by fig leaves. "***But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid"***" (Gen 3:9-10 NIV). As God begins to discuss what happened with the Man, the Man blames God for the woman He gave him. "***And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it"***" (Gen. 3:11-12 NIV). The Man went from loving his wife to self-preservation mode! He blames God and the woman instead of taking responsibility for his own act of rebellion. Williams states the effects on sin bears consequences on the human "futility of mind and action, guilt and punishment; then separation, estrangement, and bondage" (Williams. Pg. 245).

Hamartiology

Closing Remarks Beloved, sin is a Slave-Master who often whispers in our soul that it loves us, when, at the very core: it desires to use us and make us captives that are obedient addictive slaves to its insisting demands! Yes, sin has insisting demands and it demands that we follow its guidance and make it lord over our lives. “The natural human condition, therefore, is that of aggressiveness against one’s neighbor. James writes, *“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures”* (4:1-3NIV). Whether on a large scale or small, is the history of mankind. Times of peace turns out to be only pauses between renewed fighting. Aggressiveness, rooted in alienation, is at the heart of the human condition”. (Williams. p. 265). There is no part of the whole of any human being that sin has not affected us and has also had its effect in us in some fashion or another. Because of sin, Man is utterly lost and without hope.

Doctrine of Covenant

The Doctrine of Covenant is a broad topic that spans the entire Bible. There are a total of 6 Covenants found throughout Scripture. The following list includes each covenant and its reference: Adamic (Genesis 2:15-17), Noahic (Genesis 9:9-17), Abrahamic (Genesis 12:1-2; 15:18; 17:1-8), Mosaic (Exodus 19:3-6; Deuteronomy 5:2-3), Davidic (2 Sam. 7:12-16); New Covenant (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). Each of these covenants are initiated by God with the purpose of accomplishing His redemptive plan for humankind. This study will present an overview of what is a covenant and what are the common elements of a covenant.

The biblical definition of covenant is both simple and complex. The word itself is of Latin origin (*con venire*), which simply means "coming together." In the Hebrew, the concept and term covenant is closely connected to the word *יָדָה* (*yada`*) because of the deep, intimate, and personal understanding agreed upon by two parties (Tim Hegg). In the Greek, the concept and term for covenant is *διαθήκη* (*diathēkē*), which communicates an understanding of compact, agreement, promise, and contract (BLB.com). J. Rodman Williams, in consolidating all of these biblical constructs for covenant, defines it as follows: "a formal, solemn, and binding contract between two parties." It also needs to be noted that all 6 of the divine covenants found in Scripture were always initiated by God. The Bible is clear to demonstrate that God initiates the covenant, makes the promises, and sets the terms Himself.

1) It is crucial to this study that the common elements of a Biblical covenant are discussed. **The first common element** found in a covenant is that God is the initiator. As briefly mentioned above, God is the One that approaches man to establish and express the terms of the covenant. This is important because it highlights that God Himself is working to move mankind toward His perfect plan of redemption. It is never man to initiate a covenant with God. It is always God. This further demonstrates the character and heart of God. It should recall to the mind of the Believer that God does "*not want that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance*" (2 Peter 3:9). And also, 2 Tim. 2:3-4 states that it is God "*who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" The fact that God has always been the initiator, that He would approach man to progressively move humankind toward redemption and blessing, is a profound revelation of a Father's heart. He wants all to be saved and none to perish.

Doctrine of Covenant

2) The second common element in a divine covenant is promise. Promise is an element found in each covenant. From the promise of continual, unobstructed relationship with God and eternal life on a perfect earth (Adamic Covenant), to the promise of never destroying the ALL the inhabitants of earth with water (Noahic Covenant), "God is always for man, never against him, and seeks only his well-being" (J. Rodman Williams). This fact is seen in the benevolent promises of the covenants.

God, being the loving Life-Giver, is true to His character. Every time He initiated a covenant for the good of those created in His image and likeness, He sought to provide abundant life for His people. That in mind, it is important to note that every covenant was "universal in scope." While God would initiate a covenant with certain individuals in history, every divine covenant held promises and ramifications that are universal to all of humankind (J. Rodman Williams). This seems to reflect the heart of God; He does not show partiality (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11). God wants to move the entire world toward restoration and redemption – though not all will willingly believe.

3) The third common element found in divine covenants is "obligation." This has to do with responsibility in determining the covenant's fulfillment. In every case, God has obligated Himself to fulfill the promises of the covenant. This perhaps is the case because only God could "make good" to perfectly fulfill His covenant promises. As will be discussed later, this does not remove responsibility from man in certain situations.

On the other hand, there are other covenants that are entirely unconditional; where there are no conditions set upon man. In these, God is obligated to fulfill His covenant out of His own sheer will. A great example of this is seen in the Noahic Covenant, where God simply promises to NEVER again destroy all flesh with a global flood. This unconditional promise is solely initiated and set by God for the good of humankind, and it holds no requirements for man.

In the end, a covenant is a formal and binding contract between two parties. Each covenant, as seen above, holds three main elements: Initiation, promise/blessing, and obligation.

Soteriology - “Doctrine of Salvation”

As we proceed, we want to recommend four-points to ponder on as references for us to have as vital points for understanding this doctrine. In saying what was just mentioned: we want to add that there are more points i.e. things up for discussion in this doctrine that may not be cited, but the ideas that we have selected are for the purpose of displaying some truthful comprehension for us to become acquainted with in this theological study of Salvation. In this portion of our Doctrine series, we will focus on what the Messiah did for Mankind. We also want to mention that this is not an indepth study, but rather just a brief introduction! The four-points for thinking this through are as followed:

- The Meaning of Soteriology/Salvation.
- The Scope of Soteriology/Salvation.
- Salvation is for Everyone!
- Salvation is Progressiveness.

Man! What has Mankind become after being separated and far removed from the original purpose and intent that God fashioned Mankind (humanity) to exist in? We know that God formed Mankind (Adam) in His “Image” and after His “Likeness” (Gen. 1:26). We also know, that, not only did Yahweh form Man, but that it was He who also “breathed into Man and Man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). All of this presents a beauty that is beyond anyone’s understanding and out of the sphere of one’s comprehension. Actually, this is just an understatement to the reality of what actually happened when God made Man. Something went wrong! Yes, something went horrible wrong after Man was created! Something went so wrong that the result of one act has so marred and displaced humanity that the effects and affects have lasted down through the generations, lasting up to this very moment. Something happened in one moment to where Man went from being clothed in glory, to being naked and ashamed. The Bible defines this as iniquity! What this word presents is that something or someone is bent over without the ability to walk straight up in an upright fashion! Adam fell by a willful disobedient act that left humanity bent towards nefarious proclivities and without hope! *“The Bible speaks, however, of God’s gracious plan to provide a solution to man’s problem. We call it salvation or soteriology”* (J. Hampton Keathley, III).

Soteriology

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16 NIV).

“Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him” (Heb. 5:8-9 NIV).

Points to Ponder...

- The Meaning of Soteriology:
- The Scope of Soteriology:
- Salvation is for Everyone!:
- Salvation is Progressiveness:
- **Soteria** (in the biblical sense) expresses a strong deliver who rescues, saves, and restores i.e. makes new.
- **Soteria** means—deliverance, preservation, safety, salvation i.e. wholeness (shalom).
- Deliverance from the molestation of enemies.
- in an ethical sense, that which concludes to the souls safety or salvation
- **Old Testament Concept**
- **New Testament Concept**

Aspects of “salvation” in OT thought.

Soteriology

- “Salvation implies that a person or a nation is in great distress, perhaps related to danger from enemies or to suffering caused by some other disaster. In such situations the sufferers do not have the ability to help themselves” (Encyclopedia of Bible Words, Pg. 540).
- “Salvation involves a deliverer (a savior). This is the person or one who acts on behalf of the sufferers to deliver them” (EBW, Pg. 540).
- “The action of the deliverer effects a release from the circumstances that caused the suffering. Thus, salvation portrays movement—from distress to safety” (EBW, Pg. 540).
- The words “save” and “salvation” can be translated from the Hebrew word “*yasa*”. This word with its many derivatives occurs over some 353 times in the Old Testament.
- “The core concept established in the OT is carried into the NT. In fact the Greek verb “*sozo*” (to save) also implies rescue from some life-threatening danger.
- *Sozo* is found over 100 times in the NT. (examples are the following verses: Luke 6:9; Luke 7:50; Luke 8:12; Luke 8:36; Luke 8:48; Luke 8:50; Luke 9:24; Luke 9:56; Luke 13:23; Luke 17:19; Luke 18:26; Luke 18:42; Luke 19:10; Luke 23:35; Luke 23:37; Luke 23:39).

(As a side note, we want to show the progression or transformation of what one word looks like from doing a proper etymological study (the study of word sources or word origins). It goes as such:

A) *Sozo* (*this word is a verb*, Strong's “4982” “from a primary sos (contraction for obsolete saoz, “safe”) means to keep safe from destruction and disease, make well, heal, restore to health, to preserve.

B) *Soter* (*this word is a noun*, Strong's “4990”, but it comes from “4982”) means: saviour, deliverer, and preserver.

C) This words leads us to *Soteria* (*this is also a noun*, Strong's “4991”, feminine of a derivative of “4990” as (properly, abstract) noun).

Soteriology

- “According to the broadest meaning as used in Scripture, the term salvation encompasses the total work of God by which He seeks to rescue man from the ruin, doom, and power of sin and bestows upon him the wealth of His grace encompassing eternal life, provision for abundant life now, and eternal glory (Eph. 1:3-8; 2:4-10; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; John 3:16, 36; 10:10)” (Bible.org).
- The extent or range of Soteriology is one phrase with two important components that complement each other to make one. The points are:
- “Salvation is the free gift of God to man by His grace through faith, completely aside from human works. Works in the life of a believer are tremendously important, but they are to be the result of receiving and appropriating God’s grace in the salvation they receive” (Bible.org). Paul informs the church at Ephesus the truth about salvation. *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Eph. 2:8 NIV). To bring further credence to this point, he (Paul) brings Abraham into this conversation in the letter to the church at Rome. *“What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness”* (Rom. 4:1-5 NIV).
- Here at the end of this point in this section, we want to speak on the fact that this word *Soteria* does not originally hint on going to heaven. No, in fact it speaks making one whole to where there is nothing missing or broken in one’s life. The word signifies the rescuing someone from molestation or destruction and making them safe. But not just safe from that which was a present threat, but rather completely from further molestations and coming issues that the individual does not have the capacity to see nor perceive.
- Sozo (verb)

Soteriology

- Jesus the Messiah is the Deliverer.
- And Wholeness (shalom) i.e. salvation only comes through Him and His finished work apart from human participation or merit!

“to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction

- one (from injury or peril)
- to save in the technical biblical sense
- to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health.
- to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save or rescue” (Biblestudytools.com/Thayer’s dictionary).
- to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment.
- to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance” (Biblestudytools.com/Thayer’s dictionary)

Yahweh the True and Living God gives us the truth through His living and abiding word. John the beloved grants us insight into this truth when he mentions, “

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (Jn. 3:16-18 NIV).

In another place John states “

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world

” (1Jn. 2:2 NIV).

Soteriology

- “God so loved *the World* (all humanity) (3:16a).
- He gave His son so that *whoever* (3:16b) believes in him will have eternal life.
- God did not send His son to condemn *the world* (even-though he could have by being a holy and righteous God/Judge) (3:17a).
- To save *the world* through him (3:17b).
- *Whoever* believes is not condemned (3:18a).
- *Whoever* does not believe is already condemned (3:18b)
- Because *they* have not believed in him (3:18c).

(In John 3:16-18, words like “the world” and “they” are terms that are all inclusive to whoever would participate. Giving that all humans have a mind and heart to accept God’s Salvation, some will deny, but we must remember that the choice is theirs).

(We will be using J. Hampton Keathley, III model for this located on Bible.org)

“Salvation in Christ, has three observable phases in the Bible. Understanding this truth can relieve a lot of tension from the standpoint of security and enable the believer to relax in the Lord and His grace while simultaneously moving forward in spiritual growth” (J. Hampton Keathley, III).

Soteriology

- “This is the *Past* tense of salvation—saved from sin’s penalty. Several passages of Scripture speak of salvation as wholly past, or as accomplished and completed for the one who has believed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This aspect views the believer as delivered once and for all from sin’s penalty and spiritual death (Luke 7:50; 1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 2:5, 8; Tit. 3:5; Heb. 7:25; 2 Tim. 1:9). So complete and perfect is this work of God in Christ that the believer is declared permanently saved and safe forever (John 5:24; 10:28, 29; Rom. 8:1, 37-39; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)” (J. Hampton Keathley, III).
- “This is the *Present* tense of salvation and has to do with present deliverance over the reigning power of sin or the carnal nature’s power in the lives of believers (Rom. 6:1-23; 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 2:19-20; 5:1-26; Phil. 1:19; 2:12-13; 2 Thess. 2:13). This phase of salvation in Christ is accomplished through the ministry of the indwelling Spirit, but it is based on the work of Christ and the believer’s union and co-identification with Christ in that work” (J. Hampton Keathley, III).
- “This is the *Future* tense of salvation which refers to the future deliverance all believers in Christ will experience through a glorified resurrected body. It contemplates that, though once and for all saved from the penalty of sin and while now being delivered from the power of sin, the believer in Christ will yet be saved into full conformity to Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29; 13:11; 1 Pet. 1:5; 1 John 3:2). This recognizes and shows that the Christian in his experience never becomes perfect in this life” (Phil. 3:12-14)” (J. Hampton Keathley, III).

Conclusion/Final Thoughts

Soteriology

Yahweh-God wants us (humanity) whole! But wholeness only comes through knowing Him and being intimately known by Him—relationship! Salvation is not just a plan set in motion to deliver all those who desire to be set free! Rather, salvation is a person—Jesus! Soteriology is the Biblical teaching and retelling of the truth of The Deliverer—Yahweh; saving His people, preserving His people, and keeping safe all those who allow Him to do so for them knowing that without Him, they are futile, weak, distressed, and tormented by their enemies and without remedy! We must emphatically express that Soteriology is not primarily about “going to heaven”, but rather, it’s about something far more delightful and life altering! Salvation is about becoming one with the Creator, who, in the union becomes Abba i.e. Father and those linked to him become children! Paul informs the congregation in Rome that, *“For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God”* (Romans. 8:19-21 NIV). He, Paul, further explains *“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently”* (Romans. 8:22-25 NIV). As we have concluded this subject: we would like to leave you with one last thought about this Deliverer! This statement comes from Hebrews 2:9-10, *“But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered”* (NIV). Beloved there is a Person who knows you and understands you more than you know yourself! He desires to make you whole and complete in the love that He has always had and will always have. Our prayer is that you would come to know Him through these teachings presented.

Pneumatology

Pneumatology is the study of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. For this study, it is important to define the foundation of this doctrine - the Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit is fully God, and He is equal in power, authority, and majesty with the other Members of the Trinity.

Pneumatology

- The Person of the Holy Spirit
 - It may be appropriate to start with John 14:16-17 when opening the discussion on the Person of the Holy Spirit. Jesus stated in this passage, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Helper**, to be with you forever... the Spirit of Truth...” (ESV). Here, “Another Helper” is in juxtaposition to Jesus Himself. In other words, in the same way as Jesus personally helped, taught, counseled, and comforted the disciples, the Person of the Holy Spirit would be given to do the same work. He was given not as a compromise – the Father did not “settle” for the Holy Spirit to “replace” the Person of Jesus in the lives of His disciples - But the Holy Spirit (as the third member of the triune Godhead) was given to provide God’s people with the all the fullness of God Himself. As is noted from the above statements, it must be understood that the Holy Spirit is a Person. He is not an impersonal force or strange ethereal consciousness! He is personal, knowable, and able to disciple just as Jesus was. In fact, Jesus declares that it was better the He leave and the Holy Spirit come in His place because of Jesus’ corporeal limitations (John 16:7).
 - This is of incredible encouragement to the Believer! Christians are not left as orphans, without the presence of help of God. Being that there is NO physical limitations to the Presence of the Holy Spirit, God’s people (individually and corporately) can all equally enjoy and experience the fullness of God’s presence. This can be proven demonstrated through a number of passages, however, 2 Cor. 13:14 highlights the reality of intimate and personal relationship with the Person of the Holy Spirit: “... *the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*”

Pneumatology

- Salvific Work

- The second major aspect of Pneumatology is that of His salvific work. The Holy Spirit is significantly responsible for applying the promises of Salvation to lives and hearts of those who believe.
- Also, it has been said by commentators that the Holy Spirit is the One who "activates and animates" the blessings and promises of God in the lives of Christians. According to 2 Cor. 3, the New Covenant (AND ALL OF IT'S BLESSINGS) is applied by the Spirit of God.

- Enabling Work

The last item for discussion is the enabling work of the Holy Spirit. This aspect of pneumatology looks at the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Believers – and how He enables the Believers for their obedience and their calling.

i. Eph. 1:13-14, "*In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*"

ii. Also, Rom. 8:9 states, "*... Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.*"

iii. It is without question that the Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in the salvation of mankind. Once an individual places their faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, they receive the very presence of God, the Holy Spirit, and the promise of the eternal life. The Holy Spirit comes to indwell the believer upon personal-faith-commitment and He deposits the hope and promise of eternal life....

i. The 2 Cor. 3 promises/blessings: hope, life, glory, righteousness, freedom, transformation, and fellowship with God. ...

ii. All of this regarding the Work of the Spirit in and around the salvation of believers.

Pneumatology

i. While this can reality can be found woven throughout the Bible (Old Testament and New), John chapters 14-16 offers a plethora of insight into the enabling work of the Holy Spirit. This section of Scripture provides a long list of ways in which the Spirit enables believers to walk in righteousness:

ii. He helps (παράκλητος - *paraklētos*), enables, encourages, comforts, teaches, brings truth to remembrance, gives peace, testifies of Jesus' Words, convicts, guides, and glorifies the Person and Work of Jesus. It is to be understood that the ministry of the Person of the Holy Spirit is present with the Believer in every step of their journey. ...

iii. It goes without saying that the Believer needs the Help of God, the Holy Spirit. It is up to us to attention ourselves to His presence and ministry in our lives. Gal. 5:25, "*If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*"

Ecclesiology - “Doctrine of the Church”

As we proceed, we want to submit four-points to ponder on as references for us to have as vital points for understanding this doctrine. In saying what was just mentioned: we want to add that there are more aspects in this doctrine that may not be cited, but the points that we have selected are for the purpose of presenting some truthful pillars for us to become acquainted with in this theological study of the Church. We also want to mention that this is not an indepth study, but rather just a brief introduction! The four-points for meditational thought are as followed:

- Church Defined
- What is The Church?
- Distinguishing Characteristics of The Church.
- The responsibility of The Church.

Ecclesiology

The Church: who, what, where, when, how, and finally why? I know that these are tools used for doing research or completing a paper on any kind of current event, but these also help to assist a person in their search for the truth concerning Ecclesiology and its importance in the heart of God and those of whom are a part of it. Mark Denver who is the Senior Pastor at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington DC mentions this in his opening to this vital doctrine, *“The church is important in God’s plans, and so it must be in our own understanding. Though many systematic theologies have largely omitted ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church is a crucial component of Christian truth”* (TheologyNetwork.org). The Church is important to God and His plan and therefore must be vitally important to those who follow Christ as well. It is interesting that Jesus only mentions the word “church or ekklesia” twice (both are in Matthews account 16:18, 18:17). We would like to add this: The Church is not the Kingdom of God! The thought or teaching that it is rests not with Sound-Biblical-Doctrine. This may be taught in some Christian circles, but it is not what Jesus or his Apostles taught. The Kingdom of God is the “Rule, Reign, and order of God”. The Church on the other hand are the people of the kingdom: they are the people of God! George Eldon Ladd speaks on this same subject and presents his thoughts towards this in a satisfying statement by saying that, *“The church is the community of the Kingdom but never the Kingdom itself. Jesus’ disciples belong to the Kingdom as the Kingdom belongs to them; but they are not the Kingdom. The Kingdom is the rule of God; the church is society of women and men”* (A Theology of the New Testament Pg.109).

“For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I will be right there among them” Jesus the Messiah (Matt. 18:20 The Living Bible).

Meditational Thoughts

- Church Defined:
- Metaphors for the Church?
- Distinguishing Characteristics of the Church.
- The Responsibility of the Church.

Ekklesia(ἐκκλησία

)

Ecclesiology

- **The New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words** gives us great background and historical content for the usage of this word and how it went from its purpose in the Greek culture to its Theological presentation:
- Donald Guthrie in his *New Testament Theology*, defines the word *ekklesia* this way, “*ekklesia* refers to God’s people conceived as a new community specially related to the Messiah (hence the expression ‘my church’ used by Jesus) (Pg.711).
- According to Wayne Grudem and his *Systematic Theology*: the church is defined as such, “The church is the community of all true believers for all times” (Pg. 743).
- George Eldon Ladd puts it this way in his work titled *A Theology of the New Testament*, “*ekklesia*” is never used of a building as is the English word “church”. It is the assembling of the saints for worship. As such, *ekklesia* can designate the believers who gather in a particular home as a house church (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15 Phlm. 2); it can designate to totality of believers living in one place” (Pg. 582). Another way that He defines the church is by talking about the community of those born of the Spirit. He mentions that, “The baptism with the Spirit is the act of the Holy Spirit joining together into a spiritual unity people of diverse racial extractions and diverse social backgrounds so that they form the body of Christ --- the *ekklesia*” (Pg. 384).
- To conclude and summarize all of what these thinking men of God are saying is that the Church is defined as all people’s/persons who are willing to accept Jesus’ lordship and have been brought into the family of God by His Spirit and are the Called Out Ones i.e. those who are no longer under the influences of this world, but are controlled by God.

In Greek culture an *ekklesia* was a political assembly. By the fifth century B.C. *ekklesia* had come to mean an official gathering of the full citizens of a Greek city-state (*polis*) who were called together to make political and judicial decisions. The Greeks never used *ekklesia* to refer to religious fellowships (including their own gathers). In the Septuagint, the word *ekklesia* translates a Hebrew word most often used in the OT to indicate a ceremonial Assembly of God’s covenant people. (New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words Pg. 164).

Ecclesiology

- “ *To help us understand the nature of the church, Scripture uses a wide range of metaphors and images to describe to us what the church is “like”* (Wayne Grudem Systemic Theology Pg. 748).
- The responsibility of the Church has three functions to it and they are as such:
 - As a Family (1Tim. 5:1-2).
 - Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-32).
 - A Body (Rom. 12:4-8, 1 Cor. 12:12-27).
 - Branches on a Vine (Jn. 15:5).
 - An Olive Tree (Rom. 11:17-24).
 - Living Stones (1 Peter 2:5).
 - Holy Priesthood (1 Peter 2:5).
 - Spiritual House (1 Peter 2:5, Heb. 3:6).
 - A Pillar and Buttress of the Truth (1Tim. 3:15).
 - The People of God (Rom. 9:25).
 - Beloved (Rom. 9:25).
 - Children of the Living God (9:25).
 - Chosen Race (1Pt. 2:9).
 - Royal Priesthood (1Pt. 2:9).
 - Holy Nation (1Pt. 2:9).
 - A People for His own Possession (1Pt. 2:9).

“This bride figure is a particularly intimate illustration of the relationship between Christ and His church, for it presupposes a strong bond of love between them” (Donald Guthrie Pg. 747).

Ecclesiology

- *“In the early centuries of the Christian church, there was little controversy over what was a true church”* (Wayne Grudem Pg.754). Another way of saying this could possibly be that in the early centuries, there was a world-of-a-difference between those who were “born again” and those who were not, those who were filled with the “Spirit of the Living God” and those who did not have it. There was a clear distinctive visual of the Saints of God and the world! John, in his vision of the apocalypse: saw this and wrote it, *“And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death”* (Rev. 12:10-11 English Standard Version). Here are a few distinguishing characteristics of the church:
- We are made to be different from the world because we are children of the Light. God, who is trice Holy: calls us to be Holy as His is, to be pure as He is, to be righteous as He is, to be loving as He is, to be giving, as He is, to be merciful as He is, and to be gracious as He is! Listen beloved, we do this without taking into account our lives because He is our very LIFE! We would like to add that we do not do all of these perfectly! Neither do we understand them all perfectly, but what we do is place our expectational faith in Jesus and allow Him to teach and show us the true meaning of all this! As we do so, we will find ourselves not arguing over who and what is not a Christian and or who and what is not a “true church”. Beloved, there is only one Church and one people who whom Christ is coming back to gather! As individuals, let us strive to hold on to the confidence that we had at first, so that when He appears we will not shrink back but have overflowing joy at His appearance!

Ecclesiology

- The love we show for Christ and not our own lives (Rev. 12:11).
 - We keep His commands and obey his word (1Jn.2:3, 5; 3:24).
 - Live as He Did (1Jn. 2:6).
 - Love all of God's children (1Jn. 2:10, 3:14, 16).
 - We do not love world possessions (1Jn. 2:15-17).
 - We know the Truth and have an anointing (1Jn. 2:20, 27).
 - We purify ourselves as He is pure (1Jn. 3:3).
 - Are marked with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14).
 - We have been made alive and seated us with Christ (Eph.2:5-6).
 - We are God's handiwork (Eph. 2:10).
 - We have been justified by faith (Rom. 5:1, 9).
 - We are dead to Sin and alive to God (Rom. 5:11).
 - We are slaves to righteousness (Rom. 5:18).
 - We have received the Gift of no condemnation (Rom. 8:1-2).
 - We are led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14).
 - We regard no one from a worldly point of view (2Cor. 5:16).
 - We are a new Creation (2Cor. 5:17).
 - We are God's co-workers (2Cor. 6:1).
 - We overflow with thankfulness towards God (Col. 2:6-7; Philipp. 4:4).
 - We live lives worthy of the Gospel (Philipp. 1:27).
 - We do everything without complaining (Philipp. 2:14).
 - We value others above ourselves (Philipp. 2:3-4).
-
- Ministering to the LORD.
 - Ministering to Believers.
 - And Ministering to the World.

Ecclesiology

- Ministering to the Lord---Worship:
- Ministering to Believers---Nurture and Encourage:
- Ministering to the World---Evangelism Although we are called to come out of the world and be separate and also to love not the things of the world: We are called to SERVE those who are in the world just as Messiah served us and brought about salvation! Messiah said, ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you”*** (Matt. 28:19-20a ESV). Our God and Great King has commanded us to “make disciples of all nations” (all who are willing to accept the message of Jesus). The greater question to this is the “how” question. How do we make disciples of all nations? The response is by loving as He loved! Paul mentions this in his second letter to the Corinthians, ***“From one on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once viewed regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer”*** (5:16 ESV). The reason that we are able to have such a different set of eyes from the world is that Christ lives in us and it is His loves that grants us new sight to truly see peoples need of the Truth and their potential while being found in Him. Paul also mentions that ***“There, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others”*** (2 Cor. 5:11a ESV). Christ tells us to preach the Good News about what he has done to the entire world so that men may repent. Knowing His goodness and presenting His beauty to those who are in need of a Savior is the right remedy for their wounded souls. Paul instructs the congregation at Rome that “it is the goodness of the Lord that actually causes a person to repent” (Rom. 2:4).

Ecclesiology

- In 1 Samuel 3:1 the Bible states that “*Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord*” (ESV). As the people of God, or God’s dearly beloved children: our first act/responsibility/and or ministry is to minister to the Lord. Another way of stating this is saying that our purpose in this life is to worship God with our lives. This has many different aspects, but it is nonetheless the same---worship! Paul mentions in Romans 12:1, “*So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering*” (Message Bible). The New International Version (NIV) puts it this way, “*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship*”. Offering one’s body and laying down ones plans, dreams, and desires for the purpose of glorifying God is our spiritual act of worship. “God has destined us and appointed us in Christ “to live for the praise of His glory” (Wayne Grudem Pg. 757, Eph. 1:12). Worship is a life or heart so driven and purposed on pursuing Jesus that nothing else matters and in which everything else flows from it. We see Paul’s example in his words to the congregation at Philippi were he sternly mentions, “*I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death*” (3:10 NIV).

Ecclesiology

- The author of Hebrews encourages us to “*But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness*” (3:13 NIV). In the body analogy that Paul gives to the congregation in Corinth, he mentions the body and its parts as to the fact that every part has a special and unique aspect to perform for the whole body to function properly. He states that while the other parts of the body may be strong, “*and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty*” (1Cor. 12:23 NIV). Let us keep in mind that we are one body and we must encourage, edify, and nurture each other as much and as often as possible. In our Lord’s Prayer mentioned in John 17, we see Jesus praying for the body that we would be “one” as He and the Father are “one”! Our Lord commands us to “*love one another as He loved us*” (John 13:34). He goes on further to mention that all people will know that we belong to Him by doing this significant mandate! In being exactly like our Lord and Master: John’s statement on love is as such, “*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters*” (1John. 3:16 NIV). Christ is the ARCHETYPE and to be in Him means that we are like Him and continually conforming to His ways!

Justification - "The Doctrine of Being Justified before God"

As we proceed, we want to recommend four-points to ponder on as references for us to have as vital points for understanding this doctrine. In saying what was just mentioned: we want to add that there are more aspects in this doctrine that may not be cited, but the points that we have selected are for the purpose of presenting some truthful pillars for us to become acquainted with in this theological study of the Justification. We also want to mention that this is not an indebt study, but rather just a brief introduction! The four-points for meditational thought are as followed:

- Justification defined
- The Issue, Guilty or not Guilty?
- The Great Exchange!
- The Future is Now!

Truth sets a person free! We are informed of this by our very Lord Himself while speaking with His disciples. Knowledge of the Truth sets a person free! Once Truth is attained, it has the ability to lighten the load of heavy burdens that we carry in and through this life in which we were never created to bear. Truth is the line of demarcation that establishes the boundary for which lies and deception cannot cross. Lies and deception may try and creep in as truth and then lead one into actual bondage without noticeability. Biblically justification is the truth in how God manifested His love towards those who were rebellious by providing a means and a way to cause an individual to be deemed righteous in His sight and presence. We are now approaching the Biblical Doctrine of Justification or how a person is "justified before a Holy God". We believe that there are "pillars" of Christianity (or foundation beliefs that separate the followers of Christ from other religions)! Whether we call them doctrines or pillars, they are significant and can enrich our understanding for grasping the Gift that God has freely given us in the Son He loves and for also coming to walk in all that Christ has afforded unto us. As a caveat: we will be mentioning/including Righteousness because Justification and Righteousness go hand-in-hand.

Justification

“God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus” (Rom. 25-26 NIV)

Meditational Thoughts

- Justification Defined:
- *The Issue: Guilty or not Guilty?*
- The Wonderful Exchange!
- The Future is Now!
- George Eldon Ladd in his Book “A Theology of the New Testament” opens up the subject of “Justification and Reconciliation” by giving us some insight from the Apostle Paul on what justification may have meant to the apostle.
- *An unknown author on Bible.org explains what justification is in the follow way.*
- *Donald Guthrie in his work on New Testament Theology gives us a definition from a perspective on the nature of justification.*
- *J. Rodman Williams, in his Renewal Theology introduces this concept in a straightforward manner.*
- *From looking into and at the surrounding definitions of justification: one could conclude that justification, or to be justified, means to be acquitted from any charges that someone was in debt to the law or lawgiver for. Not only is it acquittal from wrong doings, but also to be declared free from those charges and also to be declared righteous (in right standing as though nothing never happened) in the sight of the law and or law giver.*

Justification

Paul employs many terms to set forth the work of Christ. One of the most important, which dominates the letters to the Galatians and the Romans, is justification. The verb “to justify” is dikaioō, built on the same root as “righteous” (dikaios) and “righteousness” (dikaiosynē). The idea expressed by dikaioō, is “to declare righteous,” not “to make righteous”. As we shall see, the root idea in justification is the declaration of God, the righteous judge that those who believe in Christ, sinful though they may be, are righteous --- are viewed as being righteous, because in Christ they have come into a righteous relationship with God (Pg. 478).

Justification is the declared purpose of God to regard and treat the sinners who believe in Jesus Christ as if they had not sinned, on the ground of the merits of the Savior. It is not mere pardon. Pardon is a free forgiveness of past offenses. It has references to those sins as forgiven and blotted out.

The frequent use of the verb ‘to justify’ (dikaioō) leads us to believe that for Paul it is generally used in a forensic sense. As we have written, this would be in line with OT usage. In other words it has to do with acquittal from the just condemnation on sin. As in a court of law a man may be declared acquitted, which means he cannot be touched by law, so Paul conceives that a man may be declared righteous and his sins no longer held against him (Pg. 499).

The usual meaning of the term, especially as found in the writings of Paul, is to “pronounce or declare righteous.” The striking feature about the word “justification” is its declaratory aspect: it does not mean to make righteous or just but, as noted, to declare or pronounce righteous. Hence, one who is justified is one who is declared by God to be righteous.

Justification

I know that we have been discussing what a fundamentally sound and foundational definition for justification is, or can be known by from the Biblical witness. Now we want to discuss the problem with Man that was caused by the fall. At the fall, Man became separate from God. God who is faithful and true, then proceeds to deal with Man according to a holy and righteous standard that is manifested by the loving faithfulness he presents—the Law! God gave the Decalogue as a standard to deal with His people Israel. According to the standard, whenever someone missed the mark (sinned), they would have to make atonement (payment) for that which was committed. The form of the payment would allow them to be forgiven for the moment, until another sinful act would be committed which would then cause for the person to make another blood payment! We see this in Leviticus 17:11, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life” (ESV).

This was the standard in which God presented so that His presence could be in the community of His people. By this standard, the people could make the appropriate payment and not be in debt! The question is then this “how can a Righteous and Holy God” acquit sinful people, but not just acquit them, but also make them righteous in His sight. It is one thing to forgive debt, but it is another to pay the debt of others that is rightfully owed to you by them. This is what God completed in Christ. After God accomplished what He desired in Jesus: Paul can make such a grand statement in Romans where he declares, “Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood” (5:9a NIV). “

He died for our sins and rose again to make us right with God, filling us with God’s goodness. So now, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith in his promises, we can have real peace with Him because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us” (Romans. 4:25-5:1 The Living Bible).

Justification

- Our Sin and Guilt:
- Christ's Death:
- Imputation of Christ Righteousness:
- *"When Adam sinned, his guilt was imputed to us, God the Father viewed it as belonging to us, and therefore it did" (Ladd Pg. 631) Paul makes this very clear in Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (ESV). Death was able to spread from the one man because (at that time) all humanity was in the one man and the one man himself was humanity! Paul, further explains in verse 18 of Romans chapter 5 that "Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men". All men were condemned because of the one man's rebellion and therefore all rebelled and became guilty and were considered condemned. "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Rom. 5:19). Sin (missing the mark) must be punished in the sight of a Righteous and Holy Judge! There are no gray areas and curves according to the LAW! Paul mentions in Ephesians 2:3 that by nature we were objects of God's wrath! Why? Because we were by nature rebellious towards God's standard after the fall! Therefore, the only thing left is punishment!*
- George Ladd present a solid case for justification by Christ work alone apart from the Law or anything else.

The grounds for justification is not obedience to the Law; it is the death of Christ. His death is the supreme manifestation of God's love for sinners and the ground on which justification is secured; "We are now justified by His blood" (Rom. 5:9). The grounds of our acceptance is not our works nor our faith nor is it the work of Christ within us; it is what He has done for us objectively. Thus, if it were possible for a person to be justified through the Law, the death of Christ would have been to no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

Justification

This has great significance and is in complete agreement with the Biblical witness that informs us that no one will be justified by works of the Law (Rom. 3:20)! On the consideration and explanation in dealing with the absolute importance of Christ's death, Ladd further explains where in Paul's writings this can be found and the importance of Christ's death as a means of one being justified.

The death of Christ as the grounds for justification is set forth in the greatest details in Romans 3:21-26. People are "justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God has put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith" (vv. 24, 25). The shedding of Christ's blood, i.e., his sacrificial death, provides the means of propitiation on the ground of which acquittal or justification can be bestowed upon humanity as a free gift (489).

Another way of saying what was just mentioned can be by saying that through Jesus' death, there is for us who believe in His finished work: Non-imputation of sin. Sin is no longer credited toward us because Messiah took our sin account upon himself and not only did He pay our debt in full, but He so pleased God in doing it! That is why, in the book of Hebrews it mentions *"looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God"* (12:2 ESV). The author further goes on about Christ in saying *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. " When Christ suffered and died for our sins, our sin was imputed to Christ; God thought of it as belonging to Him, and He paid the penalty for it"* (Ladd Pg. 631). God gave Christ to us as a sacrificial atonement and as the one Man to take the fall for all humanity. John writes *"He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world"* (1John 2:2 CSB). God again gave us His Son (John 3:16-17) so that all who believe in Him are not just justified, but also made righteous in God's sight. This is by having faith in Jesus and what he accomplished for all who believe. *"Faith's part in justification is to admit the rightness of God's act"* (Guthrie Pg. 503). Because of what Christ did, we have been granted what is known as Non-imputation of Sin. David has this to say concerning this blessedness and Paul reiterates

Justification

- Psalms 32:2a
- Paul reiterates it in the New Testament in Romans 4:7-8
- The word “imputation” theologically means “*to attribute (righteousness, guilt, etc.) to a person or persons vicariously, ascribe as derived from another*” (Dictionary.com). Wayne Grudem explains it as such “*When we say that God **imputes** Christ’s righteousness to us it means that God **thinks** of Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, or regards it as belonging to us. He (God) “**reckons**” it to our account*” (Pg. 631). We must keep in mind that this righteousness is not ours! It belongs to Christ, but Christ has freely given it to us in the exchange of taking our sins and the debt (punishment) and making it His. Not only did he do this, but Christ even became sin according to Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:21. In Paul’s letter to the congregation who are in Rome, he dedicates almost an entire chapter to the truth of not being justified by the “works of law”, but rather to those who believe in Messiah’s finished work: they are justified by their Faith in Him. So Paul states in 1 Corinthians 1:30 “*It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption*” (NIV). Not only has He given us His righteousness in exchange for our punishment, but He is also our righteousness. God foretold this and we see the witness in the prophet Jeremiah. God declares this “*Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness’*” (33:14-16 ESV). What is most fascinating from this verse is that the person is “a Righteous Branch” and his title by which He will be called is this “The Lord our Righteousness”. Paul in the NT give us his resume in Judaism and then declares that he counts it all rubbish to knowing Christ.

Justification

- Whether we call it “imputation” or the more Biblical word “reckoned”; we believe that the main message is that Christ died for sinners and those who are willing to believe the Gospel will be able to become the people of God in righteousness. You will not be considered a “sinner” any more in God sight, but be found to have a righteousness apart from the Law that can only come from having faith in Jesus. *“Faith part in justification is to admit the rightness of God’s act”* (Ladd Pg. 503).
- *“Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity”* (ESV).
- *“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute wickedness”* (AMP).
- *“How blessed those to whom Adonai imputes no guilt”* (CJB).
- These words were written by someone (King David) who was under the Law and accordingly could not be fully forgiven without the proper sacrifice!
- *“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come”* (Rom. 5:12-14 ESV).
- *“For as in Adam all die”* (1Cor. 15:22a ESV).
- *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Heb. 9:27 KJV).
- Jesus speaking with His disciples mentions the two ages, *“And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life”* (Luke. 18:29-30 ESV).
- Paul presents this question due to the fact that humanity alone cannot escape this age by himself, *“What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death”* (Rom. 7:24 NIV).

Justification

- *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin”* (ESV).
- *“Blessed and happy and favored are those whose lawless acts have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered up and completely buried. Blessed and happy and favored is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account nor charge against him”* (AMP).
- *“Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered over; Blessed is the man whose sin Adonai will not reckon against his account”* (CJB).
- *“Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin”* (NLT).

Grudem, in furthering his thoughts on justification in the area of Christ righteousness being imputed to us goes on (and builds on Paul’s words in Romans 8:1 that state *“There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”*) to encourage the community of believers by saying *“in this sense those who are justified have no penalty to pay for sin. This means that we are not subject to any charge of guilt or commendation. “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies, who is to condemn?”* (Rom. 8:33-34).

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith (Phil. 3:4-9 ESV).

Justification

God could have just forgiven our sins and the debt be paid to have everyone start over again but no, that was not in His plan for us. He forgave our sins, and made us righteous through what Christ completed. J. Rodman Williams state this “*That means a perfect righteousness, nothing lacking, all complete: His purity, His obedience, His integrity, His humility, His love: all this and more, making up His righteousness. It is all ours by virtue of Jesus Christ. When God looks at us, He beholds us clothed in the righteousness of His Son, and each of us is complete in Him*” (Pg. 68).

The Bible primarily speaks of two different ages.

- The **First Age** being the age that all humanity has entered due to Adams sin in which death entered:
- The **Second Age** is the age of eternal life in which all things will not only be made new, but also they will be everlasting. This age was also considered the coming age of the Spirit.
- The issue with the **Second Age** is that when Messiah came He entered the old age and brought the future Justification with Him and bestowed it on all who would believe in His finished work:
- Justification is Eschatological:

Justification

- *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed”* (Isa. 65:17-20 ESV).
- And again in the same chapter God mentions *“The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox”* (65:25a ESV).
- *“For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your offspring and your name remain. From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the Lord”* (Isa. 66:22-23 ESV).
- *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death”* (Rom. 8:1-2 ESV).
- Paul mention in Romans *“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God”* (8:14 ESV).

Justification

- *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”* (Eph. 2:4-7 ESV).
- George Ladd comments *“In the eschatological understanding of justification, as well as its forensic aspect, the Pauline doctrine agrees with the contemporary Jewish thought. However, there are several points at which the Pauline teaching is radically different from the Jewish concept; and one of the essential differences is that future eschatological justification has already taken place”. “Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God”* (Rom. 5:9 ESV). *“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Rom. 5:1 ESV) (Ladd. 483).

Regeneration

The doctrine of Regeneration is one of incredible simplicity and enormous consequence. This doctrine, in short, teaches that at the moment a sinner places their faith in Jesus Christ they are instantly converted and regenerated, or born again.

1) Terms and definitions:

The term regeneration is derived from two greek words: ἀναγεννάω

Regeneration

It must be understood; regeneration is one of several terms used synonymously for salvation. The Bible is very clear about offering the following descriptions of salvation with the intent of emphasizing different aspects of it: justification (Rom. 5:16), regeneration (Titus 3:5), sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30), and glorification (Rom. 8:29-30). Each of the above terms are given specifically with the purpose of communicated a particular truth about salvation. Briefly, **justification** is offered to highlight the fact of being absolved of guilt and judicially reckoned innocent before God; **regeneration** demonstrates the spiritual reality of being born again to new life with Messiah; **sanctification** communicates the progressive/continuous consecration and holiness of the Believer beginning at the moment of one's conversion; and **glorification** preaches the positional standing of the Believer before God. All four of these terms are synonymous for salvation, but each communicate a unique aspect it for the sake of understanding the magnanimity and grandeur of salvation. In regard to this topic, regeneration focuses on being born again, by faith, to new life with Christ. It is best to understand, because it is salvific, the believer's regeneration is received by faith in Jesus Christ and applied by the Holy Spirit at the moment of one's conversion. These are the biblical terms for receiving salvation, which means regeneration is no different (See Eph. 2:8-10).

2) The application of regeneration

Regeneration

God, being the Life-giver, is the one who applies new life to the Believer at the moment of conversion. The application of this glorious re-birth to new life is instantaneous. God, the Holy Spirit, provides life to soul. Titus 3:4-7 demonstrates how regeneration is applied and how it is inseparably tied to one's salvation. "*He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*" At the moment we place a personal faith in Jesus Christ, God accomplishes that which man cannot – He washes the human soul of the stain of sin and issues life to the dead, stony, and callous heart (Ezekiel 36: 25-28). "Regeneration is primarily the work of the Holy Spirit... Hence, the second birth is by the Holy Spirit. Since this is a spiritual birth, there is no other possibility: it must come from the Holy Spirit" (J. Rodman Williams). Jesus states, "*What is impossible with man is possible with God*" (Luke 18:27; Matt. 19:26). Man is entirely unable to save himself or earn abundant spiritual life; this is only a work that God can do. Ephesians 2:8-9 proves, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*" The gift of salvation is exactly that; it is a gift! It was purchased with joy, wrapped in enthusiasm, and presented graciously to sinful people. Mankind is responsible for nothing more than responding with faith to the gift presented to him, in the Person of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:13-14 shows the transaction of salvation/regeneration being applied to human lives, by the Holy Spirit, upon placing their faith in the Good News of Christ. "*In Him [Christ] you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*" Once a sinner places a personal faith in Jesus, they are saved and the Holy Spirit applies and animates the promises of God to the life of the believer. In the context of regeneration, re-birth into new life is applied to the individual by the Spirit of God.

3) The Effect of Regeneration

Regeneration

The effect of regeneration is vast and extends to every area of the Believer's life. Being that the Christian had been regenerated (born again by the Holy Spirit to new life), the entire life has been justified, redeemed, set apart for sacred use, and called to an all-important purpose. The hideous and grotesque transgressions of the past have been washed away "*by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,*" (Titus 3:5) and the life of the Believer has become so new that it can then be described to have "*partaken of the divine nature*" (2 Peter 1:4).

2 Cor 5:17-18 says, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself...*" This passage further shows the glorious reality of regeneration. Spiritually, God renewed every aspect of the Believer's life. The work of God is so great and so efficacious that the life-transforming power of the Spirit can be described as making the whole person new – even a "new creation." This, then, should leave each Christian with the exhortation to "live up to what we have already attained" (Phil. 3:16). Also, this should challenge us to continuously seek God, the Holy Spirit, for the sake of "*being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit*" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Sanctification

As mentioned under the topic of regeneration, sanctification is one of several theological synonyms for salvation. "The Bible is very clear about offering the following descriptions of salvation with the intent of emphasizing different aspects of it: justification (Rom. 5:16), regeneration (Titus 3:5), sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30), and glorification (Rom. 8:29-30). Each of the above terms are given specifically with the purpose of communicating a particular truth about salvation" (Dusty Dahlin, Regeneration). The aspect of salvation that biblical sanctification highlights is that of consecration and holiness. J. Rodman Williams defines sanctification this way, "To sanctify means to make holy or be made holy. Sanctification refers, accordingly, both to an action – sanctifying or making holy, and to a condition or state – being sanctified or made holy." This, then, helps define sanctification. In the same way, the Bible describes one as *having been saved* while simultaneously in the process of *being saved* (compare Eph. 2:8 and 1 Cor. 1:18), sanctification demonstrates that one is both set apart to God and in the process of being made completely and perfectly holy.

1) Words and Terms

Sanctification in the Greek is ἁγιασμός (*hagiasmos*) and is found eleven times in ten verses. Six times it is rendered *sanctification*, and five times it is rendered *holiness* (in the ESV). The root of ἁγιασμός (*hagiasmos*) is ἅγιος (*hagios*) which means *holy*. This information is offered for the purpose of demonstrating that sanctification cannot be separated from the concept of holiness or consecration. Both the doctrinal and linguistic contexts prove the idea of holiness.

It would be beneficial, then, to briefly define holy/holiness. J. Rodman Williams simplifies holiness to "separation or apartness... separation to God... purity and cleanness... separation from all that is impure and evil... [and] moral perfection." It also carries the following understanding: "specially recognized as or declared sacred by religious use or authority; dedicated or devoted to the service of God, the church, or religion" (dictionary.com). In every way, holy/holiness refers to being set apart to God, from the world, both in purpose and morality.

2) The Nature of Sanctification

Sanctification

The nature of sanctification is threefold: past, present, and future. As alluded to above, sanctification has the same threefold nature as salvation. The Bible describes the person who has placed their faith in Jesus Christ as having been saved (past), as being saved (present), and as will be saved (future). (see Eph. 2:8, 1 Cor. 1:18, and Mark 13:13 for reference). Being a synonym for salvation, it should be no surprise that sanctification is spoken of in the same way. Upon conversion, the Christian has been made holy (Hebrews 10:10), is being made holy (1 Thess. 4:3), and will be completely sanctified at the end of this age (Rom. 6:22).

Looking at the nature of sanctification a bit closer, it becomes apparent what the goal is. At the moment of conversion, when the sinner believes in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit does the complete work of sanctifying the believer. From that moment on, the Christian has been made holy and has been consecrated, or set apart, by the Holy Spirit for a sacred purpose and use (1 Peter 2:9). This initial work is by no means or work of oneself. This is accomplished only by the power and work of God. It is worked upon the identity and life of the believer, and he or she is holy and set apart to God from then on.

Sanctification

The present and future natures of sanctification (which in theology is a reoccurring principle coined "the-now-and-the-not-yet") demonstrate the goal of progressive holiness. Wayne Grudem and J. Rodman Williams agree on the goal of sanctification; "sanctification is the goal of the Christian life. God would have His people constantly moving toward the goal of complete holiness" (J. Rodman Williams). In the present, God, the Holy Spirit, is constantly working in the hearts of the believer, beseeching man to cooperate with Him in obedience to the upright and moral standard of God (Rom. 6:19,22). This may be understood in light of Philippians 3:16, "Only let us live up to what we have already attained." The believer has been saved and made holy by the work of the cross – now they participate with God, in obedience to the Spirit and the Word, in "walking in a manner worthy of the calling" and of their new identity (Eph. 4:1, Col. 1:10). J. Rodman Williams confirms this by saying, "Sanctification is also the task of man: God does not work without our involvement. It is not that God does so much, say 50 percent, whereas man is called upon to accomplish the rest, the other 50 percent. It is, rather, *God all the way through man all the way.*" All Believers are commanded to, and called to, participate with God in the immediate process of becoming holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). [Note: the Greek, ἁγιασμός (hagiasmos), for sanctification is also found in the Septuagint rendering of Amos 2:11. It is used of the "Nazerite" who freely chooses (or vows) to live each day of their lives in holy consecration to God.]

Finally, regarding the future nature of sanctification, it is clear that Christian's will only perfectly and completely be made holy at the end of the age. Once the final enemy has been defeated, the consequences of sin and the fallen human nature have been removed (which will occur once-and-for-all at the end of the 1000-year millennial reign), God's people will fully attain perfection. Paul declares, "*Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (NET). And again, Scripture states (in Rom. 6:22) that the "end" or the final culmination of God's sanctifying work will be realized in full at the creation of the new heavens and the new earth (Isaiah 65:17; Rev. 21:1-4). This blissful and glorious reality awaits each believer. One's full sanctification to God will be at the end of the age, with the reception of glorified bodies and the prize of seeing Christ face to face.

Eschatology - “The Doctrine or Study of the Last Things or Events”

As we proceed, we want to propose four-points to ponder on as references for us to have as vital points for understanding this doctrine. In saying what was just mentioned: we want to add that there are more aspects in this doctrine that may not be cited, but the points that we have selected are for the purpose of presenting some truthful pillars for us to become acquainted with in this theological study of the “Last Things”. We also want to mention that this is not an indebt study, but rather just a brief introduction! On a final note, we would like to add that our “Points to Ponder”, derived from a survey that was taken by The Lamp to produce a document to meet the questions that people may have concerning this complicated and difficult study. The points are as follows:

- What is Eschatology?
- Why is Eschatology Significant to us today?
- What are the Major views?
- Knowing Eschatology can be impactful on one’s faith?

“Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour” (2:18 ESV).

Points to Ponder

What is Eschatology?

- Eschatology Defined:
- Eschatology is:
- Eschatology is not:

Before we get into any of the “Points to Ponder”, let us define Eschatology so that we can be definitionally stable, but at the same time have a Biblical substratum to undergird our thinking along the way. One author from the website “sglbrary.homestead.com” defines it this way, “

Eschatology

Eschatology is the study of last things in relationship to the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is the science of prophetic study drawn from the Holy Scriptures

”. The very word “eschatology” derives from two words. The first part of the word comes from the Greek word “

Eschatos

” which means “last” and latter part “ology” comes the Greek word “logos” which can mean “word”. Bible Study Tools.com defines the Greek word

Eschatos

in this manner,

- Extreme:
 - last in time or in place
 - last in a series of places
 - last in a temporal succession
- The Last:
 - last, referring to time
 - of space, the uttermost part, the end, of the earth
 - of rank, grade of worth, last i.e. lowest

Eschatology

- Eschatology is the word and or study of the “Last Things” or “Last Events” that surround the Second coming of Christ i.e. the Day of the Lord or the Consummation of all things. We must keep in mind that eschatology is not just one event, but rather the events that are affiliated with the Last Days. Think of this doctrine as a pie: Eschatology, the term, makes up the entire pie. Now, there are different pieces of the pie that makes up the whole. The aspects that make up Eschatology are the coming of the Messiah and His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, the coming of the Spirit, the Church; the coming of the Lawless one, the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, Jacobs Trouble, the Millennium reign of Christ, the Rapture, and finally the Consummation of all things i.e. the Last Judgement. (We would like to add that the things mentioned in this list is just a general one. This list may be more or less depending upon what a person may or may not believe concerning this doctrine).
- Again, eschatology is not one event, but rather it includes them all (the list mentioned above)
- Now we arrive at the question that specifically deals with the concern of why is the studying of future events (or past events depends on what one’s view is) important for us in the here and now time? We would love to answer this by using the dots below to just name off a few reasons. Knowing and or studying the last events in human history is important because:
 - Within Eschatology there are various views in dealing with the Rapture and the Millennium.
 - Why is Eschatology Significant to us today?
 - What are the Major views?

Eschatology

- As a believer of Christ, we should desire to know everything in the word of God and these things are not only mentioned in the New Testament, but are also in the Old as well.
- God does not want His people to be ignorant of what is to come.
- By knowing what is to come, we can warn people of the coming destruction.
- By knowing the “signs of the times” we can identify that our salvation is nearer, even at the door.
- Knowing what will take place will also allow us to encourage other believers to hold on to the promise of a new creation.
- Tribulational views:
- The Four Millennial views are: (according to Blue Letter Bible).

Eschatology

- In the pre-trib view of the rapture, Christians are "raptured" out of the world before the tribulation period begins.
- The mid-tribulational Rapture view holds that the Rapture of the church will occur at the midpoint of the seven years of Tribulation.
- Post-tribulationism teaches that the Rapture and the Second Coming are facets of a single event which will occur at the end of the Tribulation when Christ returns. The church will be on the earth during the Tribulation to experience the events of that period of time.
- "Christ will come before a seven-year period of intense tribulation to take His church (living and dead) into heaven. After these thousand years, Satan, who was bound up during Christ's earthly reign, will be loosed to deceive the nations, gather an army of the deceived, and take up to battle against the Lord. This battle will end in both the judgment of the wicked and Satan and the entrance into the eternal state of glory by the righteous. This view is called pre-millennialism because it places the return of Christ before the millennium and it is called dispensational because it is founded in the doctrines of dispensationalism."
- "Christ just before the millennium and just after a time of great apostasy and tribulation. After the millennium, Satan will be loosed and Gog and Magog will rise against the kingdom of God; this will be immediately followed by the final judgment. While similar in some respects to the dispensational variety (in that they hold to Christ's return being previous the establishment of a thousand-year earthly reign), historical premillennialism differs in significant ways (notably in their method of interpreting Scripture)."

Eschatology

- “The postmillennialist believes that the millennium is an era (not a literal thousand years) during which Christ will reign over the earth, not from an literal and earthly throne, but through the gradual increase of the Gospel and its power to change lives. After this gradual Christianization of the world, Christ will return and immediately usher the church into their eternal state after judging the wicked. This is called postmillennialism because, by its view, Christ will return after the millennium.”
- “The amillennialist believes that the Kingdom of God was inaugurated at Christ's resurrection at which point he gained victory over both Satan and the Curse. Christ is even now reigning at the right hand of the Father over His church. After this present age has ended, Christ will return and immediately usher the church into their eternal state after judging the wicked. In fact, the amillennialist's hermeneutic interprets much of apocalyptic literature as non-literally.”

The Lamp

With information being easily accessible, the journey of discovery through study can seem like an intimidating and impossible task. A Simplified Systematic Theology is compiled from modern scholarship and acclaimed theologians. This work is intended to assist you on your climb to the heights of truth, while stripping away the chaos of unnecessary information

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