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**LEAD PROGRAM**

**Leaders, Elders and Deacons**

**Introduction to the Class**

Dear Brother in Christ,

Welcome to LEAD (LEADERS, ELDERS and DEACONS)! I am thrilled you are joining us to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ together.

Part of the pastor’s/elder’s responsibility in the local church is to *raise up future elders and deacons* for Christ’s church. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1-2 to “be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Timothy was to pass along the gospel truth to future men who will be able to lead Christ’s church, the pillar and buttress of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).

It’s for this reason that we have developed the following program for raising up elders and deacons. It will focus on the whole man of God including his head, heart, and hands. In other words, we will work through theology and doctrine (head), character and Christian living (heart), and Christian service (hands). It’s also for this reason that we invite all men to attend these classes since we are all striving to be godly men, aspiring to most of the qualifications given for elders and deacons. With that said, going through the class does not automatically qualify any man for the office of elder or deacon. That should be recognized and evaluated by the leadership of the church and if they deem a man qualified and he is aspiring to the office, then the process of becoming and elder or deacon can begin.

The duration of the program will be 2 semesters beginning in the fall. We will study Doctrine and Church Health in the fall. In the Spring, we will separate into two classes, one for deacon and one for elder. The entire semester will be devoted to a thorough study of each office.

Again, welcome to LEAD!

Pastor Jason

Lead & Teaching Pastor, CCBFC

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**1st Semester (Fall 2022)**

**Please Note:** In order to take the Fall Course, students are required to purchase Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* (see pg. 4) and Mark Dever’s *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church (see pg. 5)*.

\*In preparation for Classes 1-7, please read indicated pages from Wayne Grudem’s, *Systematic Theology before Class.*

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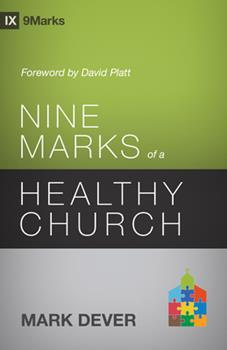
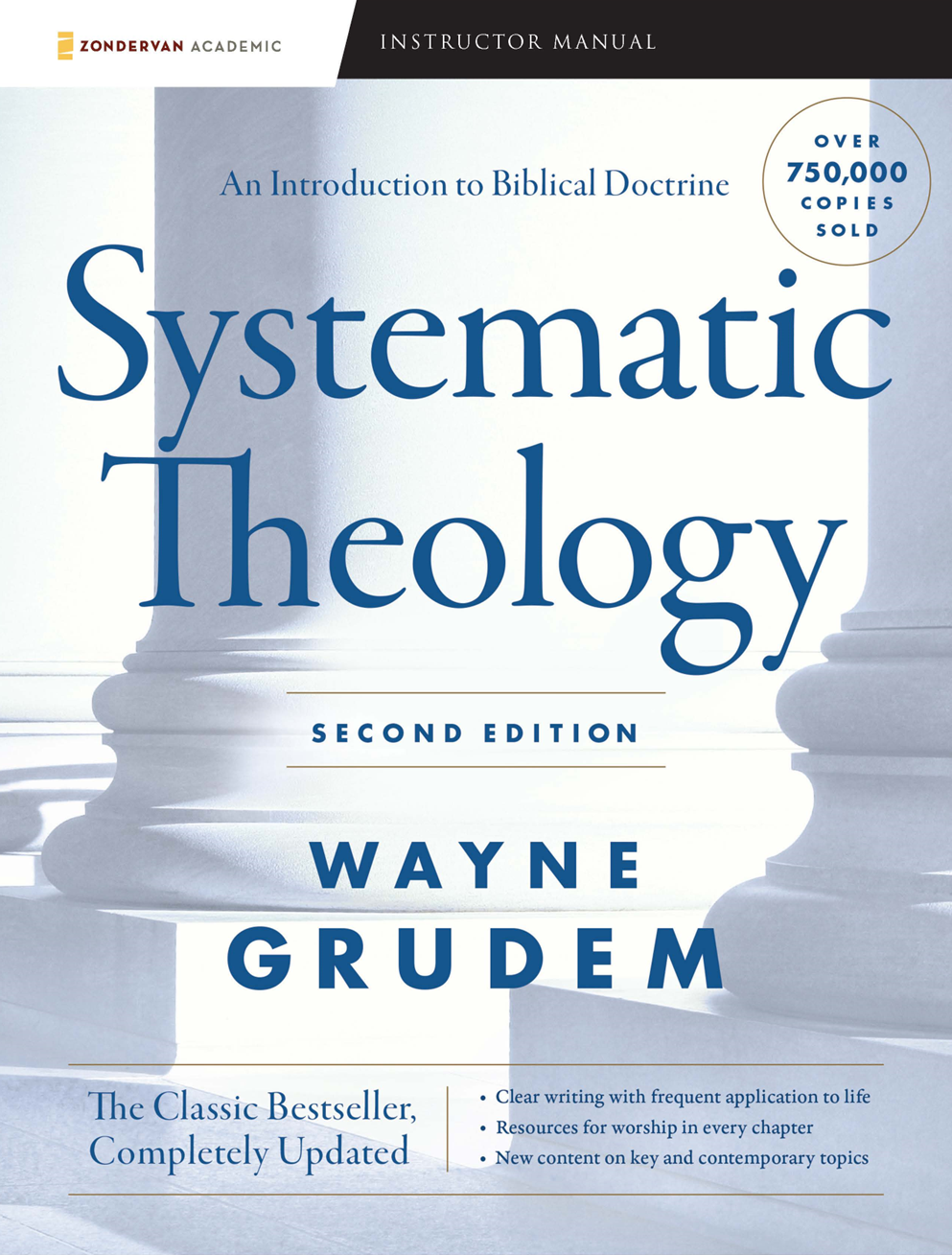
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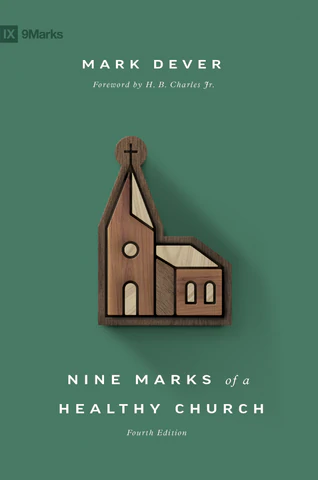
**2nd Semester (Winter/Spring 2023)**

For those who wish to continue next semester, 2 classes will be offered at the same time. One class will be offered to those who aspire to be elders and study Alexander Strauch’s, *Biblical Eldership.* The second class will be offered to those who may feel called to deaconship, and will study Alexander Strauch’s, *Paul’s Vision for the Deacons*.

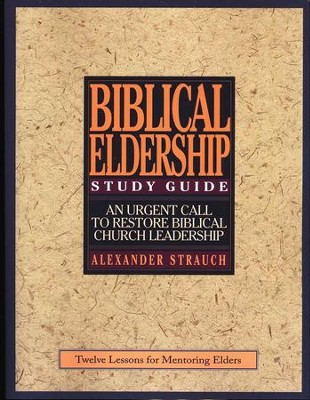
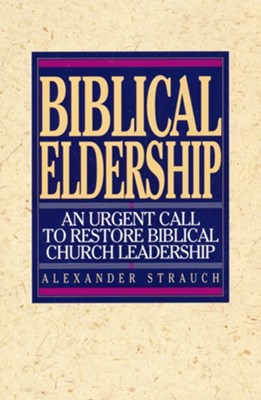
\*Students wishing to take the Eldership track must purchase the book, *Biblical Eldership* and *The Study Guide*, by Strauch (see pg. 6). \*Students wishing to take the Deacon track must purchase the book, *Paul’s Vision for the Deacons* and *The Study Guide* by Strauch (see pg. 6).

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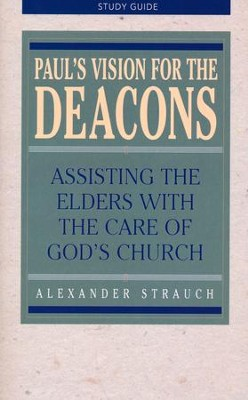
3rd Edition – Edition that I am using

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4th Edition

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**Class 1 – Introduction to Systematic Theology, Word of God, & Sufficiency of Scripture**

**Why Systematic Theology?**

**Key Terms**

apologetics, biblical theology, Christian ethics, contradiction, doctrine, dogmatic theology, historical theology, major doctrine, minor doctrine, New Testament theology, Old Testament theology, paradox, philosophical theology, presupposition, systematic theology

**Key Points**

* Systematic theology looks at the whole witness of Scripture and applies it directly to the lives of Christians.
* The study of systematic theology enables Christians to fulfill the Great Commission.

**Chapter Summary**

We can define systematic theology as “any study that answers the question, ‘What does the whole Bible teach us today?’ about any given topic.” This book focuses specifically on this field of inquiry, rather than addressing philosophical, historical, or biblical theology. When appropriate, these other approaches will come to bear on the discussion, but each takes a back seat to the larger task of systematizing and applying the whole witness of Scripture on various topics. Rather than looking exclusively, for instance, at Paul’s views on the people of God, this text will look at what the whole Bible says about the people of God (including what Paul says about them) and how that doctrine should be understood by believers today. The church needs this type of study today because so many Christians regularly “do” systematic theology, albeit in a disorganized manner. The following chapters will attempt to treat seven major areas of doctrine (the Word of God, God, man, Christ and the Holy Spirit, Redemption, the church, and the future) in a carefully organized, detailed, accurate, and Bible-centered manner. In addressing these doctrines, this text begins with two assumptions: (1) The Bible is true, and (2) the God of the Bible exists and is who the Bible says he is.

The study of systematic theology enables Christians to fulfill the Great Commission—this is the most basic reason for doing systematic theology—and it will result in many benefits in our lives. It will help us put away wrong ideas, will enable us to come to better conclusions whenever doctrinal issues and controversies arise, and will help us become mature Christians.

Some object to systematic theology as suspicious because the conclusions strike them as “too neat” or “too clear cut.” Others object to delineating a specific choice or arrangement of topics; they believe that such choices will predetermine the outcome of the study. To the first objection, we can respond that if God is consistent, and if we accurately understand God’s teachings, then they should fit neatly together. It is highly unlikely that the omniscient, omnipotent, wholly truthful God of the universe would provide us with an inconsistent, jumbled set of propositions. To the second objection, we can respond that we might study *any* topic or doctrinal question in *any* sequence, and if we are correctly interpreting Scripture, the conclusions we reach will be much the same. Some have objected that this text relies too heavily on Scripture and interacts too little with other theological writings, however this work is written for evangelical Christians for whom the Scriptures are the final authority, the very words of God.

As Christians, we must study systematic theology prayerfully and humbly. We must also study it with reason. The student of God’s word is never to leave his or her mind at the door. In studying systematic theology, we are taking part in a practice that demands community involvement; we learn much from our discussions with other Christians.

Our study of systematic theology must also be comprehensive. We pursue a doctrine by collecting all of the relevant passages in Scripture; by reading, studying, and summarizing the claims of these passages individually; and finally by attempting to summarize all of the results of our study into one or more points.

Finally, we must study systematic theology with hearts that are full of praise and delight in the God who has revealed himself to us in Scripture.

**Suggested Questions**

* What role does reason play in the study of systematic theology?
* Explain one of the two objections to the study of systematic theology that were mentioned in the text, then address this objection.

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (John Calvin)  
  <http://www.vor.org/rbdisk/html/institutes/index.html>
* *Summary of Christian Doctrine* (Louis Berkhof)  
  [https://www.monergism.com/summary-christian-doctrine-ebook](https://www.monergism.com/summary-christian-doctrine-ebook%20)
* “Who Needs Systematic Theology?” (Michael Horton)  
  <https://wscal.edu/resource-center/who-needs-systematic-theology>

**The Doctrine of the Word of God**

**Chapter 2 – The Word of God**

**Key Terms**

decrees of God, personal address, Word of God

**Key Points**

* The Word of God has come to us in many different forms.
* The focus of systematic theology is the written Word of God, the Bible.

**Chapter Summary**

The phrase “the Word of God” has a number of meanings. At various points, it can refer to Jesus Christ (e.g., Jn 1:1, 14), to God’s specific decrees (e.g., Gen 1:3ff.), to God’s words of personal address (e.g., Ex 20:1–3; Mk 1:11), to God’s words spoken through prophets (e.g., Deut 18:18–20), or to God’s words as written in Scripture (e.g., 1 Cor 14:37). In every case, God’s words are fully authoritative; “to disbelieve or disobey any part of them is to disbelieve or disobey God himself.” The words of God in written Scripture benefit us greatly because they provide us with opportunities to study them repeatedly and to make them available to many more people. In systematic theology, the focus of study is on the Bible rather than on the other forms of the Word of God.

**Suggested Question**

* Explain the value of having God’s words transmitted in written form.

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “How Is the Bible the Word of God?” (George Eldon Ladd)  
  <http://articles.ochristian.com/article14707.shtml>
* “Perspectives on the Word of God” (John Frame; in 3 parts)  
  <http://reformedperspectives.org/files/reformedperspectives/theology/TH.Frame.Perspectives_on_the_Word.pt1.html>  
  <http://reformedperspectives.org/files/reformedperspectives/theology/TH.Frame.Perspectives_on_the_Word.pt2.html>  
  <http://reformedperspectives.org/files/reformedperspectives/theology/TH.Frame.Perspectives_on_the_Word.pt3.html>
* “What Is the Word of God?” (Louis Berkhof)  
  <https://thirdmill.org/newfiles/lou_berkhof/lou_berkhof.WordofGod.html>
* “The Word of God: Timeless and Timely” (John Frame)  
  <https://frame-poythress.org/the-word-of-god-timeless-and-timely/>
* “The Word of the Lord” (Harold John Ockenga)  
  <https://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/article_word_ockenga.html>

**Chapter 8 – The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (4) Sufficiency**

**Key Terms**

blameless, sufficiency of Scripture

**Key Points**

* The Bible contains everything we need to know for salvation and for trusting and obeying God perfectly.
* Scripture must be our sole source of authority as we seek God’s will and moral expectations.

**Chapter Summary**

By “sufficiency of Scripture,” we mean that at every point of redemptive history, God ensured that Scripture contained everything that he intended for his people to have, to study, and to obey. We also mean that today, the Bible contains everything that we need to know for salvation and for perfectly trusting and obeying God. Paul emphasizes this truth in his second letter to Timothy, stating that Scripture is able to make us “wise for salvation” and “equipped for every good work.”[[1]](#footnote-1) We can be blameless in God’s sight through obeying what we find in the Bible; there are no secret expectations!

Even though we will never perfectly obey all of Scripture in this life, the sufficiency of Scripture means that we can focus on Scripture—rather than tradition or the writings of other Christian leaders—to find what God expects. We can gather all of the passages that relate directly to marriage, or money, or sanctification, and we can have confidence that “we *will be able to find* what God requires us to think or do in these areas.” This distinguishes evangelical Christians from Roman Catholic theologians, who insist that we must also listen to official church tradition and teaching to discover God’s commands. While we can certainly take advantage of these sources for understanding God’s Word, we will never need to resort to an extrabiblical source to know some additional command of God. The belief in the sufficiency of Scripture also distinguishes evangelical from nonevangelical theologians; the latter remain unconvinced that Scripture is authoritative—it contains, they might say, an explanation of early Christian experience but not any clear command from God. In other words, they believe Scripture is not simply insufficient for determining what God expects but also unreliable for determining truth.

Scripture’s sufficiency means that while God can add more words to those already spoken, man cannot. There are no missing words; we have all that God expects us to believe and follow in the Bible. Hence, God can declare his Word sufficient for blamelessness in Psalm 119:1 and yet add to it in later periods of history. Additionally, God could instruct us not to add to his words in Deuteronomy 4:2 (and later in Proverbs 30:5–6) and yet still inspire Scripture at different points in redemptive history.

There are at least six practical applications of this doctrine for our daily Christian walk:

1. We should be encouraged that everything God wants to tell us about any particular doctrine or topic is available to us in the Bible. Scripture will not answer every question we might ever have, but continued study of Scripture will result in an increased ability to understand all that God would have us understand on an issue.
2. We should add nothing to Scripture, nor consider any other writings (such as the *Book of Mormon* or *Dianetics*) to be on par with Scripture in value or authority.
3. We should not give the same level of authority to modern revelations from God, such as comments made by those with the modern-day spiritual gift of prophecy. Whenever people place other documents on the same level of authority with Scripture, the result has been to undermine the claims of Scripture and to introduce teachings that are contrary to Scripture.
4. When Scripture does not forbid something either explicitly or implicitly, we can know that it is not a sin. We should not begin the process of adding “unwritten rules” to Scripture, such as blanket prohibitions against drinking coffee or reading newspapers on Sunday or using “artificial” methods of birth control. When we insist on obedience to rules not found in Scripture, we may cause Christians to feel a deep but unnecessary sense of guilt over “sin” and alienation from God.
5. We can also trust that God’s will is available for us in Scripture; “nothing is required of us by God that is not commanded in Scripture either explicitly or by implication.” We do not need to devote ourselves to seeking God’s will through some extrabiblical route, and we can be encouraged that what he wants is plain for us to find and to read.
6. We must imitate Scripture in emphasizing those commands and doctrines that Scripture emphasizes. We should not emphasize a doctrine on which Scripture remains nearly silent (e.g., “baptism in the Holy Spirit”); doing so has led to long-standing denominational splits.

**Suggested Questions**

* Describe two practical applications of the sufficiency of Scripture.
* How does this chapter distinguish between evangelical and nonevangelical theologians on the nature of Scripture? How could the nonevangelical viewpoint hinder growth in a person’s relationship with God?

**Sing “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” pg. 27**

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “The Word Our Only Rule” (John Calvin)  
  <https://www.the-highway.com/The_Word.html>
* “‘God told me’ and the Sufficiency of Scripture” (Mark Dever)  
  <http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/god-told-me-and-sufficiency-scripture>
* “Do We Act as if We Really Believe that ‘The Bible Alone, and the Bible in Its Entirety, Is the Word of God Written’?” (Wayne Grudem)  
  <http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/43/43-1/43-1-pp005-026_JETS.pdf>
* “The Sufficiency of Scripture in Apologetics” (Michael J. Kruger)  
  <http://www.tms.edu/tmsj/tmsj12m.pdf>
* “The Sufficiency of Scripture in Counseling” (Wayne A. Mack)  
  <http://www.tms.edu/tmsj/tmsj9d.pdf>
* “Sola Scriptura and the Early Church” (William Webster)  
  <http://www.the-highway.com/Sola_Scriptura_Webster.html>

**QUIZ Chapter 2 – The Word of God**

Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following is meant by the phrase “Word of God”?
   1. Jesus Christ
   2. The Bible
   3. The prophecies of Haggai
   4. All of the above
2. The words of God that cause things to happen are called:
   1. The plans of God
   2. The decrees of God
   3. The promises of God
   4. None of the above
3. The primary focus of study in systematic theology is:
   1. Jesus Christ
   2. The Bible
   3. God’s general revelation
   4. All of the above
4. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that written Scripture is:
   1. True
   2. Clear
   3. God-breathed
   4. All of the above
5. John 1:1 calls Jesus:
   1. God
   2. The Word
   3. The Son of God
   4. The Messiah
6. A form of God´s word in which he speaks directly to people on earth.
   1. The Bible
   2. Prophecy
   3. Personal address
   4. The Incarnation
7. Which of the following events includes an example of God´s direct speech to people on earth?
   1. The giving of the Ten Commandments
   2. The Transfiguration
   3. The curse on Adam and Eve
   4. All of the above
8. Which of the following is a benefit that comes from writing down God’s words?
   1. They are accessible to many more people
   2. They can be more easily translated into other languages
   3. People trust written words more readily than the spoken words
   4. All of the above
9. Psalm 1:1–2 tells us that the man who meditates on God’s law day and night is:
   1. Blessed
   2. Trustworthy
   3. Authoritative
   4. None of the above
10. Which of the following events is identified in the text as an example of the decrees of God?
    1. Creation
    2. The baptism of Jesus
    3. The Ten Commandments
    4. All of the above

True/False

1. The phrase “Word of God” has several meanings.
2. The Holy Spirit is also called “the Word of God.”
3. God’s words spoken through human lips are just as authoritative as when he speaks directly.
4. Disbelieving or disobeying God’s words is not the same as disbelieving or disobeying God.
5. The words of Jesus are not the same thing as the words of God.
6. God speaks to us in ordinary human language.
7. God is limited by the imperfections of human language.
8. We cannot study God’s decrees directly.
9. We are no longer able to observe and imitate Jesus Christ’s life and teachings firsthand.

Among the members of the Trinity, it is especially God the Holy Spirit who has the role of communicating the character of God to us and of expressing the will of God for us.

**Class 2 – The Doctrine of God**

**Chapter 15 – Creation**

**Key Terms**

concordist theory, creation *ex nihilo*, day-age theory, deism, dualism, flood geology, gap theory, *homo sapiens*, immanent, literary framework theory, macroevolution, materialism, mature creationism, methodological naturalism, micro-evolution, neo-catastrophism, old-earth theory, pantheism, pictorial-day theory, progressive creationism, theistic evolution, transcendent, twenty-four-hour day theory, young earth theory

**Key Points**

* God created everything ex nihilo, and it was very good.
* God stands above creation and is intimately involved in it.
* Secular evolutionary theories conflict with the biblical data and have serious shortcomings.
* Theistic evolution is incompatible with Scripture.
* It is not possible to determine the age of the universe, though much evidence indicates an old earth and universe.
* Young earth and old earth views are both valid for believers.

**Chapter Summary**

God created everything out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), it was originally very good (Gen 1:31), and he created all of it for his own glory. The whole Bible continually declares that God created everything that exists and that nothing exists that he did not create (Gen 1:1; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11). God’s creative work also includes the creation of time, the creation of the entire spiritual universe (Neh 9:6), and the direct, personal creation of Adam and Eve (Gen 2:7, 21–22; 1 Cor 11:8–9). That God directly created the first humans means we are not like the other creatures; God made us in his image as the highest of his created work. The Father created, but the Son and the Spirit participated in the creation of all things as well. Scripture often states that everything was created “through” the Son (e.g., Jn 1:3; Col 1:16); the Holy Spirit is described as present and giving life to God’s creation (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30).

God remains transcendent and immanent in relationship to his creation. He stands above his created work, yet he actively involves himself in it. Creation depends on God, but creation is distinct from God. This biblical view stands in contrast to materialism, pantheism, dualism, and deism. Materialism simply runs contrary to the whole of Scripture; pantheism inaccurately assumes that even great evil is a part of God’s character. Dualism overvalues the power of the created universe, undervalues the goodness of creation, and denies God’s lordship over creation. Deism fails to account for the continual witness in Scripture of God’s immanence (Job 12:10; Col 1:17; Eph 4:6).

Scripture also bears witness that God created all things for his own glory (Rev 4:11; Isa 43:7; Ps 19:1–2). In all of creation, we can see God’s infinite power and wisdom (Rom 1:20). Even though creation glorifies God, he did not need to create in order to receive glory; his creative work was a freely willed act (Rev 4:11). If the omnipotent God created everything for his glory, it naturally follows that the universe would fulfill this purpose. After completing his work, God declared it all to be very good (Gen 1:31), and the NT affirms that God’s creation is still good (1 Tim 4:1–5).

If accepted scientific opinion contradicts our understanding of Scripture, we must recognize that the conclusions of science have caused and will continue to cause believers to examine and improve their understanding of Scripture. However, countless Christians who have examined Scripture remain opposed to the prevalent scientific acceptance of evolution. Hence, we must affirm the following:

1. Our current understanding of Scripture and of the natural world is incomplete. When we know and correctly understand all the facts, no final conflict will exist between the two.
2. Any secular theory that denies the existence of God or his creative work is inconsistent with the biblical record.
3. Current neo-Darwinian theory fails in several ways. Mutation and natural selection cannot create new genetic information and random mutations are nearly always destructive rather than constructive. We also intuitively recognize the impossibility of macroevolution. It’s clear that nonliving material cannot produce living material and that several aspects of living cells are “irreducible complex systems”—they must exist as an entire system or not at all, and it is impossible to show a piece-by-piece evolutionary development of such systems. Further, humans appear suddenly and clearly in the archaeological record, and the differences between humans and chimpanzees are so significant that evolutionary theory cannot explain how these differences would have come about. Additionally, it is possible that modern genetic diversity in humans could have come from one genetically diverse original couple. But neo-Darwinian theory is driven by methodological naturalism, and many unbelieving scientists seem eager to reject Scripture in favor of any other—often quite absurd—explanations. If evolution were to be true, then we have no meaning, there are no moral absolutes, and it seems to support eugenic practice for the good of the human race.
4. Theistic evolution is incompatible with Scripture. The theory fails to recognize the distinction between creation and providence,[[2]](#footnote-2) and proponents often reject the historical Adam and Eve as well as several other significant events found in Genesis 1–3 (e.g., the direct creation of man and woman in God’s image, the original sinlessness of mankind, the fall, the curse, the direct creation of the many kinds of animals, and the rest of the seventh day). Essentially, theistic evolution has to deny the historicity of Genesis 1–3 and propose instead that it is a poem or an allegory despite the clearly historical nature of the whole book of Genesis and the deliberate genealogical connection of the historical Adam and Eve with Noah and later with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If the events of Genesis 1–3 are not to be understood as historical fact, we can no longer trust the words of Jesus nor those of many books in the New Testament which affirm their historicity (Matt 19:4–5; Lk 3:38; Acts 17:24–26; Rom 5:12–19; 1 Cor 11:8; Heb 4:4, 10; Rev 4:11). Theistic evolution severs general from special revelation, effectively refusing to let the Bible speak to many areas of knowledge and refusing to let creation testify to God’s existence and “invisible attributes.”[[3]](#footnote-3) And finally, theistic evolution undermines the goodness and justice of God, the imputation of sin and righteousness (i.e., the doctrine of the atonement!), and the resurrection. Theistic evolution “should not be considered a legitimate option that Bible-believing Christians, and especially Christian leaders, may hold today.”
5. The gap theory has no significant support in Scripture and is difficult to understand in light of Genesis 1:31. How could God look at a creation full of the effects of rebellion and judgment, including the existence of demonic forces, and say that it was “very good”?
6. We cannot easily determine the age of the earth or the length of the days of creation. There are evident gaps in the biblical genealogies, it is difficult to know how long ago mankind first appeared on earth, it is entirely possible that plants and animals died (and fossilized) before Adam and Eve sinned, dinosaurs seem to have existed many years before mankind, and the “days” of creation need not be literal twenty-four-hour periods of time. In fact, the Hebrew term *yôm* elsewhere appears to denote longer periods of time (e.g., Gen 2:4; Job 20:28; Prov 21:31). In contrast, the language of Genesis 1 strongly implies a twenty-four-hour day, the plants are created a day before the sun is created, Moses uses *yôm* to clearly mean a twenty-four hour day in Exodus 20:8–11, and Jesus speaks of Adam and Eve existing at the beginning of creation (Mk 10:6).
7. Much observational evidence indicates an old earth and universe. This includes, among other evidences, the rate at which the universe is expanding, the ability to see astronomical events that occurred billions of years ago, the hundreds of thousands of years of history visible in ice layers and coral reefs, and the rate of tectonic movement and continental separation.
8. Given the above, both the old earth and young earth views seem valid for Christians.

Among old earth theories, proponents of the day-age view hold that God created everything in six long periods. This view suffers from inconsistencies between the order of creation, our current scientific understanding of the development of life, the timing of the creation of the sun, moon, and stars (though it is possible to understand Genesis 1:1 as including the creation of all stars). Others have proposed long periods of time between six twenty-four-hour days of creation in which God created something new and then waited for a long time prior to creating again. Proponents of the literary framework view argue that Genesis 1 is not a chronological account but rather a framework for describing God’s activity. This view suffers from the clearly sequential language of Genesis 1. Among young earth advocates, some propose that the universe was created with apparent age. Unfortunately, this seems to make God a deceiver, and it faces a quandary in addressing the fossil record: did God create a false history? Others suggest that Noah’s flood caused the appearance of age as well as the current fossil record; however, almost all geologists reject this. It seems that the evidence from Scripture leans toward a young earth, while the evidence from creation favors an old earth. Both are possible and neither is certain; we must be willing to wait for progress while allowing for civil disagreement. Ultimately, our goal is truth.

**Suggested Questions**

* What is meant by describing God as immanent and transcendent? Contrast this both with deism and pantheism.
* Identify and explain three objections to theistic evolution.

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “A Young Earth—It’s Not the Issue!” (Ken Ham)  
  <https://answersingenesis.org/why-does-creation-matter/a-young-earth-its-not-the-issue/>
* “Creation in Old Testament Theology” (Paul R. House)  
  <http://www.ntslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/Creation%20in%20OT%20Theology.pdf>
* “Why Does the Universe Look So Old?” (Albert Mohler)  
  <https://credomag.com/2013/06/why-does-the-universe-look-so-old-albert-mohler/>
* “What did the Reformers believe about the age of the earth?” (Joel Beeke; in two parts)  
  <https://www.evangelical-times.org/21178/what-did-the-reformers-believe-about-the-age-of-the-earth-1/>  
  <https://www.evangelical-times.org/21093/what-did-the-reformers-believe-about-the-age-of-the-earth-2/>
* “RTB 101” (A collection of very short articles from *Reasons to Believe* summarizing various aspects of the Old Earth Creationist perspective)  
  <https://reasons.org/explore/publications/rtb-101>

**Chapter 16 – God’s Providence**

**Key Terms**

Arminian, Calvinism, concurrence, decrees of God, free choices, free will, freedom of voluntary choice, freedom of inclination, government, libertarian free will, middle knowledge, Molinism, preservation, primary cause, providence, Reformed, secondary cause, voluntary choices, willing choices

**Key Points**

* God preserves, concurs with, and governs all created things to fulfill his holy purposes.
* God’s sovereign control does not limit our responsibility; our choices are real and have real results.
* The Arminian viewpoint faces many significant challenges, and failure to address these challenges undermines the greatness of God’s omniscience, omnipotence, and trustworthiness.

**Chapter Summary**

The doctrine of God’s providence teaches that God, who created all things, also preserves, concurs with, and governs all created things. The church has long debated the nature of God’s providential activity; this text will present a Reformed position and then consider opposing arguments.

God preserves all created things (Heb 1:3; Col 1:16–17) with their created properties. He preserves a star in such a way that it will continue to fuse hydrogen until it exhausts its supply, at which point it will cool and become a “red giant.”

God concurs with all created things, including inanimate objects (Job 37:6–13; Ps 104:14), animals (Num 21:6; Matt 10:29), “chance” events (Prov 16:33), human affairs (Acts 17:26; Rom 13:1–7), and every part of our lives (Prov 16:9; 20:24), including our choices (Ps 33:14–15). God works through the properties of created things; stars shine and God causes stars to shine. God never does anything evil (Jas 1:13–14), but God uses our choices to do what is evil to his own wise ends (Gen 50:20; Jer 25:8–12; Acts 2:23; Rom 9:17). Even so, people are responsible for evil choices (Isa 66:3–4; Rom 9:19–20). Evil is real, and we should always seek to avoid it (Rom 3:8). We cannot comprehend how God’s concurrence works concerning evil; it is a mystery, and we might ask if we have any sort of “free will.” If Christ is upholding everything (Heb 1:3), then no choice or deed is outside God’s providential control; we do not have a free will in the “absolute” sense, yet we do make willing choices that have real effects within the constraints of God’s sovereign rule.

God governs all things; he brings about his purposes in every case (Eph 1:11; Rom 8:28). God’s providential government of all things is the way in which he works out his decrees, and these purposes were established before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4; 2:10). In working out his decrees, God works through human beings, but we remain responsible for our actions. God has ordained that our actions bring about real consequences and that he will affect his decrees through our choices, deeds, and prayers (Jas 4:2; Jn 16:24). Again, we will never comprehend God’s governance, but we must act and trust God to accomplish his purposes. For instance, Paul knew that God had ordained the election of some but suffered so that they might obtain salvation (2 Tim 2:10). Because God is in control—nothing simply happens by chance—trust and thankfulness should characterize our lives rather than fear (Matt 6:26, 31; 10:29–31; 1 Thess 5:16–18).

Many evangelicals hold an alternative viewpoint, which this text refers to as the Arminian view. This viewpoint maintains that for human freedom and choices to be real, God cannot cause them or plan them. His providence does not include every detail of our lives, but instead he merely responds to our actions and decisions. Four arguments summarize this viewpoint, presented here with rebuttals.

1. “The verses used to support the Reformed position are exceptions rather than the rule; God does not normally work in the manner described by the Reformed view.” In response, it must be said the verses used do not describe exceptions; God does not cause some snow to fall or some plants to grow. He causes all snow to fall (Job 37:6) and all plants to grow (Ps 104:14). Paul states that God “works *all things* according to the counsel of his will” (Eph 1:11, italics added).
2. “The Reformed view makes God responsible for sin and evil.” The Arminian view rejects this and states that God does not ordain or cause any evil or sin. Yet, in response, Joseph says that God intended the sinful choices of Joseph’s brothers for good (Gen 50:20), and Jeremiah says that God sent the Babylonians as a punishment against the Israelites (Jer 25:8–12).
3. “If God causes a choice, it is not a real choice.” In response, it must be noted that Scripture assigns the responsibility for our choices to us. If God ordains a real choice, then it is a real choice, just as when God ordains a real thunderstorm, it is a real thunderstorm.
4. “The Reformed view leads to fatalism, while the Arminian view promotes responsible choices and actions. In the end, Calvinists live like Arminians anyway.” This objection fails to understand the Reformed view of providence; we must act and trust God to bring about his will. Calvinists do share many views with Arminians: both believe in personal responsibility, the efficacy of prayer, and the value of obedience and danger of disobedience. However, Calvinists can live with a greater trust in God’s promise to bring all things—even great human evil—together for the good of those who love him (Rom 8:28); this depends not on our free choices but on his sovereign ability to accomplish it.

Four additional objections remain against the Arminian view. First, the Arminian view eliminates (or severely undermines) God’s omniscience regarding the future. Some argue that God knows but does not plan the future, yet a God-known future is as certain as a God-planned future; our choices are no more free in one than in the other. It seems that the Arminian view then naturally leads to open theism.

Some theologians have proposed Molinism as an alternative to both the Arminian and Reformed viewpoints. Molinism (or “middle knowledge”) argues that God does not determine our choices, but he knows them, because he knows what we will do in any situation, and he brings about that situation. When considering salvation, Molinism holds that God creates exactly the situation necessary for those he foreknew would freely choose him to actually choose him. In response to this view, we can affirm that God certainly does know what we will do in any situation. However, Molinism fails to reflect the biblical descriptions of predestination and it lacks any scriptural support. It also leads to the conclusion that God must determine many choices in order to bring about a situation in which a person has a free choice. In addressing predestination, it is “a somewhat complicated variation on the standard Arminian view that predestination is based on God’s knowledge of who would freely choose to believe.” Further, it doesn’t actually protect libertarian freedom because God’s foreknowledge guarantees certain choices will be made.

Second, if God did not want evil to exist in the world, why does it exist? If he could not prevent it, he is not omnipotent. If it must exist for our choices to be genuine, then will we be free to choose evil in heaven? Are God’s choices real? Could he choose evil someday?

Third, if God did not want evil to exist in the world, how can we know that he will defeat it? If God could not prevent evil from entering the world against his will, and if he cannot know what will happen in the future, “how then can we be sure that God’s declaration that he will triumph over all evil is in itself true?”

And finally, proponents of the Reformed view are unable to resolve two issues (how God ordains without blame our choices to do evil, and how God causes us to make free choices), but Arminians face many more questions about the nature of God’s omniscience, omnipotence, and trustworthiness (Does he know the future? Can he prevent evil? Can he fulfill his promises?).

**Suggested Questions**

* Identify two Arminian objections to the Reformed view and provide a response to each.
* Identify three events in Scripture when God used humanity’s evil choices for his purposes.

**Sing “Behold Our God”**

Who has held the oceans in his hands?  
Who has numbered every grain of sand?  
Kings and nations tremble at his voice  
All creation rises to rejoice

Behold our God, seated on his throne  
Come, let us adore him  
Behold our king, nothing can compare  
Come, let us adore him

Who has given counsel to the Lord?  
Who can question any of his words?  
Who can teach, the one who knows all things?  
Who can fathom all his wondrous deeds?

Behold our God, seated on his throne  
Come, let us adore him  
Behold our king, nothing can compare  
Come, let us adore him

Who has felt the nails upon his hands?  
Bearing all the guilt of sinful man  
God eternal, humbled to the grave  
Jesus, Savior, risen now to reign

Behold our God, seated on his throne  
Come, let us adore him  
Behold our king, nothing can compare  
Come, let us adore him

You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)  
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)  
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)  
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)

You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)  
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)  
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)  
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill-)

Behold our God, seated on his throne  
Come, let us adore him  
Behold our king, nothing can compare  
Come, let us adore

Behold our God, seated on his throne  
Come, let us adore him  
Behold our king, nothing can compare  
Come, let us adore him

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “A Sovereign and Personal God” (D. A. Carson)  
  <http://gospelpedlar.com/articles/Sin/Will/sov_personal.html>
* “The Sovereignty of God” (John Murray)  
  <https://opc.org/cce/sovereignty.html>
* *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility* (J. I. Packer)  
  <https://www.chapellibrary.org/book/dsah/divine-sovereignty-and-human-responsibility-packerjamesinnell>

**QUIZ Chapter 15 – Creation**

Multiple Choice

1. The text identifies which of the following as a scientific difficulty for the theory of evolution?
   1. The universe God created was “very good”
   2. The genealogical records compiled by James Ussher
   3. The intuitive recognition that highly unlikely events are actually impossible
   4. None of the above
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the view that small developments occur within one species without creating new species.
   1. Macroevolution
   2. Microevolution
   3. Natural selection
   4. None of the above
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is defined by the author in the following manner: “God created matter and after that did not guide or intervene or act directly to cause any empirically detectable change in the natural behavior of matter until all living things had evolved by purely natural processes.”
   1. Materialism
   2. Intelligent design
   3. Theistic evolution
   4. Microevolution
4. Which of the following views holds that there was a significant span of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2?
   1. The day-age theory
   2. The gap theory
   3. The literary framework theory
   4. The ideal time theory
5. Which of the following views is also known as the concordist theory because it seeks “concord” between the Bible and scientific conclusions regarding the age of the earth?
   1. The day-age theory
   2. The gap theory
   3. The literary framework theory
   4. The ideal time theory
6. Which of the following denies the existence of God altogether?
   1. Materialism
   2. Intelligent design
   3. Theistic evolution
   4. Microevolution
7. Pantheism denies which of the following aspects of God’s character?
   1. His immutability
   2. His holiness
   3. His distinct personality
   4. All of the above
8. The key point(s) on which the author disagrees with theistic evolution is/are:
   1. Whether God created matter
   2. Whether God actively sustains the natural world
   3. Whether God caused any empirically detectable change in the natural behavior of matter
   4. All of the above
9. Theistic evolution undermines the historical trustworthiness of which of the following New Testament books?
   1. Matthew
   2. Acts
   3. Romans
   4. All of the above
10. Which of the following is evidence for a very old earth?
    1. Ice layers
    2. The genealogies in Matthew and Luke
    3. Both of the above
    4. None of the above

True/False

1. God created time.
2. Now that sin has entered the world, the material creation is no longer good in God’s sight, nor should it be seen as good by us.
3. The literary framework view of Genesis 1 denies the truthfulness of Scripture.
4. Deism generally holds that God is not presently involved in the created order.
5. Darwin was only able to find a couple of “intermediate types” in the fossil record.
6. The doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* matters much more than the age of the earth.
7. The Hebrew word *yôm* clearly means a twenty-four-hour day in Exodus 20:8–11.
8. Francis Crick proposed that life on earth was sent by a spaceship from a distant planet.
9. God the Father was the primary agent in initiating the act of creation.
10. If scientists were able to produce a living organism, that would prove that God did not create life.

**QUIZ Chapter 16 – God’s Providence**

Fill in the Blank

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ theology is another term for Calvinism.
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is that aspect of God’s providence whereby he keeps all created things existing and maintaining the properties to cause them to act as they do.
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is that aspect of God’s providence whereby he cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do.
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is that aspect of God’s providence that states that God has a purpose in all that he does and that he directs all things so that they accomplish his purposes.
5. Some Arminians claim the view known as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which holds that God knows all the future possibilities and he knows how each free creature will respond, and so he knows but does not determine the future except through creating the circumstances for the choices he desires free creatures to make.

Multiple Choice

1. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God are the eternal plans of God whereby he determines to bring about everything that happens.
   1. Secret will
   2. Decrees
   3. Divine plan
   4. None of the above
2. God is the invisible, behind-the-scenes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that initiates everything that happens.
   1. Primary cause
   2. Natural cause
   3. Efficient cause
   4. Secondary cause
3. A theological tradition that denies God’s providential control over the details of all events:
   1. Calvinism
   2. Arminianism
   3. Presbyterianism
   4. Compatibilism
4. Which of the following denominations tend to be thoroughly Arminian?
   1. Methodists
   2. Nazarenes
   3. Assemblies of God
   4. All of the above
5. Which of the following is identified in the text as a proponent of Molinism?
   1. John MacArthur
   2. William Lane Craig
   3. I. Howard Marshall
   4. Clark Pinnock
6. Which of the following is an unresolved question for Calvinists?
   1. How can God cause us to choose something willingly?
   2. Why would God allow evil when it is against his will?
   3. How can God know the future?
   4. All of the above
7. In which of the following ways can we apply the doctrine of providence?
   1. Worrying about the future since we cannot change it
   2. Praying less as it does not really affect the outcome of events
   3. Being thankful for all good things because we caused them
   4. None of the above

True/False

1. God uses evil for His glory.
2. The Arminian view generally holds that God simply responds to human choices and actions.
3. One Arminian objection against the Calvinist view is that the Calvinist view makes God responsible for sin.
4. God continues to give us breath in each moment.
5. If something is right for God to do, it is also right for us to do.
6. Our actions have real results, but do not really change the course of events.
7. Most Calvinist theologians affirm that God does not react to what we do.
8. Prayer does not actually change the course of events.

**Class 3 – The Doctrine of Man**

**Chapter 24 – Sin**

**Key Terms**

age of accountability, dualism, impute, inherited corruption, inherited guilt, inherited sin, mortal sin, original guilt, original pollution, original sin, Pelagius, propitiation, sin, total depravity, total inability, unpardonable sin, venial sin

**Key Points**

* Sin is any moral failure in our deeds, our emotions, or our beings.
* Through Adam’s sin, we have all inherited guilt and corruption.
* Every sin separates us from God, but some sins are much more harmful in their results.

**Chapter Summary**

“Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.” This means that while stealing and adultery are sin, so also are the desires to steal and commit adultery (Ex 20:17; Matt 5:22, 28). Moreover, our very nature can be sinful. In Ephesians 2:3, Paul states that believers once were “by nature children of wrath.” The most common definition of sin apart from the above is simply to say that sin is selfishness, yet Scripture does not define sin this way. In fact, some self-interest is praised (Matt 6:20; Ezek 33:11), and many sins are simply not selfish as we commonly understand selfishness (e.g., selfless devotion to a false god or a harmful political ideal). Worse yet, this definition might suggest that God is sinful in righteously seeking his own glory (Isa 42:8)!

God did not sin, and he is not guilty for sin (Deut 32:4; Job 34:10; Jas 1:13). At the same time, we must affirm that sin did not surprise or challenge God (Eph 1:11; Dan 4:35); rather, God ordained that sin would enter the world through the choices of moral agents. Sin first manifested itself in the angelic realm with the fall of Satan and the demons, but it manifested itself in creation through the sin of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:1–19). Their sin typifies sin in general: it challenged our basis of knowledge (Is God true?), it challenged our basis for moral standards (Is God right?), it challenged our identity (Are we subordinate to God?), and like all sin, it was irrational (Ps 14:1; Prov 10:23).

Adam’s sin affects us in two ways. First, Adam’s sin means that we have inherited guilt (Rom 5:12, 18–19). God imputes Adam’s sin to us; he regards us as sinners who are guilty before him. Though some may protest that this is unfair, we must remember that we have all also committed many sins for which we are guilty. What is more, if we think it unfair for Adam to represent us in the garden, we must also consider it unfair for Christ to represent us on the cross. Second, Adam’s sin means that we have inherited corruption (Ps 51:5; Eph 2:3). Because Adam sinned, we have a natural, inborn tendency to sin as well. In our very natures, we have no spiritual good (Rom 7:18; Jer 17:9); every part of us is corrupted by sin. In our actions, we have no ability to do any spiritual good (Rom 3:9–20; Jn 6:44).

Because of this inherited guilt and corruption, every person is sinful (1 Kgs 8:46; Jas 3:2; 1 Jn 1:8–10). Some have rejected this and argued that we must be able to do the good that God commands us to do, or he would not hold us responsible for our sins. However, Paul states in Ephesians 2:1 that we were “dead” in our sins, unable to do any good, yet Scripture still affirms that we are guilty before God (Rom 5:12–21). Our ability does not limit our responsibility. This leads us to ask if infants are guilty before they commit any actual sins, and if infants that die before they can understand the gospel are able to be saved. Psalms 51:5 and 58:3 indicate that we are sinful *in nature*, if not in deed from before birth, so we must say that if infants who die before sinning are saved, it is not because they are innocent but because of Christ’s redemptive work applied on their behalf through the Holy Spirit (1 Tim 2:5, Jn 3:3). It is possible for God to regenerate an infant before birth (Lk 1:15; Ps 22:10), but Scripture does not tell us how often this takes place. God’s frequent pattern in Scripture is to save the children of those who believe in him (Heb 11:7; Jn 4:53; Acts 14:4), and we have no reason to think that it would not be the same for believers’ children who die very young (2 Sam 12:23).

No sin is worse than other sins in terms of our legal guilt before God; every sin separates us from God (Jas 2:10–11; Gal 3:10). However, some sins are worse in terms of their consequences. Some sins bring much more harm to our lives or to the lives of others, and they bring more harmful spiritual results (Jn 19:11; Ezek 8:6, 13, 15). These sins are those that bring more dishonor to God, those that cause more harm to people, and those that are done with hardened hearts (Num 15:30).

When a Christian sins, they remain forgiven (Rom 8:1; 1 Cor 15:3) and still a part of God’s family (1 Jn 1:8; 3:2). Still, when a Christian sins, God is displeased, and he disciplines us (Eph 4:30; Heb 12:6). Our sin harms our Christian life and witness and makes it more difficult to pursue Christlikeness (Rom 6:16). Furthermore, we lose heavenly rewards (1 Cor 3:12). We must be wary, because a persistent pattern of disobedience to Christ and a lack of the fruit of the Holy Spirit indicate that a person has not placed his or her faith in Christ and is not a Christian.

The unpardonable sin (Matt 12:31–32; Mk 3:29–30; Heb 6:4–6) is the “unusually malicious, willful rejection and slander against the Holy Spirit’s work attesting to Christ, and attributing that work to Satan.” This sin is unpardonable because the person who knows that Jesus Christ is God and believes that the Holy Spirit is working through him but then maliciously attributes that work to Satan has rejected all the means by which God brings a person to repentance and forgiveness.

God punishes sin both to deter and to warn. However, he punishes sin primarily because his holy righteousness requires it (Jer 9:24; Rom 3:25–26).

**Suggested Questions**

* What does the text define as “the unpardonable sin”?
* What happens when a Christian sins?

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “What Is Sin?” (J. Gresham Machen)  
  <http://www.westminsterconfession.org/introduction-to-the-christian-faith/what-is-sin.php>
* “Original Sin: Depravity Infects Everyone” (J. I. Packer)  
  [https://www.monergism.com/legacy/mt/sitepages/original-sin-ji-packer](https://www.monergism.com/legacy/mt/sitepages/original-sin-ji-packer%20)
* “What Is Sin?” (David Powlison)  
  <https://www.monergism.com/legacy/mt/sitepages/what-sin-david-powlison>

**Chapter 25 – The Covenants Between God and Man**

**Key Terms**

covenant, covenant of grace, covenant of redemption, covenant of works, new covenant, old covenant, progressive covenantalism

**Key Points**

* A covenant agreement includes parties, conditions, blessings, and consequences.
* Three covenants exist: a covenant of works, a covenant of redemption, and a covenant of grace.

**Chapter Summary**

In speaking of the manner in which God relates to man, we speak of God’s covenants with us. The covenants that we address in this chapter are those unchangeable, legal agreements initiated by God that outline the commitments and requirements in the relationship between God and humanity. We cannot change the covenant; we can only accept or reject the terms and obligations. While it is true that these terms are unchanging, it is also true that a new covenant may replace an old covenant.

The *covenant of works* is that covenant established by God with Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen 2:9, 15–17). While Genesis does not include the term “covenant” in its description of these first events, Hosea declares of Israel, “But like Adam they transgressed the covenant” (Hos 6:7). Paul also speaks of Christ’s role as similar to Adam’s (Rom 5:12–21); they both serve as the representative heads of a group of people, which would indicate that Adam was in a covenant with God before his sin. The covenant of works fits the pattern of covenants in Scripture. There are two parties (God and man), there are requirements (do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), there are consequences for disobedience (death), and there are blessings for obedience (life).

In some senses, the covenant of works remains active. If we could be perfectly obedient in our lives, we would receive the blessing of obedience, but disobedience carries consequences (Rom 7:10; 6:23; Gal 3:12). We know that Christ kept the covenant of works, living a life of perfect obedience to God’s commands (1 Pet 2:22; Rom 5:18–19). This active obedience ensures the efficiency of his death on the cross. However, other aspects of the covenant of works are no longer in force. We have no tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and our inherited sin nature means that we are unable to keep the provisions of this covenant. Additionally, believers receive the blessings of this covenant not through our own obedience but through Christ’s obedience.

The *covenant of redemption* is the agreement made before creation between the members of the Trinity. In this covenant, the “Son agreed to become a man, be our representative, obey the demands of the covenant of works on our behalf, and pay the penalty for sin, which we deserved.” Our understanding of this covenant comes from many places in Scripture. For instance, we see that the Father gave the Son a people to redeem as well as a work to accomplish (Jn 17:2–4). We also see that the Father agreed to send the Son as a representative and to accept his work as sufficient for the redemption of many (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:18–19). The Father also gave the Son all authority in heaven and on earth, including the authority to send the Holy Spirit to believers (Matt 28:18; Acts 2:33). The Son agreed to incarnate (Gal 4:4), to remain perfectly obedient (Heb 10:7–9), to die on the cross (Phil 2:8), and to gather all of the elect to himself (Jn 17:12). The Holy Spirit agreed to empower Jesus for ministry and obedience (Lk 4:1, 14, 18) and to “apply the benefits of Christ’s redemptive work” to the elect (Jn 14:16–17, 26).

Finally, the *covenant of grace* is that covenant established by God to save man after the fall. It is called a covenant of grace because it is “entirely based on God’s ‘grace’ or unmerited favor toward those whom he redeems.” The parties to this covenant are again God and humanity, though in this covenant, Christ acts as the mediator: he fulfills the covenant condition for the elect. The condition in this covenant is simply faith in the work of Christ as our Savior. This was as true for the faithful in the OT as it is for the faithful today. In fact, Paul states that both David and Abraham were justified—they received the benefits of the covenant—because of their faith in the Messiah to come. Faith in Christ is still the condition for entrance into the covenant of grace, and obedience to God’s commands provides evidence of this initial faith (Jas 2:17). The blessing for accepting and entering into the covenant is eternal life in a personal relationship with the Creator (Jer 31:33). The outward sign of entrance into this covenant was circumcision in the OT; in the NT and today, we mark entrance into this covenant by baptism and continuance in the covenant by participation in the Lord’s Supper.

While this covenant has remained unchanged in its essence, the provisions have varied. Immediately after the fall, there was merely the insinuation that a relationship with God might be maintained in the promise of a Savior to come (Gen 3:15) and in God’s provision of clothing (Gen 3:21). After the flood, God’s promises showed that he was relating to creation graciously. Beginning with Abraham, the elements of the covenant of grace are all in place (Gen 15; 17). Scripture often speaks of Christ fulfilling the covenant with Abraham (e.g., Rom 4:1–25; Gal 3:6–18). This covenant of grace is the “new covenant,” and it stands in contrast to the old covenant, made under Moses at Mount Sinai (Lk 22:20; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:6–13). The new covenant far exceeds the old covenant because it brings the Messiah, the final atonement for sins, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Progressive covenantalism identifies five covenants. These are between God and creation, God and Noah, God and Abraham, God and Israel, and God and David, and they are all fulfilled in Christ. These are understood to be both conditional and unconditional.

**Suggested Questions**

* What role did the Holy Spirit fulfill in the covenant of redemption during Christ’s earthly ministry? What role does the Holy Spirit fulfill in the covenant of redemption today?
* What are the necessary components of a covenant agreement?

**Sing “All I have Is Christ”**

I once was lost in darkest night  
Yet thought I knew the way  
The sin that promised joy and life  
Had led me to the grave  
I had no hope that You would own  
A rebel to Your will  
And if You had not loved me first  
I would refuse You still

But as I ran my hell-bound race  
Indifferent to the cost  
You looked upon my helpless state  
And led me to the cross  
And I beheld God's love displayed  
You suffered in my place  
You bore the wrath reserved for me  
Now all I know is grace

Hallelujah! All I have is Christ  
Hallelujah! Jesus is my life  
Hallelujah! All I have is Christ  
Hallelujah! Jesus is my life  
Now, Lord, I would be Yours alone  
And live so all might see  
The strength to follow Your commands  
Could never come from me  
Oh Father, use my ransomed life in any way You choose  
Oh Father, use my ransomed life in any way You choose  
And let my soul forever be my only boast is you  
Hallelujah! All I have is Christ  
Hallelujah! Jesus is my life  
Hallelujah! All I have is Christ  
Hallelujah! Jesus is my life  
Hallelujah! All I have is Christ  
Hallelujah! Jesus is my life

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “The Everlasting Covenant” (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones; MP3)  
  <https://www.mljtrust.org/sermons-online/ephesians-1-3/the-everlasting-covenant/>
* “Introduction: On Covenant Theology” (J. I. Packer)  
  <http://www.gospelpedlar.com/articles/Bible/cov_theo.html>
* “Covenant of Works” (R. C. Sproul)  
  <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/covenantworks.html>
* “The Covenant Promise of the Spirit” (Charles Spurgeon)  
  <https://answersingenesis.org/education/spurgeon-sermons/2200-covenant-promise-of-spirit/>

**Chapter 24 – Sin**

Fill in the Blank

1. Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sin is the guilt and tendency to sin which all people are born with because of Adam’s sin.
3. To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ means to think of as belonging to someone, and therefore to cause it to belong to that person.
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was a fifth-century monk who taught that man has the ability to obey God’s commands and can take the first and most important steps toward salvation on his own.
5. In Roman Catholic teaching, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a sin that can be forgiven, although perhaps after punishments in this life or in purgatory.

Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following happens when a Christian sins?
   1. Our legal standing before God does not change
   2. Our fellowship with God does not change
   3. Our Christian life does not change
   4. All of the above
2. The primary purpose of God’s punishment of sin is:
   1. Deterring further sin
   2. Warning observers
   3. Proving God’s righteousness
   4. All of the above
3. According to Roman Catholic teaching, a sin that causes spiritual death is:
   1. An unforgiveable sin
   2. A mortal sin
   3. A venial sin
   4. All of the above
4. A term used by some theologians to indicate a point in a person’s life before which he is not held responsible for sin:
   1. Point of maturity
   2. Age of accountability
   3. Loss of innocence
   4. None of the above
5. According to Roman Catholic teaching, a sin that can be forgiven:
   1. Unforgiveable sin
   2. Mortal sin
   3. Venial sin
   4. All of the above
6. Which of the following passages does the text use to argue for inherited guilt?
   1. Hebrews 4:10–12
   2. Ephesians 2:1–3
   3. Romans 5:18–19
   4. All of the above
7. Which of the following passages does the text use to argue for inherited corruption?
   1. Hebrews 4:10–12
   2. Ephesians 2:1–3
   3. Romans 5:18–19
   4. All of the above
8. The unpardonable sin includes:
   1. A clear knowledge of who Christ is and the power of the Holy Spirit working through him
   2. A willful rejection of the facts about Christ that one knows to be true
   3. Slanderously attributing the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ to the power of Satan
   4. All of the above

True/False

1. The text maintains that children have a guilty standing before God even while in the womb.
2. The doctrine of total inability (or total depravity) means that unbelievers are unable to do any good.
3. Sin was present in creation prior to the disobedience of Adam and Eve.
4. The true measure of our responsibility and guilt is our own ability to obey God.
5. The primary reason God punishes sin is to warn us against further sin.
6. The Bible teaches that some attitudes are sinful.
7. Sin brings pain and destructive consequences to us and to others affected by it.

**Chapter 25 – The Covenants Between God and Man**

Fill in the Blank

1. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is an unchangeable, divinely imposed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship.
2. This chapter states that God entered into a covenant of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Adam and Eve in the garden.
3. This chapter states that God entered into a covenant of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ within the Trinity.
4. This chapter states that when Adam and Eve failed in the garden, God established a covenant of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ between himself and those whom he would redeem.

Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following are essential parts of a covenant?
   1. Definition of parties
   2. Conditions of participation
   3. A sign of the covenant
   4. All of the above
2. Which passage hints at the possibility of a relationship with God even after sin entered the world?
   1. Genesis 3:15, 21
   2. Genesis 9:8–17
   3. Genesis 15:1–21
   4. Genesis 17:1–27
3. Which of the following covenants included a promise by God not to destroy the earth with a flood again?
   1. Abrahamic
   2. Davidic
   3. Mosaic
   4. None of the above
4. Which of the following covenants was given to restrain the sins of the people until Christ came?
   1. Abrahamic
   2. Davidic
   3. Mosaic
   4. None of the above
5. Which of the following covenants gives a promise of eternal kingship to King David and his descendants?
   1. Abrahamic
   2. Davidic
   3. Mosaic
   4. None of the above
6. In which of the following Old Testament passages appears the promise of a new, better covenant?
   1. Genesis 15:1–3
   2. 2 Samuel 7:8–16
   3. Jeremiah 31:31–34
   4. None of the above
7. Which of the following emphasizes a discontinuity between the ways God related to people during different periods of history?
   1. Covenant theology
   2. Progressive covenantalism
   3. Dispensationalism
   4. None of the above

True/False

1. Beginning with the covenant with Noah, all the elements of the covenant of grace are present.
2. The covenant with David is known as the “old covenant.”
3. Hebrews 13:20 calls the new covenant “the eternal covenant.”
4. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant of grace.
5. The New Testament authors used the ordinary Greek word for contracts when speaking of the covenant.
6. The old covenant is the covenant made at Mt. Sinai.
7. The promise of salvation by faith was temporarily set aside during the administration of the Mosaic covenant and replaced with a promise of salvation by obedience.
8. Dispensational theology has traditionally identified seven periods of time in which God related to people in a distinct manner.
9. The covenant of works is still in force.

**Class 4 – The Doctrines of Christ and the Holy Spirit**

**Chapter 29 – The Offices of Christ**

**Key Terms**

intercession, king, priest, prophet

**Key Points**

* Jesus Christ fulfills the OT offices of prophet, priest, and king in a manner far superior to those who originally fulfilled these roles.
* Believers can imitate Christ in fulfilling these same roles.

**Chapter Summary**

Christ fulfills the OT offices of prophet, priest, and king. He serves as our Prophet in that he reveals the Word of God to us; he serves as our Priest in that he offers the sin-atoning sacrifice on our behalf (and is himself that sacrifice); he serves as our King in that he rules over the church and all of creation.

Christ is the prophet promised in Deuteronomy 18:15–18. In these verses, Moses declared that the Lord God would raise up a prophet like Moses and that this prophet would speak the words of God to the people of God. Jesus did serve in this capacity—many who saw Jesus declared him to be a prophet (Jn 4:19; Mk 8:27–28)—but the NT epistles never refer to Jesus as a prophet or *the* prophet. Hebrews 1:1–2 even intentionally distinguishes between the prophets and Jesus as the “Son.” While Jesus is the prophet that Moses promised, he is greater than the OT prophets because he is the one about whom they prophesied. He’s greater yet because he is the one who provided them with the words of prophecy about his coming!

Christ is our perfect Priest. In a manner greater than that of the OT priests, Christ offered a perfect sacrifice, which was his own body on the cross (Heb 9:26). While the OT priests offered sacrifices yearly because these sacrifices could not perfect the people of God (Heb 10:1–2), Christ offered a sacrifice (himself) just once, and it perfects all who trust in him. He is our great High Priest (Heb 4:14). As our Priest, he brings us into God’s presence. The OT high priest could enter the Holy of Holies only once a year, and the people had to remain outside, but Christ has entered into the Holiest of Holies through his own flesh, and he calls us to enter with him (Heb 10:19–22). As the priests of the OT would offer prayers for the people, Christ continually offers prayers on our behalf (Heb 7:25; Rom 8:34). He sits in the Father’s presence and offers our specific requests and petitions, requests that have been offered with the aid of the Spirit (Rom 8:26).

Jesus Christ is also our King. As the king of Israel ruled over the people of God, Christ now rules over all the people of God for all time. His rule is not of this world (Jn 18:36) but is in fact over all of creation. God has set him above “all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he put all things under his feet.”[[4]](#footnote-4) In the end, every knee will bow, and every tongue will proclaim, “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

As coheirs with Christ, and as people made in the image of God, we also bear the roles of prophets and prophetesses, priests and priestesses, kings and queens. In Eden, Adam was given knowledge of God and the ability to speak truthfully about God. He could even repeat God’s very words for Eve. Adam and Eve could also function in a priestly capacity, offering up prayers and sacrifices of thanksgiving in God’s presence. They also functioned as a king and queen over creation, having dominion over the works of God (Gen 1:26–28). Sin limited mankind’s ability to fulfill these roles. Our knowledge of God, while available in creation, became twisted, we were no longer able to worship freely in God’s presence, and our dominion turned into tyranny. God reintroduced these roles in the kingdom of Israel, Christ perfectly fulfilled these roles, and now Christians can imitate Christ in each of these roles. We can speak truth to the world, bringing God’s Word to those who have need of it. Peter calls us “a royal priesthood,”[[6]](#footnote-6) meaning that we can worship in God’s presence together or offer up sacrifices of good works in his name. Paul says we are even to offer ourselves as a sacrifice, thereby imitating Christ’s self-sacrifice (Rom 12:1). We are also kings, raised up with Christ and seated “in the heavenly places.”[[7]](#footnote-7) He has given us spiritual authority (Matt 18:18–19), and when he returns, we will reign with him in the new heavens and the new earth (Rev 22:5).

**Suggested Questions**

* What makes Christ a better priest than the priests of the Old Testament? What makes him a better prophet than the prophets of the Old Testament?
* Describe two ways that Christians can fulfill each of the roles of prophet, priest, and king.

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “Three Things Briefly to Be Regarded in Christ—viz. His Offices of Prophet, King, and Priest” (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 2, chap. 15)  
  <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.iv.xvi.html>
* “Christ Our Great High Priest” (Martin Luther, *Assorted Sermons*)  
  <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/luther/sermons.iii.html>
* “The Triple Cure: Jesus Christ – Our Prophet, Priest, and King” (Kim Riddlebarger)  
  <https://www.monergism.com/triple-cure-jesus-christ-%E2%80%93-our-prophet-priest-and-king>

**Chapter 30 – The Work of the Holy Spirit**

**Key Terms**

blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, in the Holy Spirit, manifestation of God’s active presence

**Key Points**

* The Holy Spirit manifests God’s presence through his empowering, purifying, revealing, and unifying ministries.
* The Holy Spirit pours out God’s blessing in response to obedience and withholds God’s blessing in the face of disobedience.

**Chapter Summary**

“The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.” The Holy Spirit has been present and active in creation since the beginning (Gen 1:2), he fills the church with power now (Acts 1:8), and he is the promise for believers of what we will experience in the resurrection (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5). In describing his work, this chapter will address four aspects.

1. *The Holy Spirit purifies.* When we become Christians, the Spirit washes and sanctifies us spiritually (1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:5). After this, the Spirit continues to purify us, bringing about growth in holiness and enabling us to better reflect the character of God (Gal 5:22–23; 2 Cor 3:18).
2. *The Holy Spirit unifies.* In the Holy Spirit’s arrival at Pentecost, he filled believers (not just a few select leaders) and he established the church as a community (Acts 2:1–18, 42–47). For this reason, Paul can speak of the Spirit as giving fellowship (2 Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1–2), and he can speak of division as being opposed to the Spirit’s leading (Gal 5:18, 20). In 1 Corinthians 12:12–26, Paul points to the fact that believers share in one Spirit as evidence that we are to be united.
3. *The Holy Spirit reveals.* In Scripture, we read that the Holy Spirit revealed God’s words to the OT prophets and the NT apostles (Ezek 11:5; 2 Pet 1:21; Jn 16:13). He also reveals God’s presence with perceivable phenomena, such as prophecy, a dove, or a rushing wind (Num 11:25–26; Jn 1:32; Acts 2:2–3). He reveals God’s presence through his work within the lives of individual believers, giving them confidence in their adoption and giving them gifts for ministry (Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6). In line with this, he gives guidance to the people of God; this is sometimes very direct (Matt 4:1; Acts 8:29), and other times it involves an internal leading and awareness of his desires (Acts 15:28; Gal 5:16–26; Rom 8:14). He also reveals himself and his activity through a godlike atmosphere. For instance, we may experience an atmosphere of love and peace (Rom 5:5; 1 Cor 14:33), or we may experience a spirit of unity (Eph 4:3). The Holy Spirit also reveals himself by giving us a confident feeling of assurance (1 Jn 3:24; Rom 8:16), and he teaches the things of God to God’s people (Jn 14:26; 16:13; Eph 1:17–19).
4. *The Holy Spirit empowers.* This means that the Holy Spirit gives life to every breathing creature (Ps 104:30; Job 34:14–15) and that he gives new life to the elect (Jn 6:63; 2 Cor 3:6). He also empowers people for service. He gives skill in leadership and wisdom (Deut 34:9), in artistic endeavors (Ex 31:2–5), in judgment and battle (Judg 3:10), and in many other areas. Yet in the OT, while the Holy Spirit empowered people in many ways, he had not yet come in the powerful way that God had promised (Ezek 36:26–27). In the NT, the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus’ ministry (Lk 4:14), and at Pentecost, God poured out the Holy Spirit on the church (Acts 2:1–4). The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples (Acts 6:5, 8; Rom 15:18–19), and he gives spiritual gifts to equip all Christians for ministry (1 Cor 12:11). He also empowers prayer (Rom 8:26) and spiritual warfare (Acts 13:9–11).

Scripture makes it evident that the Holy Spirit will give or withhold God’s presence and blessing depending on how pleased he is with what he sees. For instance, the Spirit often came on Samson (Judg 13:25; 14:6) but left him after he persisted in sin (Judg 16:20). In a similar manner, the Spirit turned against Israel when they rebelled (Isa 63:10). Paul warns of this in Ephesians 4:30 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19, urging Christians not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit. Scripture also describes a deeper level of disobedience that results in death (Acts 5:3, 9) and a knowing apostasy that brings only judgment (Heb 10:26–29). Worse yet, Scripture describes a level of disobedience so severe that the Holy Spirit will never return to convict (Matt 12:31–32); this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the willful, malicious attributing of the Holy Spirit’s work to Satan.

In contrast, “in the life of Christians whose conduct is pleasing to God, the Holy Spirit will be present to bring great blessing.” He gives us gifts for ministry (1 Cor 12:11), he grants us close fellowship with him (Phil 2:1), and he provides clarity as we read Scripture (2 Cor 3:16). In fact, it is possible to be filled with the Holy Spirit to the extent that we feel what God feels and desire what God desires and minister by God’s strength (Eph 5:18; Acts 4:8; 9:17). We must depend on the Spirit in all things.

**Suggested Questions**

* What does the text mean when it says that the Holy Spirit purifies?
* Identify three ways in which the Holy Spirit empowers.

**Sing “Holy Spirit” on pg. 800**

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “How Are Believers Guided into ‘All Truth’?” (John Owen)  
  <http://www.the-highway.com/hsguided_Owen.html>
* “The Holy Spirit a Comforter” (Charles Spurgeon)  
  <http://www.nonprofitpages.com/elm/chs_comfort.htm>

**Chapter 29 – The Offices of Christ**

Fill in the Blank

1. As a priest, Jesus Christ continually \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for us, and continually brings us \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God.
2. The text states that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ also were prophets, priests, and kings.
3. Peter calls us “a chosen race, a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a holy nation,” in 1 Peter 2:9, indicating that we share the role of priest.
4. The text states that we have a “prophetic” role as we proclaim the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the world.

Multiple Choice

1. The text identifies which of the following as the book of the Bible in which the theme of Christ’s priesthood is developed extensively.
   1. Romans
   2. Hebrews
   3. Ephesians
   4. Revelation
2. Jesus told Pilate, “My \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is not of this world.”
   1. Priesthood
   2. Kingdom
   3. Prophetic ministry
   4. Person
3. Which of the following does the text identify as an example of an Old Testament prophet?
   1. Abraham
   2. Nathan
   3. Solomon
   4. All of the above
4. Which of the following was the first major theologian to apply the categories of prophet, priest, and king to the work of Christ?
   1. Martin Luther
   2. Augustine
   3. John Calvin
   4. Charles Hodge
5. In which of the following ways was Jesus far greater than the Old Testament prophets?
   1. He was more specific in his prophecies
   2. His prophecies came true more quickly
   3. He prophesied on his own authority
   4. All of the above
6. In which of the following ways does Jesus function as a priest?
   1. He speaks God’s words to us
   2. He prays for us
   3. He rules over us
   4. All of the above
7. In which of the following ways do we currently share in the kingly reign of Christ as believers?
   1. In offering up praise to God
   2. In speaking truthfully to others about God
   3. In exercising authority in the church
   4. In participating in the judgment of angels

True/False

1. In his office of priest, Christ reveals God to us and speaks God’s words to us.
2. The office of king means that Christ rules over the church.
3. The text points to Exodus 18:15–18 as a promise that God would send a prophet like Moses.
4. The text states that in the Gospels, Jesus is primarily viewed as the prophet like Moses.
5. Jesus is never called a prophet or *the* prophet in the New Testament epistles.
6. In his death on the cross, Jesus was both the sacrifice and the priest who offered the sacrifice.
7. We can best understand Jesus’ intercession for us as his act of remaining in the Father’s presence as a continual reminder that he himself has paid the penalty for all our sins.
8. We can best understand Jesus’ intercession for us as his living continually in the presence of God to make specific petitions and requests before God on our behalf.
9. We will continue to imitate Christ in these three roles even after he returns to rule the new heavens and new earth.

**Chapter 30 – The Work of the Holy Spirit**

Fill in the Blank

1. The text states that the Holy Spirit “provides a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ atmosphere when he manifests his presence.”
2. Peter proclaimed that Pentecost fulfilled the prophecy of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2:28–32.
3. The Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and this aspect of ministry includes the giving of life.

Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following is not a part of the Holy Spirit’s revealing ministry?
   1. Revealing God’s words to prophets
   2. Giving assurance of salvation
   3. Teaching truth
   4. Making prayer effective
2. “The Holy Spirit gives stronger or weaker evidence of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God according to our response to him.”
   1. Presence / Goodness
   2. Grace / Blessing
   3. Presence / Blessing
   4. Grace / Goodness
3. Paul warned the Ephesian Christians, “Do not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Holy Spirit of God in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).
   1. Grieve
   2. Resist
   3. Quench
   4. Blaspheme
4. Which of the following are instances of the use of *agō* (“to lead, bring”) in the New Testament?
   1. Disciples guiding a donkey to Jesus
   2. Andrew leading Matthew to Jesus
   3. Luke bringing Mark to Paul
   4. None of the above
5. Which of the following chapters does the text identify as treating various aspects of the Holy Spirit’s work in the world and in believers?
   1. Necessity of Scripture
   2. Prayer
   3. Man as Male and Female
   4. All of the above
6. Which of the following passages describes the Holy Spirit’s work in revelation?
   1. 1 Peter 1:21
   2. 1 Peter 2:21
   3. 2 Peter 1:21
   4. 2 Peter 2:21
7. Which of the following are elements of the atmosphere that the Holy Spirit can impart?
   1. Freedom
   2. Joy
   3. Wisdom
   4. All of the above
8. Which of the following is not cited as an example of the Holy Spirit’s empowering ministry in the Old Testament?
   1. Arousing Saul to battle against Israel’s enemies
   2. Endowing Bezalel with artistic skills
   3. The death of Pelatiah
   4. None of the above

True/False

1. The text defines the work of the Holy Spirit as “to manifest the active presence of God to the world through the church.”
2. The Holy Spirit is now the primary manifestation of the presence of the Trinity among us.
3. The text identifies the following four aspects as comprising all of the work of the Holy Spirit among us: empowering, purifying, revealing, and unifying.
4. The revealing ministry of the Holy Spirit includes his guidance of God’s people.
5. Even in the lives of unbelievers, there is some restraining influence of the Holy Spirit.
6. When the Holy Spirit is working strongly in a church to manifest God’s presence, the church community will experience harmony and overflowing love.
7. The phrase “slaying in the Spirit” only appears once in Acts.
8. From the very beginning of creation, we have an indication that the Holy Spirit’s work is to complete and sustain what God the Father has planned and God the Son has begun.
9. All our ministry, whatever form it may take, is to be done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Class 5 – The Doctrine of the Application of Redemption**

**Chapter 31 – Common Grace**

**Key Terms**

common grace, special grace

**Key Points**

* God pours many undeserved blessings on all people.
* Common grace is evident in every realm of life: physical, intellectual, moral, creative, societal, and religious.
* Common grace does not save, but it does demonstrate God’s goodness, justice, and glory.

**Chapter Summary**

Common grace is the grace of God whereby he bestows many blessings on all people, both believers and unbelievers. Common grace differs from saving grace in its results (it does not save), in its recipients (it is given to all), and in its source (it derives from the patience of the Father rather than from Christ’s atoning work).

Common grace can be seen everywhere. It is evident in the physical realm; unbelievers enjoy continued life in spite of their sin, all people enjoy God’s blessings in the sun and the rain (Matt 5:44–45), and the world is filled with beauty in spite of the curse of sin. Even unbelievers, who deserve none of this, can enjoy God’s common grace with a simple walk through the woods. Common grace is also evident in the intellectual realm. All people have a knowledge of God (Rom 1:21), and even unbelievers have the ability to grow in knowledge and to distinguish between truth and falsehood. “This means that all science and technology carried out by non-Christians is a result of common grace.”

Common grace is also evident in the moral realm. Unbelievers still have a notion within themselves of what is right and what is wrong (Rom 2:14–15). Because of this, many unbelievers will live morally approvable lives, and many will enjoy the benefits of living in a generally moral society. For instance, unbelievers benefit from living in a society that prohibits theft and murder: they are not as likely to be robbed or murdered! God also demonstrates common grace to unbelievers by allowing them to see or to experience the consequences of immoral behavior; these consequences are a warning of his coming judgment. In a similar way, common grace is evident in the societal realm, as God has instituted human government for the good of those governed (Rom 13:1–7).

Common grace is also evident in the creative realm. Many unbelievers are gifted to express themselves through representative art forms, literary endeavors, musical compositions, or athletic achievements. Common grace also appears in the religious realm. Unbelievers can enjoy the benefit of the prayers of believers (Matt 5:44; 1 Tim 2:1–2) as well as the benefit of contact with loving believers.

Common grace and special grace often interact. Common grace often benefits the recipients of special grace; believers benefit from the ability of unbelieving and believing people to build our church buildings or to bind our Bibles. Believers often bring blessing into the lives of unbelievers through their impact on society. Christians have played a leading role in eliminating slavery, in gaining political and economic rights for women, in assisting the victims of natural disasters, and many other such things. Common grace never saves a person. God’s goodness to unbelievers can predispose them toward acceptance of the gospel (indeed, Romans 2:4 says it is meant to draw them to repentance), but regeneration remains a work of special, saving grace.

Why would God shower so many blessings on undeserving sinners? First, we know that he does so to bring about the redemption of all of the elect. Peter states that God withholds final judgment so that the elect might reach repentance (2 Pet 3:9–10). Second, God gives these blessings to demonstrate his goodness and mercy. He is kind to all people, even to “the ungrateful and the evil.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Common grace also demonstrates God’s justice: he has repeatedly invited sinners to turn to him in repentance and faith, and they have continued to reject his offer of grace. Finally, common grace is another means by which God demonstrates his glory. All men and women reflect the glory of God as they use his gifts to exercise dominion over creation.

We must remember that common grace will not save a person, and those individuals who seem to enjoy significant amounts of blessing in this life will not necessarily be saved. They must trust in Jesus Christ, or they too will suffer condemnation. When unbelievers do good things, we must not slander these deeds as evil. For instance, if a wealthy atheist donates significant amounts of money to eradicate polio, we should thank God for his common grace in that act. Finally, we should respond to the doctrine of common grace with thanksgiving and praise; God’s grace is abundant even in the lives of those who have rejected him!

**Suggested Questions**

* The text listed several realms in which God’s common grace is evident. Identify three and give a couple of examples for each of these realms.
* How does common grace demonstrate God’s justice? How does it demonstrate his glory?

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* *The Problem of Good* (Scott Kauffmann)  
  <http://208.106.253.109/essays/the-problem-of-good.aspx>
* “Common Grace: An Irenic Proposal” (Esther Meek)  
  <https://commongroundsonline.typepad.com/common_grounds_online/2006/04/common_grace_an.html>
* “The Good Elements in False Religions” (Johannes G. Vos)  
  <http://www.the-highway.com/articleFeb08.html>

**Chapter 32 – Election and Reprobation**

**Key Terms**

determinism, election, fatalism, foreknowledge, freedom of inclination, freedom of voluntary choice, predestination, reprobation

**Key Points**

* In his sovereign good pleasure, God has chosen some for salvation, and in sorrow, he has passed over others.
* Election is not based on any good in us; God does not elect based on foreknowledge of our faith.

**Chapter Summary**

The *ordo salutis* begins with election: “an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign good pleasure.” Several passages in the NT affirm that God ordains beforehand those who will be saved. Paul speaks of God foreknowing and predestining, then calling, justifying, and glorifying (Rom 8:28–30). Luke writes of Gentiles who believed and says they were ordained for eternal life (Act 13:48). Paul describes believers as chosen before the foundations of the world and predestined for adoption according to God’s purpose (Eph 1:3–12). Peter calls us God’s elect and a chosen race (1 Pet 1:1; 2:9). John speaks of God’s enemies as those whose names were not written in the Book of Life before creation (Rev 13:7–8; 17:8). The doctrine of election appears throughout the NT.

The NT teaches election as a comfort for believers. Paul reminds his readers of election so that they will trust that God is working all things out for their good (Rom 8:28–30). It also teaches election as a reason to worship the Lord. In Ephesians 1:5–6, Paul says that we were chosen “to the praise of his glorious grace.” Moreover, it teaches election as a reason for evangelism. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:10, “I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.” In other words, he expects success in evangelism because God has ordained some to salvation.

Some object that election turns us into robots; they hold that if God elects, our choices have no significance, and our universe is simply spinning on its cogs like a machine. Yet the NT consistently portrays salvation as something worked by a personal God in a relationship with persons. There is no coldness in it (Eph 1:5; Ezek 33:11). Jesus invites all people to come to him (Matt 11:28), and he says that those who reject him have done so out of their own hardness of heart (Jn 5:40; Matt 23:37).

Others have argued that God looks forward and sees saving faith in a person’s heart and that he chooses to save them because of that; they claim he saves because he foreknows a person’s faith. However, when the Scriptures mention God’s foreknowledge, they speak of him not merely as knowing facts about people but as knowing individuals in a personal, relational manner (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 8:3; Gal 4:9). Additionally, when the Scriptures speak of election, they do not state that God chose us because of our faith or any other good thing about us. For instance, Romans 9:11–13 says that God chose Jacob before he had done anything either good or bad. Repeatedly, Paul emphasizes grace as the reason God chose to save us (Rom 11:5–6; Eph 1:5–6; 2:8–9; 2 Tim 1:9). In fact, if we affirm election on the basis of faith, we begin the steady slide into salvation by merit. We would be teaching that we have saved ourselves by having faith rather than that God has saved us by his grace for his own good purposes (Eph 1:5–6). Moreover, if God elects because he foresaw our faith, this does nothing to address the issue of fatalism. If God knows some event will happen in the future, then it is as certain as if he had determined it himself. Our destinies remain determined, but we must conclude some other, impersonal force determines them. This is no good. God elects simply because he desired to love us.

Still others have objected to election along some of the following lines. Some hold that election means we have no choice in whether or not to accept Christ. However, as we read in chapter 16, God can work through our desires to bring about his purposes; he can cause us to choose Christ freely. Some claim that this means that our choices are not actual choices. Yet if God has said that our choices are real, then they are real. In the same manner, some have objected that election makes us puppets, but God has created us with a real will and the ability to make real choices. Some have argued that election gives unbelievers no chance to believe, but the record of Scripture is that people choose to reject Jesus (Jn 5:40; 8:43–44; Matt 23:37). Furthermore, Paul answers this objection in Romans 9:20, “But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, ‘Why have you made me like this?’”

To the objection that election is unfair, we can respond that God had no need to save anyone. He made no provision for the salvation of fallen angels, and he need not save any of us (2 Pet 2:4). Again, Paul reminds us that the creature has no right to question the Creator’s choices or justice (Rom 9:20–24). God can do whatever he desires with his creation. Some may object that Scripture describes God as desiring to save everyone (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9). Yet, from the Reformed perspective, God’s revealed will (what he commands) is distinct from his hidden will (what will happen); from the Arminian perspective, God desires our freedom more than he desires to save everyone. In other words, the Reformed system holds that God’s glory is his highest value, and it is shown in election (Rom 9:22–23). The Arminian system holds that man’s freedom is God’s highest value. On balance, the Reformed perspective has much greater biblical support.

“Reprobation is the sovereign decision of God before creation to pass over some persons, in sorrow deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins, and thereby to manifest his justice.” This is the most difficult doctrine in Scripture, yet it is something Scripture clearly teaches (Jude 4; Rom 9:17–23). While election is presented as a reason to rejoice, reprobation is presented as something that brings sorrow to God; it should cause us sorrow as well (Ezek 33:11; Rom 9:1–4).

The doctrine of election should cause believers to feel a great sense of humility and confidence in God alone. We are saved only by God’s grace, and for this we should praise him eternally.

**Suggested Questions**

* Why does this text deny election on the basis of God’s foreknowing a person’s faith?
* The text identifies three ways that Scripture encourages us to view election. What are these?

**Sing “Amazing Grace”**

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind but now I see

Was Grace that taught my heart to fear  
And Grace, my fears relieved  
How precious did that Grace appear  
The hour I first believed

Through many dangers, toils and snares  
We have already come  
T'was Grace that brought us safe thus far  
And Grace will lead us home  
And Grace will lead us home

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost but now am found  
Was blind but now I see

Was blind, but now I see

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “The Salvation of All Men” (John Calvin)  
  <https://www.the-highway.com/Salvation_of_All.html>
* “For He Chose Us in Him before the Creation of the World” (Kim Riddlebarger)  
  <http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/for-he-chose-us-in-him/>
* “What Is Election” (Sam Storms)  
  <https://www.samstorms.org/all-articles/post/what-is-election/>

**Chapter 31 – Common Grace**

Fill in the Blank

* 1. The grace of God that brings people to salvation is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ grace.
  2. The grace of God by which he gives all people innumerable blessings is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ grace.

Multiple Choice

* 1. Which of the following are not stated as a reason for God’s common grace?
     1. To demonstrate God’s goodness
     2. To demonstrate God’s justice
     3. To demonstrate God’s moral law
     4. None of the above
  2. Which of the following are not stated as examples of God’s common grace?
     1. The beauty of flowers
     2. Science and technology
     3. Genuine repentance
     4. Human government
  3. In response to common grace, the text says “we must be careful not to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the good things that unbelievers do as totally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
     1. Reject / evil
     2. Treat / worthless
     3. Accept / good
     4. Praise / worthwhile
  4. The text states that cooking is an example of God’s common grace found within the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ realm.
     1. Societal
     2. Creative
     3. Intellectual
     4. Physical
  5. Common grace is different from saving grace in:
     1. Its results
     2. Its recipients
     3. Its source
     4. All of the above
  6. In Matthew 5:44–45, when encouraging us to love our enemies, Jesus identifies which of the following as evidence that God shows common grace to unbelievers?
     1. The sun and rain
     2. Food and gladness
     3. Birds and bread
     4. None of the above
  7. Which of the following does the chapter identify as evidence of God’s common grace in the intellectual realm?
     1. The inward sense of right and wrong that all people have
     2. The proclamation of the gospel
     3. The inner sense of God’s existence that all people have
     4. None of the above
  8. In the societal realm, God’s common grace is demonstrated in:
     1. The institution of the family
     2. Public schools
     3. Judicial systems
     4. All of the above
  9. In which of the following ways can we participate in showing God’s common grace to unbelievers?
     1. Praying for them
     2. Engaging in scientific research
     3. Political activity
     4. All of the above

True/False

* 1. The text identifies two differences between common and saving grace: the results and the recipients.
  2. Common grace is a direct result of Christ’s atoning work.
  3. Unbelievers continue to remain alive only because of God’s common grace.
  4. The text states that God gives common grace in order to redeem those who will be saved.
  5. Unbelievers deserve to enjoy none of the beauty in creation.
  6. Many technological advances brought about by non-Christians are a result of common grace, though some are clearly not.
  7. Part of common grace is the suffering experienced in this life as a consequence of marital infidelity, laziness, and theft.
  8. It is just for God to delay the punishment of sin.
  9. Unbelievers do not often receive more common grace than believers.

**Chapter 32 – Election and Reprobation**

Fill in the Blank

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the term used by the text to identify an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved. (Not “predestination.”)
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is used by the text to identify the sovereign decision of God before creation to pass over some persons, in sorrow deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins.
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a system in which our choices and decisions make no real difference because things will turn out as previously ordained.
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the idea that acts, events, and decisions are the inevitable results of some prior condition or decision that is independent of human will.
5. The list of events in which God applies salvation to us in the specific sequence in which they are believed to occur in our lives is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following are included in the *ordo salutis* listed in the chapter?
   1. Evangelism
   2. Adoption
   3. Resurrection
   4. All of the above
2. Clark Pinnock argues that Romans 8:28–30 does not speak of predestination to salvation but of believers being predestined to:
   1. Adoption
   2. Resurrection bodies
   3. Christ-likeness
   4. None of the above
3. How does the New Testament present the teaching of election?
   1. As a comfort
   2. As a reason to praise God
   3. As an encouragement to share the gospel
   4. All of the above
4. When Romans 8:29 speaks of God’s foreknowledge, it speaks of God’s foreknowledge of:
   1. Facts
   2. Faith
   3. Persons
   4. Perseverance
5. Which of the following theologians held that God elected Christ and all people in Christ?
   1. Karl Barth
   2. Leon Morris
   3. Jack Cottrell
   4. Cornelius Van Til

True/False

1. The New Testament presents election as an encouragement to evangelism.
2. Romans 8:28–30 tells us that God chose us in Christ “before the foundation of the world.”
3. Election is based on God’s knowing of our faith in advance.
4. It would be fair for God to send every person to hell.
5. The text affirms that according to God’s revealed will, he desires to save everyone.
6. Reformed theologians generally use double-predestination to talk about both election and reprobation.
7. Paul indicates in Romans 11 that all of Israel is elect.
8. Predestination based on foreknowledge of a person’s faith preserves the free choice of individuals.
9. Scripture repeatedly affirms that people remain in unbelief because they are unwilling to come to God.
10. The text states that the dispute between the supralapsarian and infralapsarian positions is not very edifying.

**Class 6 – The Doctrine of the Church**

**Chapter 51 – Worship**

**Key Term**

worship

**Key Points**

* The church must worship God with our voices, in spirit and in truth.
* Worship will result in joy, edification, sanctification, and spiritual closeness with God.
* Churches must commit prayer and energy to enabling true worship of God, as this is the purpose for which all people have been created.

**Chapter Summary**

“Worship is the activity of glorifying God in his presence with our voices and hearts.” Worship should characterize our entire lives, but we are called to devote ourselves to singing God’s praises and adoring him in our hearts (Col 3:16). God assembled his people at the exodus for the sake of receiving their worship (Ex 7:16), and he organized Israel’s calendar around festivals of worship. In Isaiah 43:6–7, we read that God created us for his glory, and in Ephesians 1:12, we read that God has called us to live for “the praise of [Christ’s] glory.” Only God is worthy of worship (Rev 22:8–9), and we are called to worship him “in everything” (1 Pet 4:11).

True worship of God will bring about several results.

1. We experience joy and delight in God, and we enjoy a foretaste of heaven’s pleasures. The psalmist declares, “Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise!... For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.”[[9]](#footnote-9)
2. God takes delight in us and in our worship; we bring joy and delight to God’s heart (Isa 62:3–5; Zeph 3:17). The fact that God delights in our worship should encourage us.
3. We draw spiritually near to God (Heb 10:19, 22). Genuine worship actually takes place in God’s presence; in worship, we are joining with the voices of the angels and the spirits of believers.
4. God draws near to us as well (Jas 4:8). As God made himself known among his people during the dedication of Solomon’s temple, he will continue to make himself known among his people when he is pleased with the praise that they offer.
5. We are edified by God. God meets us in worship, he ministers to our hearts, he builds up our faith, and he refreshes our souls (1 Pet 2:4–5). In fact, during worship we “will often experience an intensification of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.”
6. We can expect God’s enemies—the demonic forces opposed to the gospel—to flee.
7. “Unbelievers will from time to time have the secrets of their heart disclosed, and they will fall on their face and ‘worship God and declare that God is really among you’ (1 Cor 14:25; cf. Acts 2:11).”

Worship is our purpose, and as such it is eternally valuable. Paul instructs us to live wisely and to make the most of the time we have by filling that time with “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord.”[[10]](#footnote-10) In other words, if we desire to do the will of God, we should worship him. His eternal delight in our worship will never fade.

Genuine worship must take place “in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:23–24). We cannot simply worship God physically but must worship him with our spirits. A genuine attitude of worship will come over us, and we will respond in true, spiritual worship when we begin to grasp God’s character and works. Unfortunately, many evangelical churches do not have true worship until after the message has drawn their hearts and minds to consider the glories of God, at which point the service ends. It is critical that we evaluate our services and times of worship to make our worship more effective. Pastors and elders will need to commit themselves to prayer for God’s blessing on worship and to teaching on the nature of worship in God’s presence. Believers will need to pursue reconciliation and unity with the other members of the body, and the church must jointly pursue personal holiness. Congregations should seek to create atmospheres that are conducive to focused times of worship, and they should seek songs that allow them to express their hearts effectively.

The author includes the following personal observations and recommendations regarding worship. First, it is important to pursue an atmosphere of worship and actively avoid a “performance mentality.” The aural sensitivities of worshipers change with age, and volume levels that may be comfortable for younger ears will be physically painful for older worshippers, and it is important for all to be able to worship together. In corporate worship, a key word is corporate—in some sad instances the worship leaders are not leading others in worship, but are worshiping while others watch. This should be avoided, as should songs that are hard for many people to sing, or too many unfamiliar songs. There is significant blessing in the older hymns and worship songs, and these should be incorporated when possible. Finally, it is helpful to ensure that the theological content of the songs used is varied in theme over the course of the year, and that it is always faithful to Scripture.

**Suggested Questions**

* Describe three benefits of true worship.
* According to this chapter, what motivates true, spiritual worship?

**Sing “O Church Arise”**

O Church Arise and put your armour on  
Hear the call of Christ our Captain  
For now the weak can say that they are strong  
In the strength that God has given  
With shield of faith and belt of truth  
We'll stand against the devil's lies  
An army bold whose battle-cry is Love  
Reaching out to those in darkness

Our call to war to love the captive soul  
But to rage against the captor  
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole  
We will fight with faith and valour  
When faced with trials on every side  
We know the outcome is secure  
And Christ will have the prize for which He died  
An inheritance of nations

Come see the cross where love and mercy meet  
As the Son of God is stricken  
Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet  
For the Conqueror has risen  
And as the stone is rolled away  
And Christ emerges from the grave  
This victory march continues till the day  
Every eye and heart shall see Him

So Spirit come put strength in every stride  
Give grace for every hurdle  
That we may run with faith to win the prize  
Of a servant good and faithful  
As saints of old still line the way  
Retelling triumphs of His grace  
We hear their calls and hunger for the day  
When with Christ we stand in glory

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “Evangelistic Worship” (Tim Keller)  
  <https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/evangelistic-worship/>
* “The Whole Earth Is Full of His Glory: The Recovery of Authentic Worship” (R. Albert Mohler Jr.)  
  <https://equip.sbts.edu/publications/journals/journal-of-theology/sbjt-24-winter-1998/the-whole-earth-is-full-of-his-glory-the-recovery-of-authentic-worship/>
* “Transformational Worship: Encountering God in Ways that Change Us” (Rory Noland)  
  <https://transformingcenter.org/2006/07/transformational-worship-encountering-god-in-ways-that-change-us/>

**Chapter 51 – Worship**

Fill in the Blank

1. Worship is the act of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God in his presence with our voices and hearts.

Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following is listed as a result of genuine worship?
   1. God delights in us
   2. God draws near to us
   3. God ministers to us
   4. All of the above
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tells us that true worship is done “in spirit and truth.”
   1. Ephesians 5:17–20
   2. John 4:23–24
   3. Hebrews 12:18–24
   4. None of the above
3. Ephesians 5:17–20 tells us that worship is a way to make the most of the:
   1. Situation
   2. Fellowship
   3. Time
   4. None of the above
4. Edmund Clowney points out that the “immediate goal” of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was God’s gathering his people for worship.
   1. Flood
   2. Exodus
   3. Ten Commandments
   4. Exile
5. “God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of worship and we are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
   1. Worthy / worthless
   2. Worthy / not
   3. Worthy / too
   4. Worthy / to a lesser degree
6. Which of the following is not listed as a result of genuine worship?
   1. The Lord’s enemies flee
   2. Unbelievers know they are in God’s presence
   3. We draw near to God
   4. We are entertained
7. Which of the following does the text warn against as hindering effective and genuine worship?
   1. Short services with too many activities
   2. An emphasis on personal holiness
   3. A liturgical model for worship
   4. All of the above
8. In the last section of the chapter, the author identifies some personal observations and preferences. Which of the following does he mention as a difficulty for highly trained musicians?
   1. Maintaining a comfortable volume for all
   2. Avoiding a performance mentality
   3. Limiting distractions
   4. Leading people from multiple congregations

True/False

1. The primary reason God called us into the assembly of the church is so that we might worship him.
2. One result of worship is that the Lord’s enemies will flee.
3. Hebrews 12 tells us that when we worship God, we approach the heavenly Jerusalem.
4. Paul tells us, “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”
5. Not everything the church does should be considered worship.
6. The text states that it would be inappropriate to frequently reevaluate the various elements of our Sunday services.
7. For genuine and effective worship, it is important to have a physical setting conducive to worship.
8. The author personally recommends a shift away from using any hymns older than the congregants.
9. Worship is doing the will of God.
10. New covenant worship prepares us for worship in the presence of God.
11. We truly worship when we see who God is and respond to Him.

**Class 7 – The Doctrine of the Future**

**Chapter 54 –** **The Return of Christ: When and How?**

**Key Terms**

eschatology, general eschatology, imminent, *maranatha*, *parousia*, personal eschatology, preterism, second coming of Christ

**Key Points**

* Christ will return in a visible, audible, physical, personal manner, but we cannot know when he will return.
* It is possible but unlikely that all of the signs preceding Christ’s return have been fulfilled.
* Full preterism should not be “considered to be a legitimate evangelical position.”

**Chapter Summary**

In contrast to the personal eschatology of chapters 41 and 42, the remaining chapters will focus on general eschatology. This chapter will address Christ’s second coming by first detailing the aspects on which evangelicals agree and then exploring one area of disagreement: the timing of his return.

All evangelicals agree that Christ is going to return suddenly in a visible, audible, physical manner (Matt 24:44; Heb 9:28; 1 Thess 4:16). His return dominates the message of the NT, and the passages describing it cannot be read as implying a mere spiritual return (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16).

In addition, evangelicals agree that we ought to eagerly await the Lord’s return (Rev 22:20; Titus 2:12–13). Unfortunately, as believers get caught up in the cares and worries of the world, this deep longing decreases; we can find a helpful indicator of our own spiritual health in the degree to which we long for Christ’s appearing. Even as we anticipate his return, we should still commit ourselves to long-term projects; we have no idea when he will return, but we can live in a state of readiness and be engaged in using the talents that he has given us (Matt 24:44; 25:15–30).

Evangelicals also agree that we cannot know when Christ will return (Matt 24:44; 25:13). Jesus declared that he himself does not know (Mk 13:32–33)! Hence, we can discount any attempts to set dates or years or seasons as incorrect and pointless. Various religious groups (e.g., Jehovah’s Witnesses) have made predictions, and every single one has been wrong. What is worse, many people who believe these predictions begin to withdraw from their lives and ministries, and great harm can result in the lives of these individuals.

All evangelicals agree that Christ’s return will result in judgment on the wicked, reward for the people of God, and eternal life with Christ for believers. The triune God will reign and receive worship forever, and all sorrow and suffering and sin will be no more.

Christians disagree over the nature and length of the great tribulation and the millennium, whether Christ will return before or after the millennium, whether there will be a secret pretribulational rapture of believers, and how God will bring about the salvation of Israel. Even so, people with these various views still affirm the inerrancy and authority of Scripture. These eschatological questions remain of secondary importance, though continued, gracious study of them will help the church to gain greater unity.

The question on which evangelicals disagree is this: Could Christ return at any time? An overwhelming number of passages in Scripture predict a sudden, unexpected return.[[11]](#footnote-11) If we had no NT passages about signs preceding Christ’s return, we would conclude that the answer to our question is, “Yes, absolutely.” Was John wrong when he prophesied that the Lord would return soon (Rev 22:7, 12, 20)? Did Jesus wrongfully teach that he would return quickly after his ascension? None of the passages necessitate this interpretation, and John likely spoke with the same prophetic foreshortening common to all biblical prophets. In any case, the Lord has his own view of time (2 Pet 3:8–9).

In spite of the passages mentioned above, several other texts describe signs and events that must come first. The gospel must be preached to all nations (Mk 13:10). A great tribulation must take place (Mk 13:7–8, 19–20). Many false prophets must arise with signs and wonders (Mk 13:22). The skies must fall apart (Mk 13:24–25). The Antichrist must arise (2 Thess 2:1–10). Israel must experience a great turning to Christ (Rom 11:12, 25–26). In fact, if we did not have the NT passages describing Christ’s sudden return, we would conclude that the answer to our question is, “No, not yet.”

As we look at these passages, we have two options. We could say that Christ could not return at any moment. However, this view seems to quash the force of Christ’s warnings to live in readiness for his return, and it treats the signs in a manner that decreases rather than increases our eager expectation. This does not seem to be Christ’s intent (Lk 21:28). Our other option is to say that Christ could return at any moment, but then we must reconcile the apparent tension in these passages. We could decide that Scripture describes two separate returns—a secret rapture of believers and a later victorious return—but the passages do not clearly teach this. We could say that every sign has been fulfilled and Christ could return right now, but this is not convincing on a review of the passages. Or we could say, and this text will affirm, that “it is unlikely but possible that the signs have already been fulfilled.”

In fact, the gospel may have been preached to all nations (Col 1:5–6, 23), but many tribes and language groups still have not heard of Christ. The great tribulation may have occurred during the Roman siege of Jerusalem (AD 66–70), yet Christ describes a greater tribulation than anything that has ever taken place or ever will (Mk 13:19–20), and the last century has produced countless disasters that exceed that of the Jewish War. Many false prophets may have arisen and performed signs and wonders, but Christ’s words seem to predict a widespread and popularly convincing manifestation of this activity. The language used to speak of the heavens falling apart may metaphorically refer to the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70), but Christ speaks of his own, literal return in these heavens; it seems better to treat them as real meteorological occurrences. Nero (or Hitler, or Stalin) could have been the Antichrist, but he died. Israel may have experienced the promised, extensive turning to Christ for salvation, but it is doubtful, and some have argued that Romans 9–11 does not promise any such large, future salvation for Israel.

On review, apart from the signs in the skies, it is possible though unlikely that these signs have already been fulfilled. Moreover, the heavens can certainly shatter just before Christ’s return. Therefore, we can say that it is possible though unlikely that Christ could return at any moment. We cannot know, and we must be ready.

Preterism is the view that when Jesus speaks of “this generation” in Matthew 24:34, he is speaking of those alive at that time. As a consequence, preterists believe all of the previously discussed eschatological events had to happen, including Jesus’ return, within a very short window of time. Thus, preterists hold that Christ did return invisibly in AD 70 at the destruction of the temple. In response, there are several other possible understandings of the phrase “this generation.” Additionally, the notion of a secret and invisible second coming runs counter to Christ’s words (Matt 24:26–27, 30–31; Lk 21:27) and the words of the apostles (1 Thess 4:16–17; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 1:7).

**Suggested Questions**

* What are some signs that must take place before Christ returns?
* What are three aspects of Christ’s return about which all evangelicals agree?
* Why does the author reject full preterism as an illegitimate evangelical position?

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “The Second Coming of Christ” (Louis Berkhof)  
  <https://www.monergism.com/second-coming-christ>
* “The Second Coming of Christ” (Charles Spurgeon)  
  <https://theologue.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/thesecondcomingofchrist-chspurgeon.pdf>
* “10 Things You Should Know About the Second Coming of Christ” (Sam Storms)  
  <https://www.samstorms.org/enjoying-god-blog/post/10-things-you-should-know-about-the-second-coming-of-christ>

**Chapter 55 – The Millennium**

**Key Terms**

amillennialism, dispensational premillennialism, great tribulation, historic premillennialism, midtribulation rapture, millennium, postmillennialism, posttribulational premillennialism, posttribulation rapture, premillennialism, pretribulational premillennialism, pretribulation rapture, rapture

**Key Points**

* Scripture seems to teach that Christ will establish a literal, earthly, millennial reign at his return.
* Scripture does not clearly teach that Christ will rapture believers before the great tribulation.

**Chapter Summary**

Revelation 20:1–10 describes a millennial reign of Christ, and the church has held varying views on the nature and length of this “millennium.” Amillennialism interprets this passage as a description of the church age, in which Christ has greatly reduced Satan’s power and during which believers who have died now reign with Christ in heaven. This age will continue until Christ returns, resurrects the dead, glorifies believers, and judges the wicked. Postmillennialism holds that because of the spread of the church and considerable Christian influence on society, the church age will transition into a millennial period of peace and righteousness. This millennial period will last for a long time, and then Christ will return, resurrect the dead, glorify believers, and judge the wicked. In essence, postmillennialism maintains that the gospel has power to change lives and transform societies.

Historic premillennialism asserts that at the end of the church age, and after a period of severe tribulation, Christ will return to initiate his millennial kingdom. Dead believers will rise again, all believers will receive resurrection bodies, and all will reign with him. Satan will be bound until the end of this time, then he will be released; he will gather together living unbelievers, and they will attempt to battle against Christ. Christ will crush his enemies, resurrect the wicked for judgment, and lead his people into the eternal state. Pretribulational premillennialism holds to this same series of events, but it argues that Christ will secretly gather his people to himself at the beginning (or in the middle) of the period of great tribulation. After seven years of tribulation, Christ will return to the earth to establish his millennial reign. This view remains popular among dispensationalists who desire to preserve a distinction between the church and Israel.

Amillennialists present several arguments: (1) only one, obscure passage (Rev 20:1–6) seems to teach a literal, future millennial reign, (2) Scripture only seems to teach one bodily resurrection (Jn 5:28–29; Dan 12:2), (3) it seems impossible that glorified believers and sinners could live together in the millennium, (4) it seems impossible for the wicked to persist in sin in the face of the glorified Jesus Christ, (5) a millennial reign has no clear purpose, and (6) Scripture seems to describe the resurrection, judgment, and re-creation of the universe as occurring at the same time. In response to the first, Scripture needs to state something only once for it to be true, and the passage is straightforward from a premillennial viewpoint; and in fact, many other passages seem to teach a future period greater than the current age but still short of the glory of the eternal state (Isa 11; Zech 14:5–21). To answer the second, Scripture does not teach only one resurrection; in fact, Revelation 20:6 speaks of “the firstresurrection,” implying a second. The other passages (Jn 5:28–29; Dan 12:2) do not rule out the possibility of two resurrections. As for the third argument, Jesus did live in his glorified body for forty days among sinners, as did many OT saints (Matt 27:53). To answer the fourth, even one of Jesus’ disciples persisted in sin in the face of Jesus’ ministry; sin is not rational. In response to the fifth, God may have many purposes for such a millennium, such as demonstrating his righteousness and his design for earthly society. Ultimately, amillennialism cannot adequately incorporate Revelation 20.

Postmillennialists also present several arguments: (1) the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20) seems to teach that the whole world will eventually fall under the power of the gospel, (2) parables of the kingdom of God point toward this same likely dominion of the gospel, and (3) the world seems to be becoming more Christian. The first and second arguments cannot hold because Christ never indicated the extent of the spread of the gospel or the kingdom. We can agree that they will spread and grow, but we cannot know that they will triumph over the whole world. To answer the third claim, we need only to point out that the world is also becoming much more evil; in fact, many passages in Scripture deny the core of the postmillennial viewpoint (Matt 7:13–14; 24:21–30; 2 Tim 3:1–5).

This text affirms historic premillennialism. In support of this view: (1) the OT contains several passages describing a period that surpasses this current age but still contains some sin, rebellion, and death (Isa 11; 65:20; Zech 14:5–21; Ps 72:8–14), (2) the NT also seems to describe the millennial period in passages other than Revelation 20 (Rev 2:26–27; 1 Cor 15:23–25), (3) the binding of Satan seems to imply a greater restriction of his activity than anything we now experience (cf. Rev 20:2–3 with 1 Pet 5:8), and (4) Revelation 20:4–5 most likely describes resurrected believers reigning in a future kingdom after the advent of the Beast (Rev 13:1–18).

Will Christ secretly return and rapture believers to himself prior to the great tribulation? Those who hold such a view maintain that it would be inappropriate for believers to remain on earth during the outpouring of God’s wrath, that Jesus promises a rescue in Revelation 3:10, that Christ’s victorious arrival at the end of the tribulation leaves no enemies on earth during the millennium, and that this view makes his imminent return possible. In response, not all of the suffering during the tribulation results from God’s wrath, Jesus’ words to the church in Philadelphia do not apply to the universal body of Christ at some future date, Christ can defeat his enemies without actually killing all of them, and other views also allow for Christ’s return to take place at any moment. In fact, against the pretribulational view, we should note that the NT never clearly promises a secret rapture. First Thessalonians 4:16–17 instead seems to describe a very public gathering of believers. Moreover, some passages directly link the end of the tribulation and the Lord’s return (cf. Matt 24:29–31 with 1 Thess 4:16 and 1 Cor 15:51–52). Finally, the NT does not explicitly teach that Christ will return twice.

**Suggested Question**

* Identify two reasons from the text for rejecting a pretribulational, secret rapture of believers.

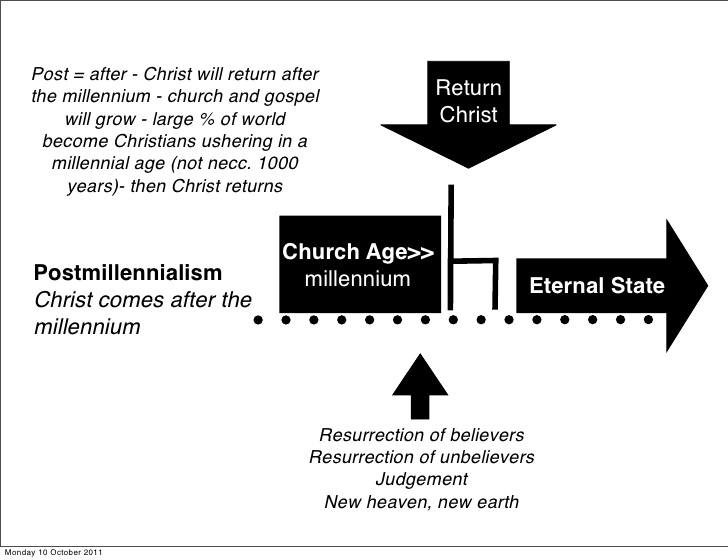
**Sing “Jesus Shall Reign Where’er the Sun” on pg. 1402**

**Other Media Sources/Websites**

* “The End of History—The Moral Necessity of Eschatology” (R. Albert Mohler Jr.)  
  <https://albertmohler.com/2008/06/09/the-end-of-history-the-moral-necessity-of-eschatology>
* “Three Millennial Views: A Chart” (The Reformed Reader)  
  <http://www.reformedreader.org/mchart.htm>

## Rev 20:1-10 is the present church Return age - those reigning with Christ include peo...Amillennialism

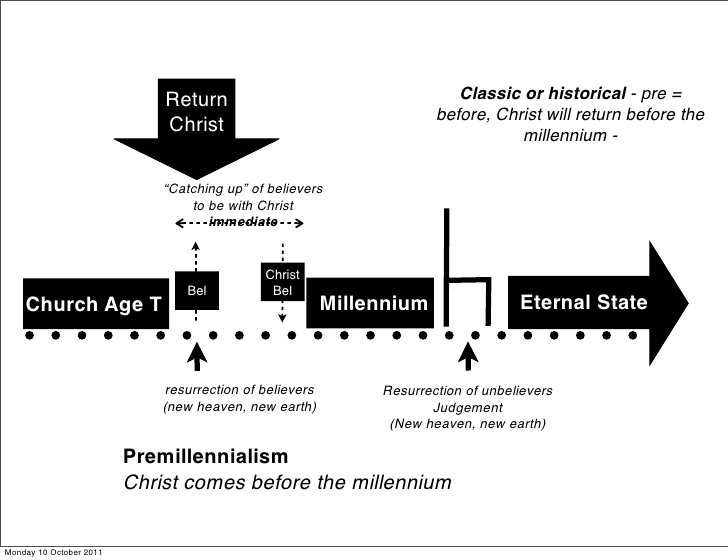
## Postmillennialism

According to this view, the progress of the gospel and the growth of the church will gradually increase, so that a larger and larger proportion of the world’s population will be Christians. There will be significant Christian influences on society. Society will more and more function according to God’s standards, and gradually the “millennial age” of peace and righteousness will occur on the earth. At the end of this period, Christ will return, all will be raised, the final judgment will occur, and there will be a new heaven and new earth.

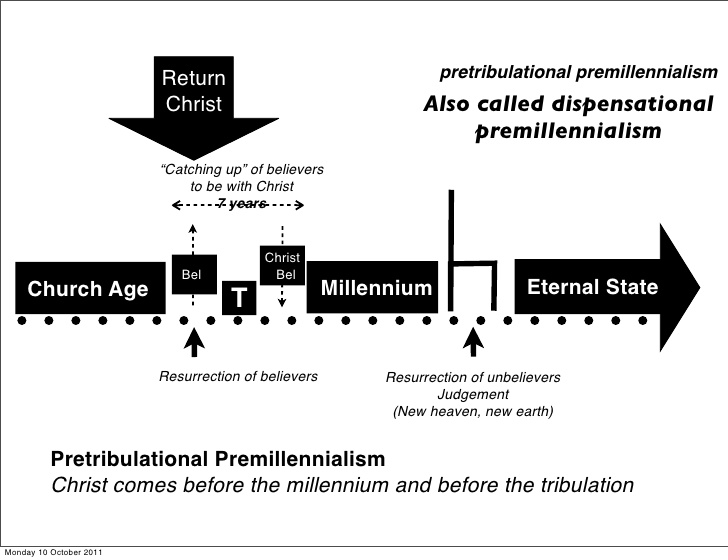
## Premillennialism

### Classic or Historical Premillennialism

According to this view, the present church age will continue until the time of the great tribulation (T). After the time of tribulation, Christ will return to the earth, believers who have dies will be raised, and will meet the Lord in the air. Christ will reign on the earth for a thousand years. Satan will be bound and have no influence during these thousand years. At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be released to be finally defeated and cast into the abyss. The unrighteous dead will be raised. The final judgment will occur and the new heaven and new earth established for eternity.



### Pretribulation Premillennialism (or Dispensational Premillennialism)

This view holds that the Lord will secretly return and the righteous dead will be raised and all living believers will be taken out of the world. This will be followed by seven years of tribulation. The Jewish people will be saved. At the end of the tribulation, Christ returns publically with all believers to reign on earth for a thousand years. At the end of the thousand years, the unrighteous dead will be raised, Satan will be finally defeated, the final judgment will occur, and the new heaven and new earth will be established for eternity.

**Chapter 54 – The Return of Christ: When and How?**

Fill in the Blank

1. The study of “last things” or future events (from the Greek *eschatos*) is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is another name for the “man of lawlessness” who will cause great suffering.
3. The return of Christ is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which means that it could happen at any time.
4. The great \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a period of great hardship and suffering prior to the return of Christ.

Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following is not true of the second coming of Christ?
   1. It will be visible
   2. It will be spiritual
   3. It will be sudden
   4. It will be personal
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ means “Our Lord, come!”
   1. Parousia
   2. Rapture
   3. Maranatha
   4. Immanuel
3. Which of the following passages indicate that Christ’s return is imminent?
   1. Mark 13:32–33
   2. 1 Peter 4:7
   3. Revelation 22:7
   4. All of the above
4. The text states that, though it’s unlikely, all of the signs that precede Christ’s return have possibly been fulfilled, except for:
   1. Preaching of the gospel to all nations
   2. False prophets working signs and wonders
   3. Powerful signs in the heavens
   4. A great tribulation
5. Which of the following holds that Christ returned in AD 70?
   1. Preterism
   2. Partial preterism
   3. Postmillennialism
   4. All of the above
6. Which of the following creeds rejected the idea that Christ had already returned?
   1. The Apostles Creed
   2. The Nicene Creed
   3. The Westminster Confession
   4. All of the above
7. Who initially proposed the idea of two separate returns of Christ?
   1. Augustine
   2. John Calvin
   3. John Nelson Darby
   4. John MacArthur

True/False

1. It is unlikely but possible that Christ could return as you’re filling out this quiz.
2. The “man of lawlessness” will appear before the return of Christ.
3. It shows a lack of faith in the future appearing of Christ for a Christian to commit to a long-term project.
4. All evangelicals agree that Christ’s return will result in judgment of unbelievers.
5. It is possible that the massive return of Jewish people to Christ as predicted in Romans 9–11 has taken place.
6. Both preterism and partial preterism fall outside of the bounds of Christian orthodoxy.
7. 1 John tells us that many antichrists have already come.
8. We should be very cautious in evaluating the claims of anyone who says that they know specifically when Jesus is coming back.
9. In his letter to the Colossian church, Paul says the gospel has spread through the whole world, indicating that in at least a representative sense, the gospel has been preached to all nations.

**Chapter 55 – The Millennium**

Fill in the Blank

1. The view that there will be no literal thousand-year bodily reign of Christ on earth is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The view that Christ will return to the earth after an age of peace and righteousness on earth is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The view that Christ will return to the earth after the tribulation and then establish a millennial reign, a view that does not hold to the idea of a secret rapture of the saints, is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. The view that Christ will secretly call believers to himself and then, after the tribulation, return to reign on earth for a thousand years is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. The view that Christ will rescue believers from the portion of the tribulation that is marked by the wrath of God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following views holds that there is more than one resurrection?
   1. Amillennialism
   2. Postmillennialism
   3. Premillennialism
   4. All of the above
2. Which of the following views holds that Satan is currently bound and unable to deceive the nations?
   1. Amillennialism
   2. Postmillennialism
   3. Premillennialism
   4. All of the above
3. Which of the following views points to the parable of the mustard seed and the leaven as evidence in its favor?
   1. Amillennialism
   2. Postmillennialism
   3. Premillennialism
   4. All of the above
4. Which of the following views holds that Christ’s glorious reign will make it such that no one could persist in sin?
   1. Amillennialism
   2. Postmillennialism
   3. Premillennialism
   4. All of the above
5. Which of the following views holds that there is no purpose for a millennial reign?
   1. Amillennialism
   2. Postmillennialism
   3. Premillennialism
   4. All of the above

True/False

1. This chapter affirms that believers will go through the great tribulation.
2. Those who believe in a rapture prior to the tribulation desire to emphasize the sameness of the church and Israel.
3. Those who believe that Christ will return after an extended period of peace and righteousness on earth argue that the world is becoming more and more Christian.
4. Those who deny the notion of an extended, bodily reign of Christ on earth argue that Scripture teaches only one resurrection.
5. Those who believe that Christ will not secretly rapture the believers prior to the tribulation claim that Christ’s words to the church in Philadelphia must be applied to the whole invisible church.
6. Jesus’ words in John 5:28–29 hint at the possibility of two different resurrections.
7. When postmillennialists talk about the millennium, they are talking about a renewed earth with Jesus Christ physically present and reigning as King.
8. Isaiah 11:10–11 and 65:20 seem to clearly describe the eternal state.
9. The pretribulational view is the only one consistent with the ideas that Christ could come back at any time and that there are signs preceding his return.
10. Postmillennialism seems to grow in popularity during times of persecution.

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**Class 8 – *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church***

**Introduction**

1. Introduction
2. “Students are dissatisfied with the current status of the church.”
3. What is the church in her nature and essence? What is to distinguish and mark the church?
4. For Historians
   1. John Stott – Marks of the local church: love, suffering, holiness, sound doctrine, genuineness, evangelism, and humility.
   2. “The Reformation made the gospel, not ecclesiastical organization, the test of the true church.”
   3. “Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists.” -John Calvin
5. The Church Today Reflects the World
   1. This book is not exhaustive on the Church.
   2. “..the two most easily recognizable hallmarks of secularization in America are the exaltation of numbers and of technique.” – Os Guinness
   3. Need to recover biblical preaching and leadership, not pragmatism and pettiness.
6. Popular Models of the Church
   1. Liberal
   2. Seeker-Sensitive
   3. Traditional
7. Needed: A Different Model
   1. We need an “Old” Model – Historic, Biblical
      * 1. Expositional Preaching
        2. Biblical Theology
        3. The Gospel
        4. A Biblical Understanding of Conversion
        5. A Biblical Understanding of Evangelism
        6. A Biblical Understanding of Church Membership
        7. Biblical Church Discipline
        8. A Concern for Discipleship and Growth
        9. Biblical Church Leadership

**Mark 1 – Expositional Preaching**

1. Definition – Expositional Preaching is preaching that takes for the point of a sermon the pont of a particular passage of Scripture.
2. The Central Role of the Word of God.
   1. The Role of God’s Word Bringing Life

* Genesis 1 – Creation
* Genesis 3:14-15
* Genesis 12
* Ex. 20
* Ez. 37
* Jn 1:1
* Mk. 1:38
* Acts 2
* Romans 10:17
* “I simply taught, preached, wrote God’s Word: otherwise I did nothing…The Word did it all.” -Martin Luther
  1. The Role of God’s Word in Preaching
* “Your law is my delight” (Ps. 119:174).
* Moses taught Israel the law (Ex. 18:19-20)
* Josiah read the law to God’s People (2 Chron. 34:30).
* Nehemiah 8:8 is an example of Expositional Preaching
* Jesus made comments on Scripture in Lk. 4
* Jesus unpacked the Scriptures in Lk. 24
* Peter preached from portions of Joel 2 and Psalms 16, 110 in Acts 2.
  1. The Role of God’s Word in Sanctifying
* The Word creates faith and makes us grow.
* Mt. 4:4, Jn. 17:17, Eph. 5:25-26 – Examples of sanctification.
* “The Church Reformed, always being Reformed according to the Word of God.” -Protestant Reformation
  1. The Role of the Preacher of God’s Word
* Most important thing you look for in a church.
* Preachers are not called to preach what is popular.
* We are called to preach the Word of God to the Church of God.
* The Holy Spirit creates His People by His Word.
* Paul told Timothy “To Preach the Word.” 2 Tim. 4:2
* Preaching of the Word must be central in the Church.
* What makes a really good church? Even more than parking and pews and greetings and programs and nursery and music and the preacher, it is what is preached – the Word of God.

**Mark 2 – Biblical Theology**

1. Definition – The Theology of the Whole Bible
2. Not just how we are taught (expositionally), but what we are taught (Biblical Theology).
   1. The God of the Bible is a Creating God

* The Bible is history.
* The Bible presents the truth about God and us – Biblical Theology
* God is a creating God and a choosing God. (Initiator, Giver, Creator of the World, Creator of His People, Author of our Faith).
  1. The God of the Bible is a Holy God.
* He is a God of covenants (Lk. 22:20).
* We need atonement and reconciliation (Col. 1:21, Heb. 10:27).
* We need a Great High Priest to atone for our sins (Heb. 9:7).
* How we do church depends on how we understand God and ourselves.
  1. The God of the Bible is a Faithful God
* Ex. 34:6-7.
* Faithful to forgive through Christ (Deut. 18:15). Both testaments tell us about the suffering Messiah and King.
  1. The God of the Bible is a Loving God.
* Luke 24 – A special love for Covenant People
* Is. 53:4-6
* Mark 10:45, Phil. 2:6-8, Acts 2:22-24
* We loved because he first loved us! (1 Jn 4:10,19)
  1. The God of the Bible is a Sovereign God
* All Creation will be involved in his renewing love and sovereign plan (2 Peter 3:13).
* Church triumphant, New Heaven and Earth (Rev. 21:1-4, 21:22-22:5)
* This kind of Biblical Theology is practical.
* Many Christians have honest questions about God’s sovereignty but any leader of God’s Church should not doubt or have misunderstanding of God’s sovereignty.
* The Story of the Bible is one story.

**Class 9 – *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church***

**Mark 3 – The Gospel**

1. News is big business – “Hell will be full of newspapers with a fresh edition every thirty seconds, so that no one will ever feel caught up.”
2. The Good New is Not Simply that we are OK
   1. Some See Christianity as a therapy religion.

* We are not ok. We are dead in our sins (Eph. 2:1)
* Our sins are deadly for our relationship with God (Rom. 6:23).
* God is not just a passive creator, but a jealous lover.
  1. We are guilty before God (Rom. 3:9-20).
* We are totally depraved, or spiritually dead.
* Our transgressions deserve death.

1. The Good News Is Not Simply that God is Love.
   1. The Bible does say God is love, but is that the whole story (1 Jn. 4:8).

* God also requires holiness (Heb. 12:14).

1. The Good News Is Not Simply That Jesus Wants to be our Friend
   1. Since he is our friend, sin is no big deal? Forgive and forget our sins?

* Christ death is economic.
* Christ death is relational.
* Christ death is legal.
* Christ death uses military language (Col. 2:15).
* Christ death is redemptive, reconciliatory, and accomplishes propitiation.

1. The Good News is Not Simply that God will Renew Creation
   1. God has wonderful plans for the world (Rev. 21&22), and Christians being made new (John 3, Rom. 6).
   2. We don’t do the gospel, we proclaim it.
   3. We are not passive. We enter baptism, take the Lord’s Supper, speak of Jesus before men.
2. The Good News and Our Response
   1. God, Man, Christ, Response
   2. Repentance and Belief (Acts 20:21)
   3. What is repentance? Turning from our sin. Metanoia literally means “to change your mind.”
3. Conclusion
   1. Christianity has a specific content.

* Christ died on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust in him.

**Mark 4 – A Biblical Understanding of Conversion**

1. Is Change Needed (Rom. 3:9-20)
2. Is Change Really Possible? (Jn. 3, Acts 9)
3. What Change Do We Need?
4. Conversion or New birth.
   1. Is it merely mental acceptance?
   2. Is it merely moral resolve?
   3. Is it merely relying on Christ?
5. How Does This Great Change Happen?
   1. We do nothing?
   2. We do everything?
   3. God works this saving faith in us (Ez.11:19, 1 Cor. 2:14, Jn 6:44)?
   4. New Hampshire Confession of Faith, article 8

“We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all sufficient Savior.”

* 1. Eph. 2 is an important passage about conversion.
  2. God brings about conversion (Acts 13:48), but he uses us as the means (Rom. 10:17) as we preach the Word (1 Pet. 1:23)

1. Conclusion
   1. Both change is needed and possible.
   2. Augustine, Luther, Bunyan, CH Spurgeon, C.S. Lewis – All changed by the Gospel.
   3. Jesus’ first sermon “Repent and believe the good news.”

**Class 10 – *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church***

**Mark 5 – A Biblical Understanding of Evangelism**

1. What do you think of when you hear the word evangelist?
2. What is evangelism?
   1. It’s Not Imposition

* We simply tell the Good News and leave the results to God (1 Cor. 3:5-7).
  1. It is Not a Personal Testimony.
  2. It is Not Social Action or Political Involvement
  3. It is Not Apologetics – answering questions and objections about the Christian faith.
  4. Its not the Results of Evangelism
* “To evangelize does not mean to win converts…but simply announce the good news, irrespective of the results.” -John Stott
* 2 Cor. 2:15-16 – Paul preached the same gospel to everyone, but had to different effects (aroma of life to some and death to others).
* “To evangelize is to declare the authority of God, what he has done to save sinners, to warn men of their lost condition, to direct them to repent, and to believe on Jesus Christ.”

1. Who should evangelize?
   1. Not limited to Paul or the apostles (Mt. 28:18-20).
   2. All throughout Acts disciples evangelized (5:42, 8:1-4, 11:19-21).
   3. Part of evangelism is how believers relate to one another in love (Jn. 13:35).
2. Why should we evangelize?
   1. Can their be wrong motives to evangelize?

* Churches do not want to close their doors.
* Evangelize to be right.
* Gain a reputation.
  1. Right reason is a desire for people to be obedient to the Great Commission.
  2. Ultimate Motivation – Love for God

1. How should we evangelize?
   1. Biblically!
      * 1. Tell people with honesty that if they repent and believe, they will be saved, but it will be costly.
        2. Tell people with urgency that if they repent and believe, they will be saved, but they must decide now (Heb. 4:7)
        3. Tell people with joy that if they repent and believe the good news, they will be saved. However difficult it may be, it is worth it!
        4. Use the Bible – Philip in Acts 8
        5. Realize that the lives of individual Christians and of the church as a whole are a central part of evangelism.
        6. Remember to pray.
        7. Build relationships with non-Christians.
        8. Work together with other Christians to take the gospel to those who don’t live around any Christians.
2. Conclusion
   1. We should all evangelize.
   2. The gospel, in and of itself, is powerful.
   3. Many of the greatest evangelists believed that salvation is by God’s election (Acts 18:9-10).

**Mark 6 – A Biblical Understanding of Church Membership**

1. We live in an age of “commitment-phobia.”
2. We live in an age of “lone-rangerism.”
3. This is hostile to the NT church.
4. What is a church?
   1. Not is building, but a body of people who profess and give evidence that they have been saved by God alone.
   2. The church is the body of Christ, the local collection of Christians committed to Christ and to each other.
5. Why join a church?
   1. Don’t do it – Church Growth Strategies
   2. We do not live the Christian life alone.
   3. We are to be a part of the body where we sit under God’s Word, fellowship together, pray, and partake the ordinances.
   4. Fundamental duty of a Christian is to gather (Heb. 10:25).
   5. Christians should gather to love one another, seek peace and unity, care for one another, watch over one another, edify one another, bear with one another, etc. (see list on pg. 161 – third edition).
   6. Church members have responsibilities toward leaders and vice versa (1 Peter 5:1-3, Heb. 13:17).
      * 1. Join a church to assure yourself of the faith.
        2. Join a church to evangelize the world.
        3. Join a church to expose False Gospels.
        4. To edify the Church (Heb. 10:19-25).
        5. To Glorify God (1 Peter 2:12)
6. What Does Church Membership Entail?
   1. In Action – Initially by baptism
   2. In Writing – by signing a statement of faith and church covenant
   3. Attend Services Regularly
   4. Attend Communion Particularly
   5. Attend Members’ Meetings Consistently
   6. Pray Regularly
   7. Give Regularly
7. Conclusion
   1. Membership is the church’s corporate endorsement of a person’s salvation.
   2. Church Membership means being incorporated in practical ways into the body of Christ.

**Class 11 – *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church***

**Mark 7 – Biblical Church Discipline**

1. Do we have obligation to one another?
2. Is all Discipline Negative?
   1. There is formative or positive discipline – this refers to those things that shape people as they grow emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually.
3. What is Church Discipline?
   1. God is a judge. Jesus is a judge. We are to judge ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28), We are to judge one another in the church (1 Cor. 5).
   2. “Open the front doors and close the back doors.”
   3. “Close the front door and open the back door (1 Cor. 5:9-10).”
4. What does the Bible say about Church Discipline?
   1. Heb. 12:1-4

* God disciplines us.
  1. Mt. 18:15-17
  2. 1 Cor. 5:1-11
  3. Gal. 6:1
  4. 2 Thess. 3:6-15
  5. 1 Tim. 1:20
  6. 1 Tim. 5:19-20
  7. Titus 3:9-11

1. How have Christians in the past handled Church Discipline?
   1. They actually did it.
   2. See Belgic Confession (pg. 194 – 3rd Edition of Nine Marks)
2. “Our Church would never do this, would we?
3. Why Practice Church Discipline?
   1. For the good of the Person Disciplined.
   2. For the good of other Christians, as they see the danger of sin.
   3. For the health of the Church as a whole (1 Cor. 5:6-8).
   4. For the Corporate Witness of the Church
   5. For the Glory of God, as we reflect His Holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11)
4. What if we don’t practice Church Discipline?
   1. “When discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it.”

**Mark 8 – A Concern for Discipleship and Growth**

1. In a healthy church, people want to get better at following Jesus.
2. A Biblical Theology of Growth
   1. Can be prosperity (Ps. 92:12-13).
   2. Increase in wisdom (Pr. 24:5).
   3. Warning about physical things (Ps. 49:16-17)
   4. Kingdom of Christ will grow (Is. 9:7, Mt. 13:32, Acts 6:1, 7).
   5. Another kind of growth – Spiritual growth (Eph. 4:15-16, 2 Peter 1:5-8)
   6. We grow through the Word (1 Peter 2:2-5)
3. A Biblical Practice of Growth?
   1. Expositional Preaching
   2. Biblical Theology
   3. Biblical Understanding of the Gospel
   4. Biblical Understanding of Conversion
   5. Biblical Understanding of Evangelism
   6. Biblical Understanding of Church Membership
   7. Biblical Understanding of Church Discipline
   8. Biblical Understanding of Church Leadership
4. What Does Church Membership Entail?
   1. In Action – Initially by baptism
   2. In Writing – by signing a statement of faith and church covenant
   3. Attend Services Regularly
   4. Attend Communion Particularly
   5. Attend Members’ Meetings Consistently
   6. Pray Regularly
   7. Give Regularly
5. Hopes for Growth
   1. Pastoral Visitation

* In what particular ways have you grown in your understanding of the Christian life since we last met?
* How have you grown in your practice of the Christian life since we last met?
* In what particular areas do you feel that you need instruction?
* Are you disappointed in your own pursuit of holiness? If so, explain.
* How specifically can I pray for you?

1. Growth Together as a Church.
   1. Church Covenant
2. The Importance of Good Growth
   1. A healthy church has a pervasive concern with church growth-not simply growing numbers but growing members (2 Cor. 10:15, Eph. 4:15).
3. What if we don’t grow?
   1. What about the “Carnal Christian?”

**Class 12 – *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church***

**Mark 9 – Biblical Church Leadership**

1. What does the Bible say about authority and leadership in the Church
2. The Congregational Context of Church Leadership\* (The BFC differs from Mark Dever on this point – We are Elder Rule rather than Congregational Rule)
   1. Mt. 18:15-17, Acts 6:2-5, 1 Cor. 5:4-5, Gal. 1:6-9.
   2. Is congregationalism democracy? Heb. 13:17
3. Biblical Qualifications for Church Leadership?
   1. The Bible clearly models a plurality of elders in each local church (Acts 14:23, 16:4, Titus 1:5)
   2. In the NT, we find hints of the main preacher being distinct from the rest of the elders.
   3. Many modern day churches confuse elder with deacon.
   4. Finding good leaders means finding those we can trust.
   5. Qualifications (1 Tim. 3, Titus 1)

* How they deal with their family?
* Must be men (Complementarian rather than Egalitarian)
* Able to teach.

1. The Charismatic Nature of Church Leadership
   1. Charisma – A gift of God’s grace
   2. Specific gifts are given (Rom. 12:6-8)
   3. Gifts are given to build up the church (1 Cor. 12:4-7)
   4. We are to especially value the gifts that clearly build up the churches.
2. The Christlikeness of Church Leadership
   1. Boss
   2. Out Front
   3. Supply
   4. Serve

**Appendix 1 – Tips for Leading the Church in a Healthy Direction**

1. Be Truthful
2. Be Trustful
3. Be positive
4. Be Particular

**Appendix 2 – “Don’t Do It!” Why you Shouldn’t Practice Church Discipline**

1. They Open Their Bibles
2. Like a Bolt Out of Clear Blue Sky
3. How to Shepherd Your Church Toward Discipline
   1. First, encourage humility
   2. Second, make sure your congregation has a biblical understanding of church membership.
   3. Third, pray that God would help you to model ministry to other Christians in your church by your public teaching and your private work with families and individuals.
   4. Fourth, prepare your congregation’s written constitution and covenant.
   5. Fifth, never tire of teaching what a Christian is.
4. You Know You’re Ready When…(pg. 267)

**Questions for Spiritual Growth:** (Partner Men for Accountability Outside of Class)

1. How often did you meet with God this week in Bible Study & Prayer?
2. What has God been saying to you through His Word this week?
3. What joys have you found in the gospel this week?
4. What sins in your personal life did you experience this week that need confession?
5. What movies did you see this past week and how do you feel about viewing them? The internet?
6. Did you work heartily unto the Lord this week?
7. How did you influence your marriage and family this week? Positively? Negatively?
8. What challenges are on your mind?
9. How did you rebuke, correct, or encourage believers this week?
10. Were you able to share the gospel with anyone this week?

1. 2 Tim 3:15, 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For further discussion on the doctrine of providence, see Chapter 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rom 1:19–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Eph 1:21–22a. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Phil 2:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 1 Pet 2:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Eph 2:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Lk 6:35. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ps 84:4, 10a. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Eph 5:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See the list of passages in “Verses Predicting a Sudden and Unexpected Coming of Christ,” in this chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)