

1. Prolegomena

Prolegomena is the first topic in systematic theology to be studied. It lays the *foundation* for theological study by addressing *introductory matters* such as definitions and methodology.

I. What is Systematic Theology?

- A. The term **theology** comes from the Greek word **theos** (God) and **logos** (word or discourse). Theology is the study, speaking, thinking, or discoursing about God.¹
- B. The word “theology” does not appear in Scripture; however, its idea is ever-present. Originally, the word (*theologia*) was used in Greek culture to refer to the philosophers’ discussions about divine matters.²
 - 1. Plato referred to the poets’ stories about the gods as “theologies.”
 - 2. Aristotle regarded theology as the “study of God,” which was the greatest of sciences because God is considered the highest reality.
- C. The word **systematic** comes from the Greek verb **sunistano** (to be organized or to stand together).³ Therefore, *systematic theology emphasizes the collection and organization of Christian doctrine*.

D. Definition:

Augustine defines theology to be the “rational discussion respecting the deity;”⁴

Aquinas asserts, “Sacred doctrine” is “partly speculative and partly practical; it transcends all others speculative and practical. . . . In both these respects this science surpasses other speculative sciences; in point of greater certitude, because other sciences derive their certitude from the natural light of human reason, which can err; whereas this derives its certitude from the light of the divine knowledge, which cannot be misled.”⁵

Lewis Sperry Chafer says, “Systematic Theology may be defined as the collecting, scientifically arranging, comparing, exhibiting, and defending of all facts from any and every source concerning God and His works.”⁶

W.G.T. Shedd said, “Theology is the science of God. The Supreme being is the object and theme of theological investigation.”⁷

Millard Erickson defines theology as “that discipline which strives to give a coherent statement of the doctrines of the Christian faith, based primarily upon the Scriptures, placed in context of culture in general, worded in a contemporary idiom, and related to issues of life.”⁸

Robert P. Lightner of asserts theology “in its broadest meaning is a word about God. As a science it includes three major areas: biblical, historical, and systematic.”⁹ Lightner agrees with Chafer in its expanded definition.

Gerald Bray of Oak Hill College in London describes systematic theology as “the development which has organized specific theological principles and beliefs into a coherent whole, in which each part is shown to have direct bearing on and relevance to the others.”¹⁰

Wayne Grudem of Phoenix Seminary in Scottsdale, AZ, “Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, ‘What does the whole Bible teach us today?’ about any given topic. This definition indicates that systematic theology involves the collecting and understanding all the relevant passages in the Bible on various topics and then summarizing their teachings clearly so that we know what to believe about each topic.”¹¹

¹ Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, revised edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 1-2.

² Walter Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 1064.

³ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 147.

⁴ Augustine, *City of God* VIII.i.

⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Bk I., Q1.Art5

⁶ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1947), 1:6.

⁷ W.G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. I, rpt. edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 17.

⁸ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3 Vols, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 1:17-149.

⁹ Robert P. Lightner, *Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1995), 2.

¹⁰ Gerald L. Bray, “Systematic Theology” in Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J.I. Packer, eds., *New Dictionary of Theology*

(Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 671.

¹¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 21.

Kinds of Theology

Biblical Theology – Studies theology, using Bible alone (John or Paul etc.)

Systematic Theology – Organizes essential Christian doctrines using the entire Bible, church fathers, history, philosophy, creeds, to discover truth in order to form a coherent doctrinal system.

Theology Proper – Is a section within systematic theology that studies the nature and existence of God. The word “proper” distinguishes the study of God *specifically* from the study of theology in *general*.

Historical Theology – Studies the past unfolding and development of theology through the ages (stresses process of doctrine *with* chronology).

Dogmatic Theology – Study of theology within a creedal system (Calvinistic, Arminian, Catholic, Dispensational, etc.)

Natural Theology – Is the attempt to gain understanding about God without appealing to Bible or Christ. Emphasis is on *nature* (general revelation) and *reason*, rather than Scripture (special revelation).

Topics within Systematic Theology

1. Prolegomena _____
2. Bibliology _____
3. Theology Proper _____
4. Christology _____
5. Pneumatology _____
6. Angelology _____
7. Anthropology _____
8. Harmatology _____
9. Soteriology _____
10. Ecclesiology _____
11. Eschatology _____

II. Why Systematic Theology?

- A. Because it **clarifies, defines** and **organizes** the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith. Confusion is diminished or altogether eliminated.

1 Timothy 6:20 – Avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge, for by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith.

- B. Because knowledge of theology helps **defend** the Faith (apologetics). It is essential to make proper theological **distinctions** when speaking to unbelievers, cults, and antagonists. Remember, error is not known by its *similarities* to the truth, but by its *differences*.

II Timothy 2:24-25 – And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, and apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

- C. Because it helps **mature** the believer with truth and protect against error. The Apostle Paul often builds a doctrinal foundation on which to exhort believers to live godly lives (Ephesians 1-3; 4-6 Romans 1-8; 9-11; 12-16).

Truth is *protective, liberating, and maturing*:

Psalm 91:4 – His truth shall be your shield and buckler

John 8:32 – Jesus said, you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.

Ephesians 5:25-26 – Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleans her by the washing of water by the word

Ephesians 6:14 – Stand therefore, having girded your waist with the truth.

Five Key Ingredients to Theology

1. Theology is Biblical
2. Theology is Systematic
3. Theology is Comprehensive
4. Theology is Contemporary
5. Theology is Practical

III. Our Methodology

A. Your *philosophical* assumptions will determine your *theological* conclusions (e.g. Jesus Seminar)

What do you believe concerning:

1. God?
2. Reality?
3. Miracles?
4. Afterlife?
5. Morality?
6. Language?
7. Knowledge?
8. Meaning?

Henry Thiessen says, “To know a man’s philosophy is, therefore, to get possession of the key to understanding him and also to dealing with him (Acts 14:17; 17:22-31). But the Christian must recognize that philosophy will never bring a person to Christ.”¹²

Philosophy:

1. What is it?
2. Why do it?
3. How do we do it?

¹² Thiessen, *Systematic Theology*, 3.

B. Be Scientific

1. Collect the facts/truths wherever they are found (Phil 4:6)
2. Be inductive
3. Limitations of knowledge (whole vs. in part; 1 Cor 13:9, 12)
4. Form Conclusions

C. Hermeneutics

Literal vs. Allegorical

Allegorical Hermeneutic

Definition: The method of interpreting a literary text that regards the literal sense as the vehicle for a secondary, more spiritual and profound sense.¹³

Allegorizing is searching for a *hidden* or a *secret* meaning underlying but remote from and unrelated in reality to the more obvious meaning of a text. In other words, the literal reading is a sort of code, which needs to be deciphered to determine the more significant and hidden meaning.¹⁴

Assumption:

1. No real connection between historical and the spiritual significance.
2. Spiritual world is the more *real* world (Plato)

Problems:

1. It fails to interpret the Scriptures.
2. The authority of the interpretation is removed from the Scripture and placed in the *mind* of the interpreter (speculation).
3. No objective testing of interpretation or *verification* is possible.

Objection:

Paul uses allegorical method in Galatians 4:21-31

Paul is simply *explaining the literal meaning of the passage* (v 21-23) through the means of an allegory. He is not using the allegorical method to *interpret*. In other words, Paul is adding to what has already been said, not a *replacement of* what has been said.

Paul's Allegory

Allegorical Interpretation

Historical meaning is true and significant	Historical meaning is insignificant (if ever true)
Paul didn't say his allegory is an <i>exposition</i> of Genesis 16	The <i>deeper</i> meaning is the exposition
Paul <i>said</i> he was going to allegorize	Everything may be allegorized
Meaning is found <i>in</i> the text	Meaning found <i>under</i> or <i>beyond</i> the text

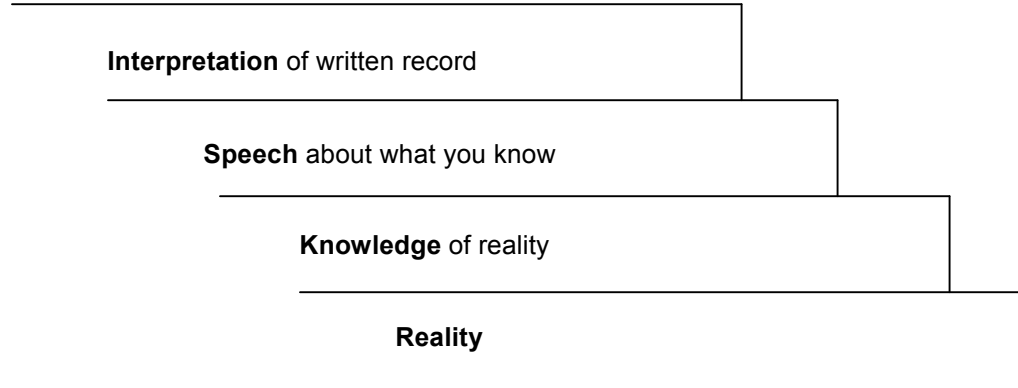
¹³ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Hermeneutics*, 21.

¹⁴ Roy Zuck *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), 29.

Philosophical Foundations of a Literal Hermeneutic

Within a proper hermeneutic, there exist several philosophical presuppositions. Each of these presuppositions plays a crucial part in understanding the text. If there are incorrect belief systems behind any one of these categories below, there will most likely be error at the interpretive level.

Accurate Interpretation



*See Roy B. Zuck, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics" in *Bibliotheca Sacra* vol. 141 no 562 April/June 1984, 120-130.

*See Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981).

Hermeneutical Principles

Definition: The literal method of interpretation is that method that gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether employed in writing, speaking or thinking.¹⁵ (with historical & grammatical considerations)

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¹⁵ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 1, as cited in Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan & Copyright by Dunham Publishing Co. 1958), 9. See Henry Virkler *Principles and Process of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981). Lights acronym developed by Christian Research Institute (Hank Hanegraaff).

Hermeneutical Categories

Since the meaning is found *in* the text of Scripture, and not *beyond* it, but in the very writing itself, there are six “causes” that will help you identify the proper role of each aspect that contributes to the meaning of a given text.

1. **Efficient Cause:** that _____ which something comes to be.
2. **Final Cause:** that _____ which something comes to be.
3. **Formal Cause:** that _____ which something comes to be.
4. **Material Cause:** that _____ which something comes to be.
5. **Exemplar Cause:** that _____ which something comes to be.
6. **Instrumental Cause:** that _____ which something comes to be.

	Boat	Meaning/text
Efficient cause:	_____	_____
Final cause:	_____	_____
Formal Cause:	_____	_____
Material cause:	_____	_____
Exemplar cause:	_____	_____
Instrumental cause:	_____	_____

2. Theology Proper

Doctrine of God

The general study of God is called *Theology*. However, theology *proper distinguishes* theology in *general* with all its broader categories (e.g. hamatology, ecclesiology, soteriology etc.) from theology *specific, which focuses primarily* on God Himself. The content of theology examines and evaluates the existence, nature, attributes, and any special problems associated with God.

I. **The Existence of God** (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:22-34)

A. **Cosmological Argument** (reasons from effect to *first cause*) (Romans 1:19-21; Hebrews 3:4; Genesis 1:1)

1. Every effect has a cause¹⁶ (self-evident)
2. The Universe is an effect (provide evidence)
3. Therefore, the universe had a cause (conclusion)¹⁷

1. Whatever begins to exist was caused by another (3 choices of origins)

¹⁶ An “effect” can be defined as “that which is caused,” and a “cause” is “that which produces an effect.” Therefore, it is an *analytic* statement which is true by definition (base on the assumption existence is undeniable).

¹⁷ See Stuart Hackett, *The Resurrection of Theism: A Prolegomena to an Apology* 2nd edition (1982) to evaluate the assumption that D. Hume and I. Kant destroyed traditional proofs for the existence of God.

2. The universe began to exist (exp. universe, 2nd Law, radiation)
3. Therefore, the universe was caused to exist by another¹⁸

Robert Jastrow says, "Now we see how the astronomical evidence leads to a biblical view of the origin of the world. The details differ, but the essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are the same: the chain of events leading to man commenced suddenly and sharply at a definite moment in time, in a flash of light and energy. Some scientists are unhappy with the idea that the world began in this way."¹⁹

Psalms 102:25-27 Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish but You will endure; Yes, they will grow old like a garment; Like a cloak, You will change them, And they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end. (cf. Hebrews 1:10-12)

B. Teleological Argument (reasons from design to a *designer*)

1. Design implies a designer (analogy between cause & effect)
2. The universe manifests design (DNA, Anthropic principle, eye, brain)
3. Therefore, the universe has a designer

Richard Dawkins asserts, "There is enough information capacity in a single human cell to store the Encyclopedia Britannica, all 30 volumes of it, three or four times over. . . . There is enough storage capacity in the DNA of a single lily seed or a single salamander sperm to store the Encyclopedia Britannica 60 times over. Some species of the unjustly called 'primitive' amoebas have as much information in their DNA as 1,000 Encyclopedia Britannicas."²⁰

(Psalm 19:1-6)

C. Moral Argument (reasons from moral law to a moral *lawgiver*)

1. Moral law implies moral lawgiver (laws come from legislators)
2. There is a moral law²¹ (undeniable, they use morals to say 'no morals')
3. Therefore, there is a moral lawgiver

C.S. Lewis addresses the futility of denying moral law when he says, If it is rejected, all value is rejected. If any value is retained, it is retained. The effort to refute it and raise a new system of value in its place is self-contradictory."²²

(Romans 2:14-15)

B. Anthropological Argument

1. Man is an intelligent being
2. Only intelligence can produce the intelligent (observe; Acts 17:28-29)
3. Therefore, an intelligent being created man

C. Change Argument (Aquinas – 1224-1274; ST I.2.3)

1. Things change (motion; substantial vs. accidental)
2. Whatever changes has the *potential* to change (act and potency)
3. But no potential can actualize itself (painting, skyscraper)
4. There cannot be an endless series of actualizers (infinite regress is impossible)²³
5. Therefore, there is a First Actualizer that needs no other to actualize itself (It/He is pure actuality)²⁴

¹⁸ Some would object to identifying this "cause" as infinite since both the major and minor premise appear to speak of a "finite" cause. Thus, how can the conclusion end with an *infinite* cause if it wasn't first in the premises - four term fallacy?). The answer to this can be seen in the fact that the cause in the premises and conclusion neither means finite or infinite causes *per se*, but rather a sufficient condition for the existence of something else that could be *either* a finite or infinite kind of cause. In this case, it happens to refer to an infinite cause by implication and conclusion since there must be a ground of being that itself is not caused. Thus the cause concluded here is an *un-caused* (via negativa) kind of cause. See N.L. Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 200-201.

¹⁹ Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* (New York: Norton, 1978), 14.

²⁰ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* (New York: Norton, 1986, 1987, 1996), 116. See Michele Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: The Free Press, 1996); Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*; Stephen Jay Gould, *The Panda's Thumb* (New York: Norton, 1982), 182.

²¹ See C.S. Lewis *The Abolition of Man* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Pub, 1944, 1947, 1972, 1975), 93-109 for a list of natural law (morals) adopted by all the major cultures and religions.

²² *Ibid.*, 56.

²³ William Lane Craig, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1979), 65-140.

²⁴ N.L. Geisler, *Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1991), 119.

Causality in Scripture: "Every effect must have a cause"

Genesis 1:1

Hebrews 1:3

Hebrews 3:4

Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because there would then be no first mover, and consequently, no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore, it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God. (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I.2.3.)

D. Argument from undeniability

1. Some things undeniably exist (e.g. I do)
2. My non-existence is possible
3. whatever has the possibility not to exist is currently caused to exist by another
4. There cannot be an infinite regress of current causes of existence
5. Therefore, a current uncaused cause of my current existence exists
6. This uncaused cause must be infinite, unchanging, all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-perfect
7. This infinitely perfect Being is appropriately called "God"
8. Therefore, God exists
9. This God who exists is identical to the God described in the Christian Scriptures
10. Therefore, the God described in the Bible exists²⁵

II. Alternative Worldviews²⁶

A. Theism

1. One infinite personal God
2. He exists *beyond* (*transcendent* - above and over creation or "up" and "out" there) and *in* (*imminent* - presence within creation)
3. He is *in* the world but not *of* the world (distinct from the world just as an artist is distinct from his painting)
4. Possesses all the omni-predicates
5. Miracles occur
6. The world is analogous to God (being, language)
7. Represented in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

B. Atheism

1. No God exists in or beyond the universe
2. No miracles (secular humanism)
3. Injustice and evil are realities
4. Many movements: Death of God (Al Kaiser); Death of God-talk; Myth of God (Nietzsche); Classical atheism (Freud, Ayn Rand, Michael Martin, Anthony Flew)

Problems:

1. No first cause
2. No absolute basis for morality
3. Evolution is untenable
 - a. Order from non-order (simple to more complex)
 - b. Life from non-life
 - c. Intelligence from non-intelligence
 - d. Something from nothing (causality)

²⁵ Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1976), 238-39. See pages 238-250 for a full elaboration of each point.

²⁶ See James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*; N.L. Geisler and William Watkins, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on Worldviews* (2nd Edition); Ronald Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict*.

C. Deism

1. One God that exists beyond (transcendent) the universe but *not* active in it
2. Mechanical universe and natural theology
3. Like theism but no miracles
4. Denies the incarnation, virgin birth, divine inspiration, etc...
5. Jefferson and Franklin

Problems:

1. Inconsistent view of miracles
2. Confuse the function of the Laws of Nature (descriptive vs. prescriptive)
3. Ignores the abundant evidence of the reliability of the Bible

D. Pantheism

1. God (impersonal) *is* the universe
2. All is *one* substance (monism)(Parmenides)
3. No distinction between creator and creation
4. No miracles
5. Opposite view of deism
6. Eastern philosophy and religion

Problems:

1. Self-defeating (change vs. non-change)
2. Fails the practical test
3. Where did the spiritual amnesia come from?
4. If the world is God, how do they explain the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics?
5. To deny logic is self-defeating

E. Polytheism

1. Many personal finite Gods beyond the universe and in it
2. They have a beginning but no end
3. Pantheism and polytheism are only two worldviews which are compatible with each other (can have one impersonal reality with many personal manifestations of it = *Hinduism*)
4. Usually named after natural phenomena and human traits
5. Romans, Greeks, Witches, and Mormons

F. Panentheism (dipolar theism, processism, organicism, neo-classical theism)

1. This worldview is a mixture of theism and pantheism
2. A personal God that has two poles: an *infinite pole* (Spirit) beyond the physical universe and a *finite pole* (God's body) which is the universe.
3. God is *in* the universe as soul is *in* the body
4. God and the universe are interdependent
5. God grows, learns, and changes with history
6. Evil is seen as an incompatibility within the universe
7. Major figures are A.N. Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, Shubert Ogden, John Cobb and Lewis Ford²⁷

Problems:

1. God cannot be both *infinite* and *finite* at the same time and in the same sense (what about the incarnation of Christ?)
2. God cannot be dependent since He is a necessary being, or else we must find what God is dependent upon (this is God)
3. God cannot guarantee final victory over evil
4. God cannot change or else he is finite (Mal 3:6)

G. Finite godism

1. A finite god that is active beyond and in the universe but is limited in power
2. Evil is real
3. The universe is eternal
4. Plato

²⁷ For a complete refutation of process theology see Royce Gordon Gruenler, *The Inexhaustible God: Biblical Faith and the Challenge of Process Theism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1983); Ronald Nash, *Process Theology*.

Problems:

1. God cannot guarantee final victory over evil
2. If god is finite, how did they come to exist? No apparent cause which is impossible, or if by the forces of nature, then nature is god
3. The universe shows signs of finitude (2nd Law, expanding universe, radiation echo)
4. Attributing human imperfections to deity (treachery, deceit) renders God *less* than ultimate

III. Understanding and Responding to Neotheism

According to neotheists, which is a combination of theism and panentheism, the God of classical (traditional) theism that has been articulated for the last 2000 years by the church (Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas) is a doctrine that possesses corruption from pagan philosophy. God's infinitude, eternality, immutability, simplicity, and omniscience ought to be abandoned or reformulated. Clark Pinnock says,

An encouraging feature in evangelicalism today is the fact that people are seeking a more intimate relationship with God. They want a more than dry intellectual connection with a far away and seemingly immobile deity and are longing for soul-satisfying interactions with the living God. . . . Practically all evangelicals who work on the doctrine of God today (except maybe Geisler) are suggesting revisions to classical theism just as open theists are.²⁸

Pinnock sees the classical concept of God as "static" instead of "dynamic," which does not make for good divine relationships with temporal creatures. According to neotheists, real meaningful relationships demand that both parties will adapt, adjust, feel changing emotions, give, take, be affected, and be vulnerable in an uncontrolled and changing way. Therefore, the future remains unsettled and open.

The following points describe neotheism's rationale and view of God.

1. *The God described by classical theism is a product of pagan philosophy, and therefore should be changed.*

Theologians have to face up particularly to the influence of the pagan dogma of the absolute unchangeableness of God, which has placed severe limits upon how certain of his attributes are understood. It has created unnecessary difficulties and skewed our thinking. It forces us to think of God knowing a changing world in an unchanging way, as acting in a temporally changing world in an atemporal way, as experiencing time as simultaneous whole and not successively. Such tensions originate in the syncretism of biblical and Greek thought and arise out of a tension between Hellenistic and biblical ideals of divine perfection.²⁹

Along with the good, however, came a certain theological virus that infected the Christian doctrine of god, making it ill and creating the sorts of problems mentioned above. The virus so permeates Christian theology that some have come to take the illness for granted, attributing it to divine mystery, while others remain unaware of the infection altogether. This book, we hope, will be a needed antibiotic to aid the healing process, bringing about a healthier doctrine of God.³⁰

2. *God changes. A God who does not change cannot really relate to a temporal and changing world (flexibility to adapt your plans)*

The Christian life involves a genuine interaction between God and human beings. We respond to God's gracious initiatives, God responds to our responses . . . , and on it goes. God takes risks in this give-and-take relationship, yet he is endlessly resourceful and competent in working towards his ultimate goals. Sometimes God alone decides how to accomplish these goals. On other occasions, God works with human decisions, adapting his own plans to fit the changing situation. God does not control everything that happens. Rather he is open to receiving input from his creatures.³¹

God is unchanging in nature and essence but not in experience, knowledge and action.³²

3. *God is not omniscient, rather He learns from what happens in the world.*

Instead of perceiving the entire course of human existence in one timeless moment, God comes to know events as they take place. He learns something from what transpires. We call this position the "open view of God" because it regards God as

²⁸ Clark H. Pinnock, "There is Room for Us: A Reply to Bruce Ware," in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* vol 45, no. 2 (June 2002): 213.

²⁹ Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 71.

³⁰ Clark Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker, and David Basinger, *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 8-9.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

³² *Ibid.*, 118.

receptive to new experiences and as flexible in the way he works toward his objectives in the world. Since it sees God as dependent on the world in certain respects, the open view of God differs from much conventional theology.³³ No being can know in advance exactly what a free agent will do, though he may predict it with high probability. God knows that whatever he wills and determines will come to pass but, if God is free and creatures are free, he cannot know in advance always exactly what will happen.³⁴

4. God has changeable feelings like humans.

...God sometimes regrets how things turn out, even prior decisions that *he himself* made.³⁵ [i.e. the flood Gen

6:6] God was clearly frustrated by Moses' persistent unbelief.³⁶ [i.e. Exodus 4:10-15]

We could say that God is impassible in nature but passible in his experience of the world. Change occurs in the world and affects god when he becomes aware of it.³⁷

5. God is not eternal.

If God did not experience events as they transpire, he would not experience or know the world as it actually is. If God's eternity were timeless, God could not be related to our temporal world.³⁸

The God of the Bible is not timeless. His eternity means that there has never been and never will be a time when God does not exist. Timelessness limits God.³⁹

6. God is not simple (parts)

When I say God is in time, I do not mean that God is exhaustively in time.⁴⁰

God is unchanging in nature and essence but not in experience, knowledge and action.⁴¹

Theism	Neotheism ⁴²
God knows all, past, present, future	God knows the past and present, but only learns the future, free event
God is impassible: Nothing can hurt or act Upon him. He acts out of His grace and mercy	God is passible: He can be hurt and acted upon. We can make God feel pain
God is eternal (non-temporal)	God is temporal
God is simple, not composed of parts. He is absolutely and indivisibly one in essence	God is composite made of parts
God is immutable: He does not change. He is perfect, and any change would be for the worse	God is mutable: Change does not necessarily mean imperfection
God sovereignly reigns over all things, no help	God is sovereign but needs our help to be able to carry out His plan of salvation
God is omnipotent: He can do anything that does not contradict His nature	God is omnipotent: He can do all things. He gives away power, finite
God is infallible: He cannot err in any respect	God is fallible: He can err

³³ Ibid., 16.

³⁴ Clark H. Pinnock, "There is Room for Us: A Reply to Bruce Ware" in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* vol 45, no. 2 (June 2002): 216.

³⁵ Gregory Boyd, *God of the Possible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 55.

³⁶ Ibid., 62.

³⁷ Pinnock et al., *The Openness of God*, 119.

³⁸ Ibid., 120.

³⁹ Ibid., 121.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 118.

⁴² Norman L. Geisler and H. Wayne House, *The Battle for God: Responding to the Challenge of Neotheism* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 17.

Responding to neotheism

Neotheists believe that God is infinite, uncaused, necessary being, and is the first cause. However, these beliefs are not consistent with their other claims below:

1. God changes

- A. Change implies parts. Change occurs when something stays the same and something else changes. But God cannot have a *substantial* change (being) or else He would not be. God cannot have *accidental* change because this implies parts, and if God is composed of parts, He has the potential to fall apart. Thus, He would not be God.
- B. A changing being must have the potential to change, but God is pure actuality with no potential or He would need a cause of His existence, which would make His cause God.

2. God has parts

- A. But an infinite being cannot have parts since it is of the nature of parts to be limited. Infinite is defined as "unlimited."
- B. Also, you cannot have an infinite number of parts because you could always add one more part, but if you add one more part God is not infinite. You cannot add to an actual infinite.
- C. Parts imply composition, and composition implies a composer. Thus, God's composer (cause) would really be God.

3. God is a temporal being

- A. But what is temporal undergoes change (which is a transition from potentiality to actuality) which is measured by time (before/after). But if God is temporal, He could not have actualized Himself, for no potential being could actualize itself (i.e. steel cannot make itself into an office building):

Only three options of Being:

- 1) Uncaused
- 2) Self-caused
- 3) Caused by another

- B. The neotheist belief that "God must be temporal because He created temporal beings/universe" confused God attributes and nature (is) with His activity (does). If God must be temporal because He created a temporal creation, He must also be a creature (man, giraffe, rhino, water, etc) because He created creatures. Mormonism has made this mistake. God acts from eternity, but His effects are in time. For example, the immaterial cause of our writings or notes is our mind, but the effect of writing is material (paper/ink). In other words, though the mind is immaterial (e.g. ideological vs. verbal) the expression of writing is material. Effects (universe) do not necessitate that the cause is identical; it only needs to be similar/analogous. Are the neotheists ready to say that since God created contingent (dependent) beings, He is also dependent?

4. God and creation have a mutual dependence. This is what makes a true relationship.

A. God never changes (Mal 3:6; Num 23:19; James 1) even though He may appear to change (Jonah 3:10). People change in relation to God, not God in relation to people.

Examples:

- 1) Sinner vs. saved
- 2) Pillar and the man
- 3) Water current and the boat
- 4) Bicycle rider and the wind direction
- 5) Cats and the proper direction of petting
- 6) Water fall and the cup

B. God has unchanging attributes:

- 1) Always hates sin
- 2) Always delights in righteousness
- 3) Always judge the unrepentant with wrath
- 4) Always is loving and gracious to the saved
- 5) Ex: Umbrella and your position (see Jer 18:7-8)

- C. Not all relationships necessitate *dependence*, only interaction
 1) The belief that God and creatures are mutually dependent is like saying the top block is holding up the bottom block and the bottom block is holding up the top block.
- D. What about prayer?
 1. Prayer is to get God's will done on earth and not our will done in heaven. We serve God in prayer, not God serving us. God changes us by prayer, not we changing God by prayer.
 2. God *interacts* but does not *react*
 3. God is *proactive* not *reactive* (Ex: sick baby and the mother; Isa 65:24; Ps 139:4)
 4. God chose to accomplish His determined *ends* through free *means* (prayer)

IV. The Nature of God

A. Metaphysical Attributes (incommunicable)

Pure Actuality

1. No beginning and no end
2. No dependence or contingency upon another
3. No *passive* potentiality, only *active* potency
4. No discursive knowledge or chronological progression in God
5. Self-existing (Aseity); not self-caused.
6. Actuality is a unique contribution to the history of thought/God
7. All other metaphysical attributes follow upon His Actuality

Exodus 3:14-15 "And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' " And He said, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' . . . 'This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.' (cf. John 8:58)

Concerning whom we thus believe, even as the Apostolic Church believes, in one Father unbegotten, who has from no one the cause of His Being . . . (Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, d. 328)

For all substance that is not a created thing is God, and all that is not created is God (Augustine, *On the Trinity* 1.6)

For God is Absolute Being and, therefore, all other being that is relative was made by Him. No being that was made from nothing could be on a par with God, nor could it even be at all, were it not made by Him (Augustine, *Confessions* 11.5)

Objection:

If God acts in the changing world, doesn't that prove God changes?

- a. He *causes* from *eternity* but his *effects* are in *time* (ex: mind produces notes)
- b. Confuses *attributes* vs. *actions*
- c. If an unchanging being must change because He caused changing things, then He must also be a creature since He created creatures.⁴³

Aseity (Lat: *aseite* "of oneself")

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning. . ." shows that God is above time and creation

Isaiah 43:10 Before Me, no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.

John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

Romans 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever! Amen.

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things

⁴³ For more information see N.L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, vol 2 (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2003), 36-37.

Revelation 1:8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 4:11 By your will they are created and have their being

Simplicity (oneness; no parts)

Romans 1:23 ...and exchanged the glory of the *incorruptible* God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Argument from simplicity:

1. Parts imply composition.
2. If composed, he must have a composer.
3. To look continually for a composer of what is composed leads to an infinite regress, which is impossible.

Therefore, there must be an *uncomposed* composer of all composition

For in God, being is not one thing and living another – as though He could be and not be living. Nor in god is it one thing to live and another to understand – as though He could live without understanding. Nor in Him is it one thing to know and another to be blessed. For, in God, to live, to know, to be blessed is one and the same as to be.⁴⁴

It is evident that the Supreme Substance . . . is immutable and without parts.⁴⁵

Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neo-Caesarea (270 AD) wrote . . . in whom [Holy Spirit] is revealed God the Father, who is over all things and in all things, and God the Son, who is through all things: a perfect Trinity, not divided not differing in glory, and eternity and sovereignty. . . .⁴⁶

Athanasian Creed (373 AD) ...And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the persons: nor dividing the substance [essence]. . . .⁴⁷

Infinite (without limits)

Job 11:7-9 Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.

Psalms 147:5 Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding *is* infinite.

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and unfathomable his ways!

Since therefore the divine being is not a being received in anything, but He is His own subsistent being as was shown above (Q. 3, A. 4), it is clear that God Himself is infinite and perfect. (Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I.7.2)

NOTE: Does God have limitations? (By his nature – Heb 6:18)
(Humanly impossible vs. actually impossible)

Immutability (unchanging)

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should *change* his mind.

⁴⁴ Augustine, *City of God*, 8.6.

⁴⁵ Anselm, *St. Anselm Basic Writings*, 83. See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Bk I.3.7.

⁴⁶ Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol 2.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

I Samuel 15:29 He who is the glory of Israel does not lie or *change* his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.

Malachi 3:6 I, the LORD, do not *change*.

James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of heavenly lights, who does not *change* like shifting shadows.

. . . who is unchangeable and immutable, who is always the same, and admits of no increase or diminution. (Alexander, Epistle on the Arian Heresy 12)

... what He is, He always is; and who He is, He is always Himself; and what character He has, He always has And therefore He says, 'I am God, I change not;' in that what is not born cannot suffer change, holding His condition always. For whatever it be in Him which constitutes Divinity, must necessarily exist always, maintaining itself by its own powers, so that He should always be God (Novatian, Concerning the Trinity, Ante-Nicene Fathers 4)

God cannot change:

God is already perfect in every way:

1. Whatever changes acquires something new
2. God cannot acquire anything new (He's already perfect and complete)
3. Therefore, God cannot change (ST I.9.1)

God is not composed of parts:

1. Whatever changes is composed (of what changes and does not change)
2. There can be no composition in God (composition implies a composer)
3. Therefore, God cannot change (ST I.9.1)

Question: Does God change his mind? (Genesis 6:7; Jeremiah 18:8)? (Metaphorical - only from man's perspective)

Eternal (timeless or Atemporal; *aeternus* = without beginning or end)

Genesis 21:33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the *eternal* God.

Deuteronomy 33:27 The *eternal* God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Job 36:26 How great is God – beyond our understanding! The number of his years past finding out.

Psalms 93:2 Your throne was established long ago; you are from all *eternity*.

Isaiah 26:4 Trust in the Lord forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock *eternal*.

I Timothy 1:17 Now to the King *eternal*, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 1:2 but [God] has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom He framed the worlds (literally "ages" – Gk. *aiones* Heb. *Olam*)⁴⁸

(Time, space, matter, came to be at the moment of creation Gen 1:1; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16)

Creation *of* time vs. Creation *in* Time

If God brought the entire temporal world into existence, He would have to be eternal (i.e. not temporal, if He was part of the temporal world we would have to say He created Himself which is impossible)

Question: If God is not in time, how can he relate to temporal creatures?

⁴⁸ See Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* which speaks of "age" in terms of time, not matter

God is eternal:

1. God is immutable (no change from one state to another)
2. Whatever is immutable implies eternity because whatever changes is in time (“before” and “after;” “now” and “then”)
3. Whatever does not change cannot be in time since it has no different states that can be measured in before and after.
4. Therefore, whatever is does not change cannot be temporal
5. Therefore, God is eternal (ST I.10.2)

Time is different from eternity:

1. Whatever is essentially whole is essentially different from what has parts
2. Eternity differs from time in that it is essentially *whole* (now) and time has *parts* (now and then)
3. Therefore, time and eternity are different (ST I.10.4)
*Endless time is not the same as eternity, it’s only an extension or elongation of time)

One God (not many gods)

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is *one*.

Psalms 86:10 For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.

Isaiah 45:5 I am the LORD and there is *no other*; apart from me, there is no God. . . . I am the LORD and there is *no other*.

I Timothy 2:5 For there is *one God* and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism; *one God* and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all.

Question: Can there be more than one purely actual God?

1. God cannot create another like Himself (causality)
2. There cannot be *two* totally identical Gods (Parmenides)

Philosophical Argument (S.T. I.11.3)

1. If two or more Gods existed, they would have to differ.
2. In order to differ, one must have what the other lacks (or else there is no difference, hence, they would be identical).
3. An absolutely perfect being cannot lack anything.
4. Therefore, there can be only one absolutely perfect being.

Immaterial (spirit; no matter)

John 4:24 God is *spirit*, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Luke 24:39 See my hands and feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.

John 1:18 No man has *seen* God at any time;

Colossians 1:15 And he is the image of the *invisible* God, the firstborn of all creation.

I Timothy 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, *invisible*, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Acts 17:29 Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold, silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

NOTE: Beware of:

Metaphors (Feathers Psalm 91:4; eyes, Hebrews 4:13; door John 10:7; rock 1 Sam 2:2; shield Gen 15:1)

Anthropomorphisms (arms Deuteronomy 33:27; back Jer 18:17)

Anthropopathisms (compassion Psalm 111:4; grief Ephesians 4:30)

Anthropoieses (repenting Genesis 6:6; forgetting Isaiah 43:25)

Metaphysical: statements that reflect god's nature literally (Love, knowledge, power, justice, existence)

Question: How do you distinguish between metaphysical and metaphorical language?

1. Ask yourself if the word can be applied to God *literally* as an infinite.
2. You may have to strip the word of its finitude (limitation) before applying it to God. Any word that loses its meaning when stripped of its limitations/ finitude cannot be applied to God literally, only *metaphorically* (ex: rock, tower, arms vs. knowledge, power, love, etc)⁴⁹

William Lane Craig asserts, "The Scriptures are filled with anthropomorphisms, many so subtle that they escape our notice. There are not only the obvious anthropomorphisms, such as references to God's eyes, hands, and nostrils, but almost unconscious ones, such as God seeing the distress of his people, hearing their prayers, crushing his enemies, turning away from apostate Israel, and so forth. These are all *metaphors*, since God does not possess literal body parts by which to accomplish these actions. In the same way, given the explicit teaching of Scripture that God does foreknow the future, the passages that portray God as ignorant or inquiring are probably just anthropomorphisms characteristic of the genre of narrative."⁵⁰

Norman Geisler identifies six theological problems that can arise if anthropomorphisms are not properly understood:⁵¹

1. "God repented" can lead to a denial of His immutability
2. "The eyes of Him" can lead to a denial of immateriality
3. "He is a Rock" can lead to a denial of infinity
4. "Whom He foreknew" can lead to a denial of His eternality
5. "God became angry" could lead to a denial of His impassibility
6. "But the Lord came down to see" can lead to a denial of His omniscience

Philosophical Argument

- 1) Matter implies multiple parts.
- 2) Each part differs from the other parts.
- 3) If they differ, one part lacks the perfection of the other parts (e.g. eyes lack eariness)
- 4) But God is perfectly one without any lack.
- 5) Therefore, God cannot be material.

*Besides, whatever is composed can decompose.

Sovereignty (rule over all)

Psalm 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Daniel 4:35 He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"

John 19:11 Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above."

⁴⁹ Geisler, *Systematic Theology* vol. 2, 29.

⁵⁰ William Lane Craig, "What Does God Know?" in Douglas S. Huffman and Eric L. Johnson, eds., *God Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 142.

⁵¹ Norman Geisler, unpublished class notes on Systematic Theology (ST2) Southern Evangelical Seminary 2002.

Omnipotent (all-powerful)

Job 42:3 I know you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.

Psalms 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Luke 1 For nothing is impossible with God. (In what way?)

“Almighty” = Gk: *pantokrator* is used nine times in the NT (and translated in the LXX) and always is translated “almighty” which means “all-powerful” (2 Cor 6:18; Rev 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:15; 21:22). The Latin Vulgate uses the word *omnipotens* from which we get our word *omnipotent*.⁵² Hb: *shadday* is translated “almighty” (Ps 91:1)

Question: Then why has God’s plan and will to save all men (II Peter 3:9) been thwarted? (necessity vs. conditionally)

God’s plan will be accomplished perfectly? What does not come under God perfect grace unto salvation will be fulfilled under his perfect justice through wrath.

Omnipresent (everywhere present - Ps 139)

Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, an *ever-present* help in trouble.

Jeremiah 23:23 Am I only a God nearby, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.

Matthew 28:20 And surely I am with you *always*, to the very end of the age.

Hebrews 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Omniscience (all-knowing)

Psalms 139:4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it *completely*, O LORD.

Psalms 147:5 Great is our Lord. Mighty in power; His understanding *is* infinite

Proverbs 5:21 For a man’s ways are in *full view* of the LORD, and he examines all his paths.

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are *everywhere*, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

Hebrews 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight.

I John 3:19 For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows *everything*.

God knows future free choices:

Eternal beings know eternally:

1. Since God is an eternal being, He knows things in one eternal now
2. The future is part of time
3. Therefore, God knows the future

*Simple beings know simply, all at once, not incrementally in stages, or parts

Transcendence (above or over all; lofty)

Deuteronomy 4:39 Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven *above* and on earth below.

Psalms 103:19 The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules *over all*.

⁵² N.L. Geisler, *Theology Proper and Christology (ST2)* unpublished Southern Evangelical Seminary class notes 2002.

Ephesians 4:6 one God and Father of all, who is *over all*, through all, and in all.

Immanence (present and active with all creation)

Micah 1:3 Look! The LORD is coming from his dwelling place; he comes down and treads the high places of the earth.

Acts 17:27 ...though he is not far from each one of us. 'For in him we live move and have our being.'

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

NOTE: God is in the world *causally* but not *intrinsically*, like an artist is in his painting.

B. Moral Attributes (essential to his nature; communicable)

Holiness (moral purity, set apart from evil & sin)

Leviticus 11:44 I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. . . . therefore be holy, because I am holy.

Habakkuk 1:13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.

Luke 1:49 . . . for the mighty One has done great things for me – holy is his name.

James 2:13 Let no one say when he is tempted "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone

Revelation 4:8 Day and night they [four living creatures] never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Just/Righteousness (lawful; equity; impartial)

Psalms 33:5 The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. . .

II Chronicles 19:7 Now, let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice, partiality, or bribery.

Isaiah 30:18 For the LORD is a God of Justice.

II John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

II Corinthians 5:21 For he made him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Question: In what way have we become righteous?

Question: Do moral obligations ever conflict? (Truth telling and stealing vs. preserving life)
How do we discover which one to obey? (Ethical right of way principle)

Jealousy (righteous zeal)

Exodus 20:5 . . . you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God . . .

Exodus 34:14 . . . (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name *is* jealous, *is* a jealous God).

Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Truthfulness (faithful to His Word)

Numbers 23:19 The LORD sent Balaam to Balak to say. . . “God is not a man that, that He should lie, Nor a son of man that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”

John 17:17 Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth.

Hebrews 6:18 . . . it *is* impossible for God to lie . . .

Merciful (offered to all who want it - John 6:37)

Ex 34:6 And the LORD passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands . . .

Psalms 37:26 *He* is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed

James 5:11 . . . the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. (see Ps 103 full of pity)

Question: Why does God seemingly show mercy to some and not to others? (Jeremiah 18:8)

Love

John 4:8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said to him “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

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

Some comments on God’s moral attributes

1. Since God is **infinite**, His attributes are infinite as well: infinitely Good, all-loving, etc....
2. Since God is **simple** (one), His attributes are coordinately unified: “justly merciful” and “mercifully just;” “lovingly holy” and “holy love. . .”
3. Since He is **eternal**, God acts and knows from eternity: God’s acts are from eternity even though the results are in time (i.e. creation)

V. Common Questions

- A. Does God have feelings and emotions?
- B. Is God limited in any way? (by his nature) Hebrews 6:18
- C. If God is essentially one, why then does he have multiple attributes (parts)?
- D. God’s changing *activities* vs. his unchanging *attributes*
- E. Can God relate to human beings if he has not experienced a human kind of life (neotheism; openness of God movement)?

The Nature of God, Man and Angels Contrasted

God	Angels	Man
Uncaused	Caused	Caused
Pure Actuality	Completed act/pot	progressive act/pot
Eternal	Aeeternal	Temporal
Spirit	Spirit	Spirit-body unity
Beyond all classes	Each a class of one	All in one class
Never can change	Will can change but nature can’t	Will & nature can change

VII. Doctrine of Analogy⁵³

The principal of analogy states that an effect must be *similar* to its cause. Like produces like. An effect cannot be totally *different* from its cause. . . . Likewise, analogy affirms that that God cannot be totally the *same* as His effects, for in this case they would be identical to God.⁵⁴ (Gen 1:26-27; 9:6; Acts 14:17; 17:28-29)

A. Being

1. Equivocal (Islam; non-being)
2. Univocal (monism; Parmenides)
3. Analogical (similar kinds of beings; Aquinas)

B. Language

1. Definition of words:
 - a. Equivocal (agnosticism)
 - b. Univocal (Duns Scotus; Aquinas)
 - c. Analogical (Christianity vs. Mormonism)
2. Application or predication of words:
 - a. Equivocal (Islam)
 - b. Univocal (Mormonism; neotheism; panentheism)
 - c. Analogical (Christianity; Aquinas)

VIII. God is a *Trinity* (relationship between the three persons in the Godhead)

A. Orthodox View

1. The doctrine of the Trinity was codified in the fourth-century at the Council of Constantinople (381) after several heresies arose.
2. It can be defined as: *three distinct persons existing within one divine essence or nature*. Each person is *coeternally* and *coequally* God possessing the same divine *substance*.

B. Formulation of the Doctrine

What is the problem?

1. How can God be both one and three at the same time?
2. Early Christians did not want to abandon their Jewish belief in one God, but also wanted to *exalt* and *worship* Jesus. They were accused of being *tritheists* by the Jews.
3. Several heresies (arianism, sabellianism, docetism) arose which threatened the *deity* and *humanity* of Christ. Christians were forced to clarify and define what they believe about Christ – which had implications on the formulation of the Trinity.
4. Persecution and imprisonment pressed Christians to confess what they believed and why to Roman authorities.
5. Therefore, newly converted Constantine called an ecumenical council at Nicea 325 AD to settle the issues.⁵⁵

Pre-Nicene precedence for the Trinity

Some say that Trinity was not even mentioned until the fourth century after the Nicene council – 325). The following quotes will confirm that the doctrine of the Trinity was alive and well before the Council of Nicea.

1. **Apostles** (33-100) accepted the full *humanity* and *deity* of Christ, and adopted the *Trinitarian* baptismal formula (Mt 16:16-18; 28:19; 1 John 1:1-10).⁵⁶

⁵³ See Battista Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963); Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Bk I.13.10; I.33; N.L. Geisler, "Analogy, Principle of" in *Baker's Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (aka *BECA*) (*Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999*), 17. Other books on analogy by George Klubertanz, Etienne Gilson, Ralph McInerney, and Joseph Butler.

⁵⁴ Geisler, *BECA*,

17.

⁵⁵ See J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, revised edition, (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1960, 1965, 1968, 1975); Louis Berkhof, *A History of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1937); Bernhard Lohse, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); W.G.T. Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine* (2 vols) (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1999).

Apostles Creed

I believe in God the FATHER Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only (begotten) Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; . . . the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven; sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of the saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body [flesh]; and the life everlasting. Amen.

2. The **apostolic fathers, early fathers, and apologists** (100-325) spoke and wrote about the Godhead and person of Christ.

Polycarp (70-155?): Bishop of Smyrna and disciple of John the apostle.

O Lord God Almighty. . . I bless you and glorify you through the eternal and heavenly high priest Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, through whom be glory to you, with Him and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever.

Justin Martyr (100-165?): (Apologist and Martyr)

For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water.⁵⁷

Ignatius of Antioch (d. 98-117?): Bishop of Antioch. In Christ Jesus our Lord, by whom and with whom be glory and power to the Father with the Holy Spirit. We have also as a physician the Lord our God Jesus the Christ the only-begotten Son and Word, before time began, but who afterwards became also man, of Mary the virgin.⁵⁸

Irenaeus (115-190): Listened to Polycarp as a youth and Bishop of Lyons.

The church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: . . . one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, . . .⁵⁹

Justin Martyr: Christ is distinct in function from the Father.

Athenagorus: Christ was without beginning.

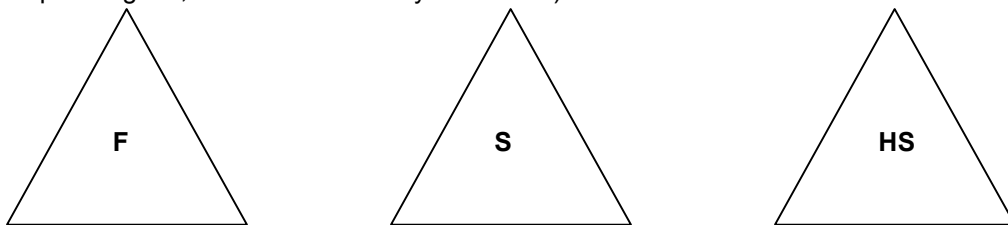
Theophilus: The Holy Spirit is distinct from the *Logos*

Tertullian: Spoke of "Trinity" and "persons" – three in number, one in substance.

Athanasius: Christ is co-eternal with the Father, had no beginning, is not subordinate to the Father, and Father and Son are of the same substance (*homoousia*).⁶⁰

Counterfeit Trinity

Tri-theism (three separate gods; Jews accused early Christians)



⁵⁶ Baptismal Formula cited by Philip Schaff, "The Greek and Latin Creeds" in *The Creeds of Christendom* Vol II, 6th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker), 5. Also, see *Apostles Creed* in same volume, p. 45.

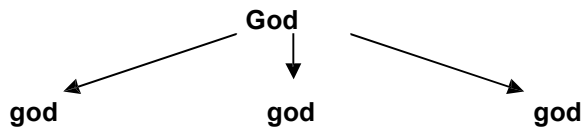
⁵⁷ First Apol., LXI.

⁵⁸ Roberts & Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975 rpt. Vol. 1, p.52)

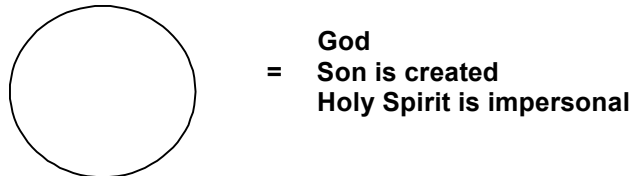
⁵⁹ *Against Heresies* X.1

⁶⁰ See H. Wayne House *Charts on Christian Theology and Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 43-44.

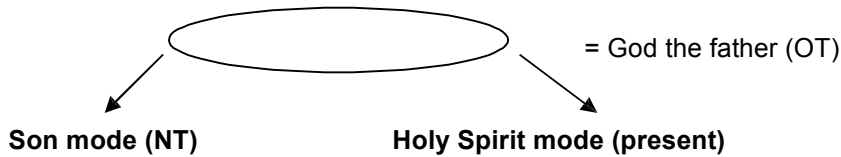
Triad/Henotheism (Hinduism, Assyrians, Babylonians)



Unitarianism (Arianism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Islam, Judaism)



Modalism (Oneness Pentecostals, Jesus Only, Sabellius 3rd cent. - overemphasized the *unity* of God; Emmanuel Swedenborg)



The Council of Nicea (A.D. 325)

Since Arianism and other Christological heresies were spreading throughout the Roman Empire, Constantine called an ecumenical council in Nicea [modern day Isnik Turkey]. This is the first ecumenical council in the history of the church (over 300 bishops from east and few from the west).

The Question: Was Christ a created being or fully God?

Arius

1. Denied Christ's deity
2. Not eternal – Created being
3. Not of same essence as the Father
4. "Begotten" = made

Athanasius

1. Affirmed Christ's deity
2. Same essence as the Father (*homoousia*)
3. No beginning

Results

We believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance [essence] with the Father;

1. Arianism condemned by the church but not destroyed
2. *Homoousia* affirmed
3. Doctrine of Holy Spirit left undeveloped

The Council of Constantinople⁶¹ (A.D. 381)

Even though the Nicene Council condemned Arianism, it flourished for the next 50 years both theologically and politically. At the request of emperor Theodosius I, a second ecumenical council was convened (c. 150 bishops from the east) to

⁶¹ Cited from H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 44.

address the several issues, among them was Macedonianism which sought to subordinate the Holy Spirit much the same way Arius subordinated Christ.

The Question: Is the Holy Spirit God?

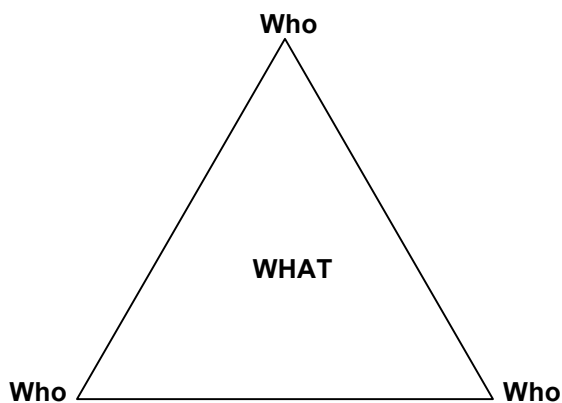
Creed:

... the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father, who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and the Son.

Results:

1. Church reconfirmed Arian condemnation
2. Macedonianism condemned
3. Deity of Holy Spirit affirmed
4. Doctrine of Trinity formed – Council at Chalcedon (451) would reconfirm Christ's two natures.

The Trinity Explained



The Father is God (Galatians 1:1)

The Son is God (Matthew 14:33; 16:16-17; 27:11 cf. Isa 9:6; John 1:1; 5:17-18; 10:30, 36; 1 John 5:20)

The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 3:17)

3. Christology

The Person of Jesus Christ

The person of Jesus Christ is *central* to biblical Christianity. Of primary importance to this doctrine is the question of *who he is*. More specifically:

1. Importance of the Doctrine
2. Heresies concerning Christ
3. The Nature of Christ
4. The Person of Christ
5. Common objections to Christ

I. The Importance of the Doctrine

A. The implications

1. If Jesus is not God there are several implications that follow:
 - a. He made false claims to be the "Son of God" (Mk 14:61-63; Mt 16:15-17; Jn 8:42; 9:35-37; 11:4)
 - b. He would not be a sufficient sacrifice to atone for the sin of the world (1 Pet 1:19) because of His *own* sinfulness (Rom 3:23). Otherwise any sacrifice would atone (Mt 26:39)

- c. Christianity would not differ in kind from other religions (1 Cor 15:12-19)
- d. There is no assurance that life exists beyond death (Phil 3:21; Rom 1:4; 1 Jn 3:2)

2. If Jesus is God there are several implications that follow:

- a. Then what Jesus said was true.
- b. He said the only way to salvation was through him (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12)
- c. There is assurance of life after death (Jn 6:68; Jn 14:1-3).
- d. Man has a moral obligation to worship and obey Him.

Heresies Concerning Christ

Docetists

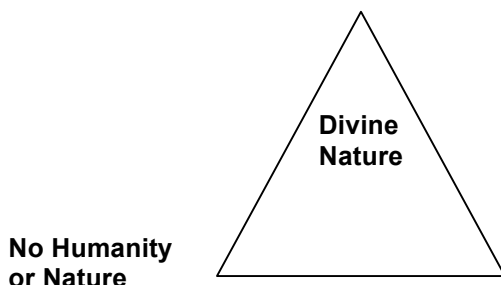
(Valentinus and Sabellius, - 1st century)

Beliefs

- 1. Denied Christ's real *humanity* – affirmed deity
- 2. Humanity of Christ was only *imaginary* or *apparent* – like a *costume*
 - 1. Christ's suffering not real.
 - 2. Marcion and Gnostics associated with this view (material world evil)

Why?

- 1. Philosophical view of material world as less than good.
- 2. Overemphasis on Christ's deity



Results

- 1. Docetism was not condemned.
- 2. Irenaeus and Hippolytus defended against it.

Reasons to Reject Docetism:

If Christ were not human, He **could not redeem** humanity (Heb 2:14; 7:26-27)

They **ignore clear passages** of Scripture that indicate Jesus had a real body (Isa 9:6; Jn 1:14; 2:21; Mt 1:2; Lk 24:39)

- 1. experienced real limitations of humanity (Mt 4:2; Jn 4:6-7)
- 2. Called a man by others (Jn 19:5; Acts 17:31; 1 Tim 2:5)
- 3. Grew as a man (Lk 2:52; 3:23)
- 4. Had human names (Mk 6:3; Mt 13:55)
- 5. Jesus' body was handled by others both before and after his resurrection (Lk 8:43-47; Jn 20:27; 1 Jn 1:1-3; Luke 24:39; 1 John 1:1-4).

If Christ was not a real human, what makes the docetist think that the **rest of mankind is real**? This is a betrayal of human sense experience.

The docetic view of Christ is in direct conflict with 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7 and Luke 24:39 which affirms that **Christ came in the flesh and remains in the flesh** (perfect participle/present participle).

Arians

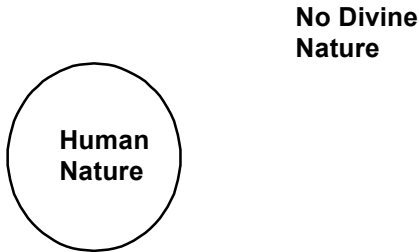
(Arius, priest-presbyter of Alexandria – 4th century)

Belief

- 3. Denied the *deity* of Christ – no divine substance (*homoousia* vs. *heteroousia*).
- 4. Jesus was the first and highest *created being*.
- 3. Modern *Jehovah’s Witnesses* descend from the Arians.

Why?

- 1. Scriptural misinterpretation (Jn 1:1; Col 1:15-16; Rev. 3:14)
- 2. Confusion around “Son of God” phrase



Result

- 1. Condemned at Council of Nicea 325 AD
- 3. Arians grew for next 50 years – Council at Constantinople 381 AD reaffirmed condemnation
- 4. Nicene Creed and Athanasius Creed affirms Christ’s deity.

Reasons to Reject Arianism

Arianism seems to ignore or **misinterpret clear passages** that reveal Christ’s deity (Zech 12:10; Jn 1:1, 14; 5:17-18; 8:58; Col 1:15-19; 2:9; Phil 2:6). (Explain “pet texts” used by J.W.’s – Rev 3:14; Col 1:15-17)

If Jesus was only a man (for He would **lack the perfection** needed to represent man to God and **lack the perfection** needed to represent God to man), He could not satisfy God’s wrath and atone for the sin of the world.

Arianism was **condemned** at the Council of Nicea (325)

Arianism does not account for the omnipredicates (**incommunicable attributes** of God) inherent in Christ’s person (Mt 18:20; Jn 2:24-25; 3:13; Heb 13:8).

Arianism misunderstands the phrase “**Son of God**” to be referring to *heteroousia* instead of *homoousia*.

There are philosophical problems regarding **fellowship** within a Unitarian model of God.

Arianism has polytheistic tendencies. (NWT John 1:1 “a god.”)

Appollinarians

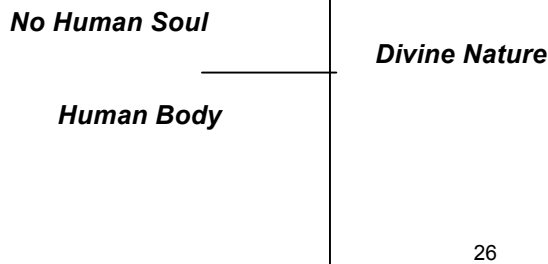
(Appollinarius, Bishop of Laodoea- 4th century)

Beliefs

- 1. Denied Christ’s complete humanness.
- 2. Divine mind (*logos*) *replaced* the human soul instead of *adding* a human soul.
- 3. Jesus did not have a human *soul* – *only possessed one nature*

Why?

- 1. We can’t be saved if Christ was a mere man. Eternal life can only be found if Christ as God.



Results

1. Condemned at Council of Antioch, 378, 379 AD
2. Condemned at Council of Constantinople, 381 AD

Eutychians

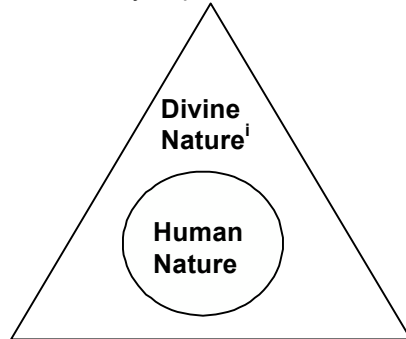
(Eutychius, 5th century – was a reaction to Nestorius. Also called “monophysitists,” *monos* = single and *physis* = nature)

Beliefs

1. Human and divine nature confused – no distinction
2. Saw Christ as possessing a single new kind of nature – *tertium quid*

Why?

1. Tried to preserve unity of person in Christ.



Results

1. Condemned by Council of Chalcedon, 451 AD
2. Council of Chalcedon (451) confirmed Christ's two natures *touching* but without confusion.

Reasons to reject Eutychianism

It is impossible to affirm that Christ has one “**infinite-finite**” nature. They (natures) are both mutually exclusive.

Christ would **be neither fully man nor fully God**. Hence, He could not redeem as man or as God.

The **Council of Chalcedon (451 AD)** affirmed the orthodox position of Christ's two natures united without confusion in one person.

Scripture affirms **distinction of natures** within Christ (Luke 2:52; Jn 5:17-18; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 2:14).

Nestorianism

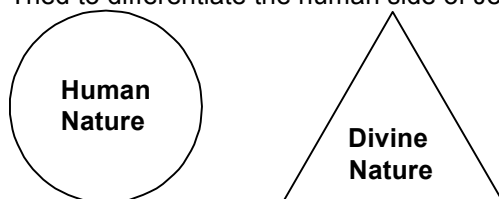
(Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople - 5th century)

Belief

1. Denied the *union* of Christ's human and divine natures.
2. Viewed Christ as *two persons* instead of two *natures* united in *one* person.
3. Joined only *morally*, not *organically* - thus Christ was *two* disjointed persons.
4. Divine controlled the human side of Jesus.

Why?

1. Tried to differentiate the human side of Jesus which died from the Divine side that cannot die.



Result

1. In 430 AD, Pope Celestine condemned Nestorius
2. In 431 AD, the General Council of Ephesus deposed Nestorius and condemned his doctrine.
3. Five years later he was banished to upper Egypt where he probably died.

Reasons to Reject Nestorianism

There is no way to account for biblical statements that attribute God's metaphysical (incommunicable omni-predicates) attributes to Christ:

1. Immutability - Heb 13:6-8
2. Omniscience - John 2:23-25
3. Omnipresence - Matt 18:20
4. Omnipotence - Matt 28:18 cf. Col 1:15-17)

If the death of Jesus Christ was only an act of a human person (because Nestorius separates Christ into two persons with two natures), it **would not be efficacious**. It was "who" Jesus was that made the sacrifice on the cross-propitious (satisfactory to God). Sins committed against a sinless and holy God requires an equally sinless and holy sacrifice – this is true equity and justice) (see Hebrews 2:14-18).

Nestorianism was **condemned** at Council of Ephesus (431 AD).

Scripture affirms Christ's human and divine nature were united (not separated or confused) in one person (Philippians 2:1-11; Col 1:19; 2:9).

The Person of Christ

Pre-existence and eternity of the Son

Psalms 45:6 Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. (cf. Hebrews 1:8-9)

Psalms 110:1 The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.' (cf. Matthew 22:41-46: "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?")

Proverbs 30:4 (Psalm of Agur) Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!⁶²

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; . . . And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, *Mighty God, Everlasting Father* . . .

Micah 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from *old*, from *ancient times*.

John 1:1 In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was *with* God in the beginning. ("was" in Greek *imperfect tense* stresses continual existence in past time; "with" in Greek speaks of *face to face* relationship)

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

John 8:58 . . . before Abraham was, I am. ("I am" is present tense meaning Christ was *continuously existing* before Abraham's birth)

⁶² See comments by Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 273-78, and R. Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, and D. Brown, *A Commentary – Critical, Experimental, Practical – on the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 508.

Acts 3:15 You killed the *author of life*, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

Deity

John 1:1 . . . the Word was with God, and the *Word was God*.

John 1:14 And the *Word became flesh* and dwelt among us, . . . (implies preincarnate existence)

John 17:5 And now , O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the *glory which I had with You* before the world was. (cf. Isaiah 42:8)

Philippians 2:6 . . . Christ Jesus, being in the *form of God* . . . (“form” *morphe* is the same word used to describe the human “form of a bondservant” Phil 2:7)

Hebrews 1:8-9 But to the Son he [God] says “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; . . . Therefore God, Your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness . . .”

Jesus

Is the “shepherd” (Jn 10:11)
Is the “I AM” (Jn 8:24, 58; 13:19)
Is the “creator” (Jn 1:3; Col1:15-17)
Is the “first and the last” (Rev 1:17)
Is “God” (Jn 1:1; 20:28; Tit 2:13; Heb 1:8)
Is the “savior” (Acts 4:12; Rom 10:9)
Is the “forgiver” of sins (Mk 2:7, 10)
Is “addressed in prayer” (Acts 7:59)
Is “confessed as Lord” (Phil 2:10)
Is “worshipped” by angels (Heb 1:6)
Is “worshipped” by men (Mt 14:31-33)
Is “unchanging” (Heb 13:8)
Is “eternal” (Mic 5:2; Jn 8:58; Heb 13:8)
Is “omniscient” (Jn 2:24-25)
Is “omnipresent” (Mt 18:20; 28:18)
Is “all powerful” (Col 2:10; Mt 28:18)

Jehovah

Is a “shepherd” (Ps 23:1)
Is the “I AM” (Ex 3:14; Isa 43:10)
Is the “creator” (Gen 1:1; Isa 40)
Is the “first and the last” (Isa 44:6)
Is “God” (Isa 43:10; 45:22)
Is “savior” (Isa 45:21; 43:3, 11)
Is a “forgiver” of sins (Jer 31:34)
Is “addressed in prayer” (Dan 6)
Is “confessed as Lord” (Isa 45:23)
Is “worshipped” by angels (Ps 148:2)
Is “worshipped” by men (Ex 34:14)
Is “unchanging” (Mal 3:6)
Is “eternal” (Deut 33:27)
Is “omniscient” (1 Jn 3:20)
Is “omnipresent” (Ps 139)
Is “all powerful” (Ps 139)

Deity and Creator

Colossians 1:15-17 He is in the image of the invisible God, the firstborn (cf. Psalm 89:27) over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in him all things consist (hold together).

Omniscient

John 16:30 Now we [disciples] are sure You *know all things* . . . By this we know you came forth from God.

John 21:17 And he [Peter] said to him “Lord, you *know all things*; . . .” (See John 2:25; 4:18)

Colossians 2:2 the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of *wisdom and knowledge*.

Question: Did Christ grow in wisdom and knowledge?

Omnipotent

Matthew 28:18 *All authority* has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Mark 2:5-7 He [Jesus] said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” (only God has the power to forgive sins – Isa 43:25; 55:7; Matt 9:2; Lk 7:47).

Colossians 2:10 . . . and you have been given the fullness of Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

Omnipresence

Matthew 28:20 Jesus came and spoke to them saying, . . . “I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.”

Matthew 18:20 For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.

Indwelling of every believer *demand*s Christ be omnipresent (John 14:23; Ephesians 3:17; Rev. 3:20)

***Question:** What about Christ’s physically resurrected glorified body?

Immutability

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the *same* yesterday, today, and forever.

Holiness (moral purity; sinless)

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – *yet was without sin*.

Hebrews 7:26 Such a high priest meets our need – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

1 Peter 2:22 He [Jesus] committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.

Question: Could Christ sin?

Question: Wasn’t Christ made to be sin for us - 2 Cor 5:21?

JESUS	
Became sin	Did not become sin
Judicially For us Substitutionally As scape goat	Actually In himself Personally Unblemished lamb

Birth

Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:30-38) (conception vs. birth)

Humanity

- He was “born” of a woman (Mt 1:24-25)
- He grew in “wisdom and stature” (Lk 2:51-52)
- He became “thirsty” (Jn 4:7)
- He became “tired” (Jn 4:6; 19:28)
- He had his own “will” (Mt 26:39)
- He was “tempted” (Mt 4:1, 4, 7, 10)
- He “wept” (Jn 11:35)
- He felt “forsaken” (Mt 27:46)
- He physically experienced “death” (Jn 19:33)

Jesus in Prophecy

	<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Fulfillment</u>
1. Born of a virgin	Isa 7:14	Mt 1:8, 24, 25
2. Son of God	Ps 2:7	Mt 3:17
3. Seed of Abraham	Gen 22:18	Mt 1:1; Gal 3:16
4. House of David	Jer 23:5	Lk 3:23, 31
5. Born in Bethlehem	Mic 5:2	Mt 2:1
6. His pre-existence	Mic 5:2	Col 1:17
7. Shall be Immanuel	Isa 7:14	Mt 1:23
8. Shall be a prophet	Deut 18:18	Mt 21:11
9. Priest	Ps 110:4	Heb 3:1; 5:5, 6
10. Teacher of parables	Ps 78:2	Mt 13:34
11. Was to enter Jerusalem on a donkey	Zech 9:9	Lk 19:35
12. Stone of Stumbling	Ps 118:22	1 Pet 2:7
13. Light to the Gentiles	Isa 60:3	Acts 13:47, 48a
14. Resurrection	Ps 16:10	Acts 2:31
15. Betrayed by friend	Ps 41:9	Mt 10:4
16. Sold for 30 pieces of silver	Zech 11:12	Mt 26:15
17. Money thrown in God's house	Zech 11:13b	Mt 27:5a
18. Forsaken by disciples	Zech 13:7	Mk 14:50
19. Silent before accusers	Isa 53:7	Mt 27:12-19
20. Wounded and bruised	Isa 53:5	Mt 27:26
21. Smitten/spat upon	Isa 50:6	Mt 26:67
22. Crucified with thieves	Isa 53:12	Mt 27:38
23. Made intercession for His persecutors	Isa 53:12	Lk 23:34
24. Rejected by His own	Isa 53:3	Jn 7:5, 48
25. Hated without cause	Ps 69:4	Jn 15:25
26. Garment parted and lots cast	Ps 22:18	Jn 19:23-24
27. His forsaken cry	Ps 22:1	Mt 27:46
28. Bones not broken	Ps 34:20	Jn 19:33
29. His side pierced	Zech 12:10	Jn 19:34
30. Darkness covers land	Amos 8:9	Mt 27:45
31. Buried in rich man's tomb	Isa 53:9	Mt 27:57-60

Stoner considers 48 prophecies and says “. . . we find the chance that any one man fulfilled all 48 prophecies to be 1 in 10¹⁵⁷.”⁶³

Note: Peter Stoner in *Science Speaks* applied the science of probability to eight biblical prophecies:

1. Born in Bethlehem	Mic 5:2	Mt 2:1
2. Preceded by messenger	Isa 40:3	Mt 3:1-3
3. Enter Jerusalem on a donkey	Zech 9:9	Lk 19:35
4. Betrayed by friend	Ps 41:9	Mt 10:4
Hands and feet pierced	Ps 22:16	Lk 23:33
5. Sold for 30 pieces of silver	Zech 11:12	Mt 26:15
6. Money thrown in God's house	Zech 11:13b	Mt 27:5a
Price given for potters field	Zech 11:13b	Mt 27:7
7. Dumb before accusers	Isa 53:7	Mt 27:12
8. Crucified with thieves	Isa 53:12	Mt 27:38

Stoner asserts, “. . . we find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10¹⁷. That would be 1 in 100, 000, 000, 000, 000, 000.”⁶⁴

⁶³ Ibid.

Works of Christ

Creator of the universe (Colossians 1:15-17)
Destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8)
Atonement for Sin (cross)(2 Corinthians 5:21)
Healing the sick (John 9:1-7)
Feeding the hungry (Matthew 14:15-21)
Raise the dead (John 11; 20)
Miracles as proof of his deity (John 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-18; 11:1-44)
Serve others (Matthew 20:28)
Judge the living and the dead (John 5:22; Acts 17:31; 2 Timothy 4:1)
Fulfill prophecy (see Matthew)
Manifest Deity (Matthew 17)

Death of Christ

Substitutionary – in place of another (1 Peter 2:24; Rom 4:25; 2 Cor 5:21)
Vicarious – substitutionary, offered by offended party (Isaiah 53)
Propitiatory – satisfying payment for sin in order to avert wrath. (Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10)
Motivated by Love – John 3:16; Romans 5:8
Mercy vs. Justice – Jesus faced ethical dilemma between mercy for the many and justice for Himself.
Preordained – Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:19-20

In what way was Christ “cursed” (Gal 3:13), “forsaken” (Mt 27:46), and made “to be sin” (2 Cor 5:21) on the cross, when the Bible also tells us that He was “blessed by God” (Ps 72:17) and One worthy to receive “glory and blessing” (Rev 5:12)?

The Son was *blessed* of God

Actually
For who He is
For the kind of person He is
Because he had no sin

Son was *cursed/forsaken* of God

Judicially⁶⁵ and substitutionally
For what He did for us
For the kind of death He died
Because He stood in for us as our substitute (He’s like someone else taking your sentence) Pathological or emotive language (feelings) Ps 22:24

Louis Berkof says, “In a short period of time He [Jesus] bore the infinite wrath against sin to the very end and came out victoriously. This was possible for Him only because of His exalted nature. At this point we should guard against misunderstanding, however. Eternal death in the case of Christ did not consist in an abrogation of the union of the Logos with the human nature, nor in the divine nature being forsaken by God, nor in the withdrawal of the Father’s divine love or good pleasure from the person of the Mediator. The Logos remained united with the human nature even when the body was in the grave; the divine nature could not possibly be forsaken of God. . . . It revealed itself in the human consciousness of the Mediator as a feeling of God forsakenness. This implies that the human nature for a moment missed the conscious comfort which it might derive from its union with the divine Logos, and the sense of the divine love, and was painfully conscious of the fulness of divine wrath which was bearing down upon it. Yet there was no despair, for even in the darkest hour, while He exclaims that He is forsaken, He directs His prayer to God.”⁶⁶

Alternatively, **Wayne Grudem** says “When Jesus cried out ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Mt 27:46), he showed that he was finally cut off from the sweet fellowship with his heavenly Father that had been the unending source of his inward strength and the element of greatest joy in a life filled with sorrow. As Jesus bore our sins on the cross, he was abandoned by his heavenly Father, who is ‘of purer eyes than to behold evil’ (Hab 1:13).⁶⁷

Intermediate state of Christ

Upon Christ’s death, His human spirit went to be with the Father (Jn 19:30; Lk 23:43, 46 cf. 2 Cor 12:1-4; 2 Cor 5:8) and His body went into the tomb (Jn 19:38-42).

⁶⁴ An elaboration of the above information can be found in Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Vol. 1 (San Bernardino: Here’s Life Publishers, 1979), 167. H. Harold Hartzler, and an Executive Council of the American Scientific Affiliation found Stoner’s book to be accurate and dependable in regard to the scientific material (including his use of the principles of probability) presented therein.

⁶⁵ “Matthew” by Louis A. Barbieri, in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (27:46)

⁶⁶ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 339.

⁶⁷ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*,

Problem texts:

1. **The Apostolic Confession** “He descended into Hell (hades)”
 - a. Added in 390 AD to the Aquileian form of the creed
 - b. Phrase not used in Scripture

2. **Ephesians 4:9** “descended into the lower parts of the earth” “Lower parts of the earth” is not equivalent to “hades” because it is associated with Christ’s “ascension” (Jn 3:13) (opposite of ascension is “incarnation”)
 - b. “Lower parts” means “this world” (Ps 139:15)

An alternative view would find in the passages in Ezk and elsewhere merely a reference to the grave. The phrase “lower parts of the earth” is found eight times. Of special significance are those in Ezk 31–32, where Pharaoh and his contemporary kings are pictured as fallen, slain, lying with the uncircumcised. Note Ezk 32:24 where Elam and her army are said to be in the “grave” (*qeber*), in the “lower parts of the earth” (*ere ta ti yôt*) and in the “pit” (*bôr*). In these two chapters the place where the heathen lie is called “grave” (*qeber*) six times; “sheol” five times; “pit” (*bôr*) eight times and “lower parts of the earth” five times. It seems likely that these terms are here used as synonyms referring to the tomb, which was typically a burial cave with ledges on the sides where bodies were buried, sometimes in state and with their armor. In this usage, *ere ta ti yôt* means no more than a place below ground where the dead are buried. It need not refer to any mythical location or subterranean place inhabited by ghosts or shades. No special cosmology or mythology is implied. The other usages of *ta ti* are Deut

32:22 and Ps 86:13 (both “the depths of Sheol” RSV); Ps 63:9 [H 10] and 139:15) both “the depths of the earth” RSV); and Ps 88:6 [H 7] (“the depths of the earth” RSV) which would seem to be in line with Ezk’s usage. No emphasis on “depth” seems necessary in the translation. Naturally this does not deny that other vss. speak of conscious existence of the spirit after death.⁶⁸

Verses 9-11 serve as a commentary on two words of the quotation in verse 8, namely, **ascended** (vv. 9-10) and “gave” (v. 11). In verses 9-10 Paul commented on the words **He ascended**. These two verses are parenthetical in thought because the issue of the passage is the giving of gifts. Before Christ could ascend He had to descend. What is meant by **to the lower, earthly regions**, literally, “into the lower parts of earth”? The genitive “of” can be taken in three ways: (1) “Into the lower parts, namely, the earth” (a genitive of apposition). This would refer to Christ’s incarnation, His “descent” to the earth. (2) “Into the parts lower than the earth” (a genitive of comparison). This would mean that Christ descended into *hades* between His death and resurrection. (3) “Into the lower parts which belong to the earth” (a genitive of possession). This would refer to Christ’s death and His burial in the grave. The third view best fits the context because in His death Christ had victory over sin and redeemed those who would be given as “gifts” to the church.⁶⁹

3. **1 Peter 3:18-19** “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom He also went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

a. The “Spirit” is the “life-giving [Holy Spirit] Spirit” by whom Christ preached through Noah to the disobedient who are now in prison.

Gleason Archer asserts, “It seems quite evident, therefore, that the passage under discussion assures us that even back in Noah’s day, in His pre-incarnate state, God the Son was concerned with the salvation of sinners.... In view of the focus on the generation of Noah as corresponding to the lost world of Peter’s day (and of every generation since then, we may be sure), we are forced to conclude that the proclamation [v. 19 *ekeryxen* = proclaim a message from a king or potentate; not *euangelizomai* = to preach or tell the good news] referred to in v. 19 took place, not when Christ descended into Hades after His death on Calvary, but by the Spirit who spoke through the mouth of Noah during the years while the ark was under construction (v. 20).⁷⁰

RSV Revised Standard Version of the Bible

⁶⁸Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. 1999, c1980. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed.). Moody Press: Chicago

⁶⁹Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

⁷⁰ Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 426-27.

4. **1 Peter 4:4-6** For this reason the gospel was preached to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

a. The dead to whom the gospel was preached were evidently not yet physically dead when it was preached unto them, since the purpose of this preaching was in part “that they might be judged according to men in the flesh.” This most likely took place during their life on earth.⁷¹

b. It may refer to those who are now dead who heard the gospel when they were alive. For example, the gospel “was preached” [past tense] to those who “are dead” [now, in the present].⁷²

5. Psalm 16:8-10 cf. Acts 2:25-27, 30, 31 “His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption”

a. *Nephesh* (Hb: soul) is often used as a personal pronoun, and *sheol* for the state of death

b. Probably referring to Jesus not being left to the power of death since the NT verses are quoted in relationship to the resurrection (Acts 2:30-31; Acts 13:34-35).

Resurrection of Christ

Literal (John 20)

Material (Luke 24:13-32; 24:39)

Same body that died (John 20:27-28)

Jesus continues to exist in his body today (1 John 4:2; 2 John 7)

Jesus' Resurrection Body

Jesus' resurrected body possesses several characteristics that are distinct from *reincarnation* (New Age) and *resuscitation* body (Lazarus). (1 Corinthians 15: 35-53; Luke 24:39; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7)

Reincarnation	Resuscitation	Resurrection
Change <i>of</i> body	No change	Change <i>in</i> body
Another mortal body	Same mortal body	Same immortal
Body dies multiple times	Body dies at least twice	Body dies once
Continual process	Rare procedure	Final state
To be avoided (negative)		To be gained (positive)
Corruptible body	Corruptible body	Incorruptible body

Early and Medieval Church Believed in the Resurrection of the Flesh

Irenaeus (c. AD 130-200)

. . . the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; . . . and the resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord . . .⁷³

Justin Martyr (c. AD 100-165)

There are some who maintain that even Jesus Himself appeared only as spiritual, and not in flesh, but merely the appearance of flesh: these persons seek to rob the flesh of the promise.⁷⁴

Tertullian (c. AD 160-230)

He rose again the third day; . . . will come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of everlasting life . . . and to condemn the wicked to everlasting fire, after the resurrection of both these classes shall have happened, together with the restoration of there flesh.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 341.

⁷² N.L.G. and T. Howe, *When Critics Ask*, 534-35.

⁷³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.10.1 in *The Apostolic Fathers of the Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprinted from the 1885 ed.), vol. 1, 330., from N.L.G., *Battle for the Resurrection*.

⁷⁴ Justin Martyr, *On the Resurrection, Fragments in The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, sec. 10, 298.

⁷⁵ Tertullian, *The Prescription Against Heretics*, Chapter XIII in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, 249.

Epiphanius (fourth-century)

For the Word became flesh, . . . the same suffered in the flesh; rose again; and went up into heaven in the same body, sat down gloriously at the right hand of the Father; is coming in the same body in glory to judge the quick and the dead; . . .⁷⁶

Augustine (c. 354-430)

The world has come to the belief that the earthly body of Christ was received up into heaven. Already both the learned and the unlearned have believed in the resurrection of the flesh . . .⁷⁷

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274)

. . . signs were enough to show both the genuineness and the glory of the resurrection. His body was genuine because it was solid: *touch me and see for yourselves: spirits don't have the flesh and blood you see I have*; it was human; . . . it was Christ's own body, as was shown by His wounds . . .⁷⁸

Negative Theories of the Resurrection

The Swoon Theory

According to this theory, Jesus did not actually die on the cross, but rather swooned, fainted, or feigned death by a drug induced metabolism. Jesus is said to have later revived in the cool damp tomb until he was strong enough to leave.

Problems with this theory:

1. It fails to consider the extent of Jesus' physical condition
 - a. No **sleep** the night before (Mk 14:32-41)
 - b. He could not bear the **weight of the cross** (Mt 27:32)
 - c. He was **scourged, mocked, and beaten** (Mt 26:27-28; 27:26-31)
 - d. His **hands and feet** had been nailed to the cross (Lk 24:39)
 - e. His **side was pierced** by a spear (Jn 19:34)
 - f. He **hung on the cross** from 9 O'clock am until at least 3 O'clock pm (Mk 15:25, 33,34)
 - g. In 1986, **medical scholars** took into consideration the wounds that were absorbed by Jesus and wrote:

Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view that the spear, thrust between his right ribs, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death. Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge"⁷⁹
2. It fails to consider those who were **witnesses** of his death
 - a. Pilate ordered his **soldiers** to check and make sure Jesus was dead before burial (Mk 15:44-45)
 - b. The Roman soldiers pronounced Jesus dead (Jn 19:33-34)
 - c. Jesus was **embalmed and wrapped** with nearly one hundred pounds of material (Jn 19:39-40)
 - d. A **heavy stone** was rolled in front of the tomb (Jn 20:1)
 - e. Finally, **John the apostle** witnessed Jesus' death (Jn 19:30)
3. It fails to consider **non-Christian testimony** by historians who record Jesus' death⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Epiphanius, *Two Creeds of Epiphanius: Second Formula* in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1983), 37.

⁷⁷ St. Augustine, *City of God* (New York: Image Books, 1958), 509.

⁷⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. by Timothy McDermott (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1989), 536.

⁷⁹ *The Journal of the American Medical Society* 255:11 (21 March 1986), 1463.

⁸⁰ For more information regarding non-Christian testimony concerning Christ see Bruce, F.F. *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

- a. Roman historian, **Tacitus**, asserts that “Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius’ reign by the governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilatus”⁸¹
- b. **Josephus** makes reference to Jesus being handed over to “Pilate” and later being “condemned to the cross”⁸²
- c. The **Talmud** records “on the eve of Passover Yeshu was hanged”⁸³
- d. In the second-century, **Lucian**, documents Jesus’ death when he writes: “The Christians, you know, worship a *man* to this day - the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account”⁸⁴

The Hallucination Theory

According to the hallucination theory, those who reported seeing Jesus after his death were actually not seeing correctly, but rather were hallucinating and probably seeing what they wanted to see in their psyche.

Problems with this theory:

1. It fails to consider the abundant number of **witnesses**. Hallucinations are private, individual and subjective.
 - a. Christ appeared to over **500 people** (1 Cor 15:3-8) at the same time and place
 - b. He appeared to **all the apostles** at once (Acts 1:4-8)
2. It fails to consider that **hallucinations usually occur once** and only last a few seconds, minutes, and rarely hours.
 - a. If Christ was a Hallucination it would be the **longest recorded** one in history at “forty days” (Acts 1:3)
 - b. Jesus appeared for **prolonged periods** of time holding extended conversations (Jn 21:3-23)
3. It fails to consider that the **disciples touched and ate** with Him.
 - a. Showed Himself to doubting **Thomas** (Jn 20:26-30)
 - b. Showed disciples His **hands and feet** (Lk 24:39)
 - c. Ate **broiled fish** with disciples (Lk 24:43)
4. It fails to give an adequate answer for the **empty tomb** (Lk 24:2-3).
5. If the apostles were hallucinating and spreading their story contrary to fact, the Jewish and Roman authorities could have easily squelched the uprising by producing the body of Jesus.

The Conspiracy Theory

According to this theory, either the Jewish authorities, the Roman guards, or the disciples conspired to steal the body of Jesus.

Problems with this theory:

1. If **Jewish authorities** stole the body, why didn’t they charge the disciples with the theft or **produce the body** to discredit the early church witness to the resurrection?
2. The **Roman Guards** wouldn’t take the body for **fear of the death penalty**. Besides, it is unlikely that the Romans had a motif for stealing the body. They would not steal the body because it would be counterproductive for maintaining peace in the region.

⁸¹ Tacitus, *Annals of Imperial Rome*, trans. by Michael Grant (New York: Penguin Classics, 1989), 365.

⁸² Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus*, trans. by William Whiston (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1981), 379.

⁸³ Quoted from Habermas, Gary R., *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ* (Joplin: College Press, 1996), 203, who quoted from the reading in *The Babylonian Talmud*, trans. by I. Epstein (London: Socino, 1935), vol. III *Sanhedrin* 43a, 281. Also see Galatian 3:13 and Luke 23:39 for the usage of the word “hanged.” Can refer to crucifixion.

⁸⁴ Lucian, *The Death of Peregrine*, 11-13, in *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, trans. by H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949), vol. 4.

3. The disciples didn't steal the body because they later **died for what they believed to be true** (i.e. the resurrection). Indeed, people do die for what they have been deceived into *thinking* is the truth (e.g. Jonestown, Heavens Gate, Solar Temple Cult) but do not die for what they know to be a lie.
4. This theory **portrays the disciples as schemers** who desired to capitalize on the situation. This is contrary to their teaching and high moral character
5. It doesn't account for the **twelve appearances** of Christ over a span of forty days to more than five hundred people.

The Wrong Tomb Theory

According to this view, Mary Magdalene and the other women went to the wrong tomb and discovered it empty. This view holds that early morning darkness, emotional trauma, and wishful thinking can account for this mistake.⁸⁵

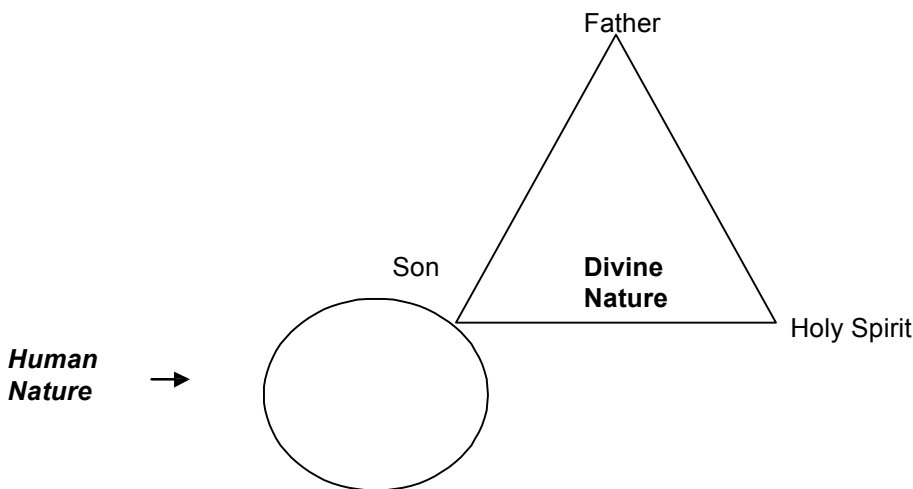
Problems with this theory:

1. If Mary went to the wrong tomb because it was dark, the authorities could have found the right tomb in the **daylight**. Peter and John did successfully (Jn 20:1-5).
2. If it was so dark that Mary couldn't see, why was the **gardener already working**? Gardeners rarely work before dawn.
3. This theory does not account for the **appearances** of Christ or for the **empty tomb**.

The Nature of Christ Explained

Christ possesses *two* distinct natures, one divine and the other human, united in one person, Jesus. Both natures are touching but not confused (*theanthropos*)(also called *hypostatic union*)

Is incarnation a Contradiction? No more contradictory than adding a circle to one tip of a triangle.



***Jesus could operate from either nature. One nature was limited (Human) and the other nature was unlimited (divine) (Lk 2:52 cf. Jn 16:30; Col 1:15-16).**

⁸⁵ For a refutation of this theory see Morrison, Frank, *Who Moved the Stone?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 97ff; William Lane Craig, *The Son Rises*.

Reasons to Accept the Incarnation:

1. If Jesus is fully God and fully man, He is *eligible* to *redeem* (Heb 2:14-18) and *judge* humanity (Jn 5:22, 27).
2. This view corresponds to *Scripture* (Jn 1:1, 14; 5:17-18; 8:58; 1 Tim 2:5).
3. It is consistent with major *church councils* throughout the centuries.⁸⁶ The Niceno-Chalcedonian Creed (451 AD) says:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in God head and also perfect in manhood; **truly God and truly man**, of a reasonable soul and body; **consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead**, and **consubstantial with us according to the Manhood**; . . . one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the **distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union**, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person . . . **not parted or divided into two persons**, but one and the same Son . . .⁸⁷

4. It accounts for the seeming *complexity* present within Christ regarding His attributes (e.g. He knew all - Jn 2:24-25, and He did not know all - Mk 13:32; Lk 2:52).
5. It accounts for the *two wills* present within Christ, one divine and one human (Mt 26:39).⁸⁸
6. This view of Christ renders love meaningful and self sufficient within the context of a triune God. God's love needs nothing external to His nature to act as its object.

Natures Clarified

The distinction between Jesus as God and Jesus as man is as follows:

Jesus as God	Jesus as Man
Infinite knowledge	Finite knowledge
Omni-predicates	Limited to time and space
Unchanging	Changing
No beginning	Beginning (birth)
Never dies	Died on the cross

The Sage Argument⁸⁹
Who Is Jesus?

People Who Claimed To Be God

		NO	YES
People regarded As A Sage	NO	Most People (Us)	Insane: David Koresh Rev. Moon Charles Manson
	YES	Solomon Confucius Buddha Socrates	Jesus of Nazareth

Note: This argument is designed to confront the unbeliever with Christ's truth claim to be God. It also demonstrates that Christ occupies a unique position as the only Son of God. The most reasonable explanation that accounts for the evidence is that Jesus is who He claimed to be, God.

⁸⁶ See Council of Chalcedon I (451 AD) and Constantinople II (553 AD).

⁸⁷ Schaff, Philip, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. II, 62-63.

⁸⁸ The heretical belief that Christ only possessed one will is called "monothelism." The third Council of Constantinople (680 AD) affirmed that Christ had two wills unopposed, with His human will in submission to the divine will.

⁸⁹ Peter Kreeft, *Between Heaven and Hell* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 52-67.

Jesus unfolded in Scripture

Old Testament: 4 sections

Law: Laid the _____ for Christ – downward motion

History: Shows _____ for Christ – outward motion

Poetry: Reveals the _____ for Christ – upward motion

Prophecy: Gives the _____ for Christ – forward motion⁹⁰

New Testament: 4 sections

Gospels: Reveals the _____ of Christ - downward

Acts: Shows the _____ of Christ - outward

Epistles: Gives the _____ of Christ - upward

Revelation: Pictures the _____ of Christ - forward

JESUS	
OT	NT
Concealed	Revealed
Contained	Explained
Shadow	Substance
Pictures	Person
Anticipation	Realization
Type	Truth
Veiled	Uncovered
Enfolded	Unfolded
Budding	Full Bloom
Coming	Arrived

Common Objections to Christ

If God is a spirit, He can't possibly have a "Son"

This statement confuses *functional* Sonship with *biological* Sonship. Jesus is the Son of God in a *hierarchical* sense not *procreative* sense. Christ's Sonship is *relational* not *physical*.

Agreed, God cannot have a biological Son. Spirit (Jn 4:24) cannot procreate due to their lack of physical capacities (Mt 22:30).

The Son of God did not come into being like a human son, however, Jesus' human nature did come into being through God's miraculous intervention. He was *eternally* the Son. The Son existed before the world began (Heb 1:2; Col 1:13, 14, 17), and continued to be the Son in the Old (Prov 30:4) and New Testaments (Jn 5:23). Further, if there was a time when the Son was not, by the same logic one must conclude there also was a time when God was not the Father.

If Jesus is the Son, how then could He be equal to God?

The term "Son" refers to *functional position* within the triune Godhead indicating "submission". It does not refer to an inferior quality of being. For example, although the wife is under her head (husband), she is of no less a quality of being, it is merely God's order and structure among men and women (Gal 3:28, I Cor 11:1-12).

⁹⁰ See N.L. Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*.

The term “Son of God” is often misunderstood. This term “Son of . . . “ can refer to “offspring of,” but more importantly its theological meaning is “of the order of.” For example, the “sons of the prophets” means “of the order of the prophets” (1 Kings 20:35), “sons of the singers means of the order of singers” (Neh 12:28), likewise, the phrase “Son of God” means “of the order of God” and represents a claim to deity.⁹¹

Ancient Semitics and Orientals used the phrase to indicate *likeness or sameness of nature and equality of being*. The Jews of the Jesus’ day understood Jesus’ claim to be the Son the equivalent of being equal with God (Jn 5:17-23). This claim was so radical, the Jews believed Christ should be put to death (Jn 19:7).⁹²

It is impossible and contradictory for Christ to be God and man since there cannot be an “infinite-finite” being

True, there cannot be an “infinite-finite” being *at the same time and in the same sense* (check law of non-contradiction). The incarnation does not violate this law because Christ had two distinct natures that differed from each other united in one person, one finite (man) and the other infinite (divine). It would only be a contradiction if Christ had two differing natures in *only one nature*.

Christ is not fully man because He could not sin (impeccability vs. Peccability)

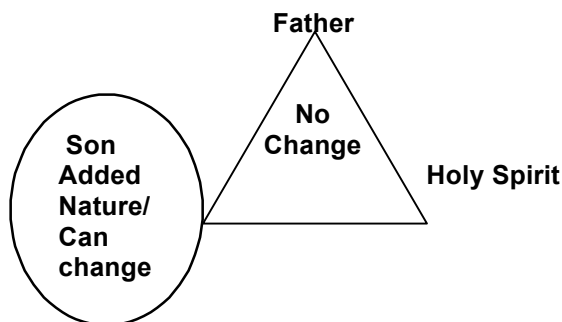
This would be true, but Christ *could* have sinned – in his *humanity* (not possible in his deity). Whenever one asks this type of question, they must direct the question at each of Jesus’ *two natures*: Christ as God and Christ as man. Christ as God could not sin, however, Christ as man could sin but chose not to (Hebrews 4:15).

To deny Jesus’ possibility to sin would render His temptation (Mt 4: 4, 7, 10) *meaningless* which in turn means that Christ could not *sympathize* with our weaknesses, since he lacked the human characteristic of *free choice*.

To deny the possibility of sin would be to deny Jesus’ *free choice*, which is a perfection God gave to all people, including Adam. If Jesus did not have free choice, He was less than a man in the truest sense.

An “unchanging” God (Mal 3:6) could not become man since becoming a man (Phil 2:7) implies “change”

True, God cannot “change” His essential nature to become a man with a human nature. However, the second person of the trinity did not change or annihilate his divine nature, He merely *added* a human nature. Hence God can remain unchanging and at the same time possess a distinct human nature. The addition of the human nature by the Son can be illustrated as follows:



Problem texts: Christological Passages

Revelation 3:14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning [archē] of the creation of God: ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

1. The English word “architect” and “archbishop” is derived from *arche*

794 αρχή (*archē*), ζ (*ēs*), (*hē*): n.fem. ; ≡ DBLHebr 8031 , 8040 ; Str 746 ; TDNT 1.479 — **1.** LN 68.1 **beginning**, initiate an action, process, or state of being (Mk 1:1); **2.** LN 67.65 **beginning**, adj. point at the

⁹¹ Rhodes, Ron, *Reasoning From the Scriptures with the Jehovah’s Witnesses* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1993), 242.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 243. Also see Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986), 248.

beginning of adj. duration (Jn 1:1 ; 2Th 2:13 v.r. ; Rev 1:8 v.r.); **3.** LN 89.16 **first cause** , the origin (Rev 3:14 +), for another interp , see next; **4.** LN 37.56 **ruler**, governor, usually in the normal human sphere (Lk 12:11 , 20:20 ; Col 1:16 ; Tit 3:1 ; Rev 3:14 +), for another interp of Revelations verse, see prior; note: some of these verses may be the supernatural, see next entry;ⁱⁱ

2. It carries the meaning of “beginner, first cause, or originator” of creation.
 - a. Colossians 1:15-17
 - b. Hebrews 1:2
 - c. John 1:3

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

1. *Prototokos* is where the English word “prototype” comes from

4758 πρωτότοκος (*prōtotokos*), ον (*on*): adj. ; ≡ DBLHebr 1147 ; Str 4416 ; TDNT 6.871 — **1.** LN 10.43 **birthright** , pertaining to the inheritance rights of the firstborn (Lk 2:7 ; Ro 8:29 ; Col 1:15 , 18 ; Heb 1:6 ; 11:28 ; 12:23 ; Rev 1:5 + ; Mt 1:25 v.r. ; Rev 2:8 v.r. NA26) ; **2.** LN 13.79 **existing before** (Col 1:15) ; **3.** LN 87.47 **superior** (Col 1:15)⁹⁴

2. Read any other way would lead to Christ being the firstborn *to all creation*, not Jehovah.
3. Psalm 89:27 David is firstborn; Genesis 41:50, 51 cf. Jer 31:9 Manasseh was firstborn, not Ephraim.
4. If Paul wanted to portray Christ as the first-created, he would have used the word *protoktisis*

John 14:28 You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming *back* to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.

1. John used the word *meizon* (greater in position), not *kreitton* (better in nature). Hebrews 1:4 Jesus is “better” than the angels not only in position, but also in nature.

Greater than I (μειζων μου [*meizōn mou*]). Ablative case μου [*mou*] after the comparative μειζων [*meizōn*] (from positive μεγας [*megas*]). The filial relation makes this necessary. Not a distinction in nature or essence (cf. 10:30) , but in rank in the Trinity. No Arianism or Unitarianism here. The very explanation here is proof of the deity of the Son (Dods).⁹⁵

2. The Father is greater in “rank, position, or office” but not in nature.

John 20:17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’ ”

1. Jesus spoke from His human nature
2. Jesus distinguished His relationship to the Father (essential) from the believer’s relationship to the Father (adoption) (never “our Father”)

⁹³Swanson, J. 1997. *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.) . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor

n. noun, or nouns

fem. feminine

DBLHebr Swanson, *A Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)*

Str *Strong’s Lexicon*

TDNT Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

LN *Louw-Nida Greek-English Lexicon*

adj. adjective, or adjectival

v.r. *varia lectio* , variant reading in a manuscript

+ More references in GNT4

interp interpreted

⁹⁴Swanson, J. 1997. *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.) . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor

⁹⁵Robertson, A. 1997. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Vol.V c1932, Vol.VI c1933 by Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Logos Research Systems: Oak Harbor

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

1. God is called “mighty God” (Isa 10:21)
2. See Jer 32:17, 18

I Corinthians 15:28 For “*He has put all things under His feet.*” But when He says “all things are put under *Him*,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.²⁸ Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

1. Functional subjection (President, Vice Pres), not *essential* subjection
2. Men and women have the same functional order (1 Cor 11:3)

Sources and Books on the Person of Jesus Christ:

Aquinas, Thomas, *Summa Theologica*

_____. *Summa Contra Gentiles*

Elwell, Walter, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Baker)

Enns, Paul, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Moody)

Geisler, Norman L., ed., *What Augustine Says* (Baker)

House, Wayne, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*

Rhodes, Ron, *Christ Before the Manger*

W.G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology - 3 Vols.*

Pneumatology

Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Since the Holy Spirit is a member of the Godhead, the special study of His person, work, and relationship to people are essential. Many groups have wrongly portrayed the Holy Spirit as *impersonal* (Jehovah's Witnesses), a *supernatural power* that can be possessed or transferred by the proper technique (faith movement; Rodney Howard Brown), or a *force* that can be harnessed for the purpose of healing or harm (Occult; New Age). These portrayals are far from the orthodox position.

1. Introduction
2. Personality
3. Activity/Work

I. Introduction

A. (Hebrew) *Ruach*

Can have a variety of usages: air, wind, breath, strength, breeze, spirit, and Spirit (Holy Spirit).⁹⁶ Genesis 1:2

B. (Greek) *pneuma hagion*

Can have a variety of usages: *current* of air, breath, breeze, spirit, soul, disposition, angel, demon, God, Holy Spirit.⁹⁷ (Acts 5:3)

B. Council of Constantinople (381) affirmed Holy Spirit's deity (*homoousia*)

The council adopted the following statement: “We believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.”⁹⁸

⁹⁶ See Strong's Concordance (7307) and Brown, Driver and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1980), 926.

⁹⁷ See *Strong's Concordance* (4151).

II. Personality of the Spirit

Intelligence (mind)

Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD . . .

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Romans 8:27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

1 Corinthians 2:10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

Note: Greek word for "searches" means *to thoroughly investigate the matter*. It is the same word Jesus used to describe the Jews as they "search" the Scriptures in vain (John 5:39).

Question: How does God know? What process is used?

Will

1 Corinthians 12:11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

(Same Greek word (*bouletai*) used to describe God's will in James 1:18. The word refers to decisions of the will after previous deliberation)

Acts 16:6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.

Question: How is God's will always fulfilled if some go to Hell? (2 Pet 3:9)

Emotion (feelings)

Isaiah 63:10 Yet they [Israel] rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Rom 15:30(same word used to describe the Corinthian believers *sorrow* and grief)

Question: What kind of feelings does God have?

Question: Can a "Force" devoid of personality have mind, will and emotions?

Holy Spirit can be lied to just like the Father (Rev 13:6; 16:9) and the Son (Matthew 27:39; Luke 23:39)

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself?"

Matthew 12:32 Jesus said, . . . "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks a word against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come."

Mark 3:29-30 Jesus said, ". . . but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation" -

Holy Spirit can be obeyed

⁹⁸Enns, P. P. 1997, c1989. *The Moody Handbook o Theology*. Moody Press: Chicago, Ill.

Barnabas and Saul obeyed the Spirit when they were told to go on a missionary journey **Acts 13:2-5**

Peter obeyed the Spirit when he was told to get up, go downstairs, and meet three men sent from Cornelius **Acts 10:19**

Holy Spirit can be insulted

Hebrews 10:29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace.?

Holy Spirit can be resisted

Acts 7:51 You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! (irresistible grace??)

Holy Spirit is Divine

Acts 5:3-4 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself?

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Hebrews 9:14 . . . how much more by the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, . . .

Holy Spirit distinguished from the Father and the Son

John 14:16, 26 Jesus said . . . And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever . . . But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 15:26 When the Counselor comes, whom I will send you from the Father; the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father; he will testify about me.

Question: How can the Spirit be personal when it lacks a real personal name? (description of character, not non-personality)

Gender of Holy Spirit/God <i>pneuma</i> (Spirit) is a neuter noun		
Theists	Feminists	Pantheists; J.W.'s
He, Him, Father God	She, Her, goddess	It, Force
Order of creation	Equal rights or superiority	Impersonal

III. The Activity/Work of the Holy Spirit

In the Life of the believer

Convicts – speaks to your conscience about your guilt before God

John 16:8 When he [Spirit, Counselor] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement: . . .

Regenerates – Born again, eternal life, renewal

Titus 3:5 . . . not by works of righteousness which we have done , but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, . . .

Seals – guarantees final redemption, ownership

2 Corinthians 1:22 who has set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2 Corinthians 5:5 Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Ephesians 1:13-14 Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Sanctifies – a continual process where the Holy Spirit sets the believer apart and transforms him into the likeness of Christ

1 Corinthians 6:11 But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 . . . God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and through belief in the truth.

1 Peter 1:2 . . . who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ . . .

Baptizes – One time event of immersion into the one body of Christ, the Church (physical baptism is outward sign of the spiritual reality)

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body . . . and all have been made to drink into one Spirit.

Ephesians 4:4-6 *There is one body and one Spirit, . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism; . . .*

Galatians 3:26-27 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Indwells - Holy Spirit abides and is active in the believer (relational). Without the indwelling, we are not saved.

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you. (1 Cor 6:19)

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body . . . and all have been made to drink into one Spirit.

Fills – A *continual* relational process of empowerment for maturity and the completion of Christian service.

Exodus 31:3 . . . I have filled him [Bezalel the craftsman] with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts. (prophets spoke by the Spirit)

Acts 2:1-4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 4:31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Ephesians 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

One Spirit

One Baptism (with 3 different manifestations)

Indwelling	Identification	Filling
One Time	One Time	Occurs many times
Reality	Symbolic	Reality
Act of the Spirit	Act of the human will	Act of the Spirit
Unification	Sign of justification	Sanctification
Positional/Relational	Visual	Practical
Church	Obedience	Christian living/ministry
1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-27	Romans 6:1-10; Acts 2:38-39	Ephesians 5:18
Means of decision (Jn 3:16)	Means of water	means of yielding
For salvation sake	For conscience sake (1 Pet 3:21)	For service sake

Guides – leadership of the believer away from sin in proportion to the believers yielding to the Spirit

Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Acts 16:6-7 Paul was guided by the Spirit when he was “forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.”

Teaches – speaks of the Spirit’s role in helping the believer understand the *significance* of Scripture as it *applies* to his life (not necessarily the *meaning*)

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Other works of the Holy Spirit

Creation (Genesis 1:2) “hovered”

Inspiration of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)
“inspired” and “moved”

Miraculous Conception of Christ (Luke 1:35) “overshadowed”

Giver of Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1-28)

IV. Terminology and metaphors

- A. *Pneuma*
- B. “Filled”
- C. “Outpouring”
- D. “In me” “in Him” “the Spirit came to me” “give me more of you God”
- E. Accommodation theory of Language

Angelology

Doctrine of Angels

The Hebrew word used for “angel” in the OT is *malak* (used over 100 times) which simply means “messenger.” The basic meaning of the word is “one who is sent.” The messenger can either be human (1 Kings 19:2) or angelic. The NT Greek word is *angelos* (used about 175 times) which again means “messenger.” It too can denote either a human (only used 6 times in NT to refer to humans - Luke 7:24; 9:52 or Revelation 1:20) or heavenly messenger.

I. Origin of Angels (created by God)

Psalms 148:2, 5 Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him all His hosts . . . Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were *created*.

John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created by Him and for Him.

II. Titles of Angels

1. **Angel (s)** – Genesis 19:1; Ps 148:2; Daniel 6:22; Matthew 22:30 (over 270 times)
2. **Archangel** – 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 9
3. **Elect angels** – 1 Timothy 5:21
4. **Living Creatures** – Ezekiel 1:2-24; Ezekiel 10:20-21;
5. **Holy ones** – Daniel 8:13; Zechariah 14:5; Job 15:15
6. **Mighty ones** – 2 Thessalonians 1:7
7. **Chief Princes** – Daniel 10:13
8. **Man** – Daniel 9:21
9. **Ministering Spirits** – Hebrews 1:14
10. **Sons of God** – Job 1:6; 2:1
11. **Hosts** – Genesis 2:1; Nehemiah 9:6; Luke 2:13
12. **Stars** – Job 38:7; Revelation 12:4
13. **Ministers** – Psalms 104:4
14. **gods** – (elohim) Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:5; Genesis 35:7

III. Time Angels were Created

Genesis 2:1-2 – Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done...

Sometime before the seventh day of Creation

IV. Spirits (immaterial; invisible Col 1:16; 2 Kings 6:17)

Hebrews 1:14 – Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

Luke 24:39ff – . . . a spirit does not have flesh and bone as you see I have . . .

Ephesians 6:12 – For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

V. No procreation or marriage

Matthew 22:30 – For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

VI. Not limited by spatial dimensions (not omnipresent)

Luke 8:30 – And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion”; for *many* demons had entered him.

Question: How many angels can you fit on the head of a needle?

VII. Free Choice (sin involves choice)

Jude 6 – And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

2 Peter 2:4 – For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;
(see Isaiah 14:12-17)

VIII. Powerful (not omnipotent)

2 Peter 2:11 – . . . whereas angels who are *greater in power and might*, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

Psalms 103:20 – Bless the Lord, you His angels, *Mighty in strength*, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word.

Matthew 28:2-3 – For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.
(See Genesis 19:10-11; 2 Kings 19:35)

IX. Angels worship and possess emotion

Isaiah 6:3 – And one called out to another and said ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.
(See Revelation 4:8-9)

Luke 15:10 – There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

X. Immortality (aeveternal)

Luke 20:36 – for neither can they die any more, for they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

Note: Eternal punishment implies that angels will exist eternally (Matthew 25:41)

XI. Can have names and titles/ranks

Michael (Daniel 12:1; Jude 9) – “Who is like God”

Gabriel (Daniel 9:22; Luke 1:11-12, 19, 26-29) “Mighty one of God”

Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12) “Illuminating/bright/shinning one”

Also called:

- Deceiver** – Revelation 12:10 cf. Ephesians 6:11
- Accuser** -Job 1:9 Zechariah 3:1
- Tempter** – Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5
- Destroyer** – Revelation 9:11
- Satan** – Zechariah 3:1; Revelation 12:9 – over 50 times
- Prince of this world** – John 12:31; 16:11
- Devil** - Luke 4:2; Revelation 12:9 – over 30 times
- Old serpent** – Genesis 3:1
- Belial** – 2 Corinthians 6:15
- Angel of light** – 2 Corinthians 11:14
- Beelzebub** – Luke 11:15; Matthew 12:25
- Great dragon** – Revelation 12:3, 7, 9

Rank and Titles:

Archangel – 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 9

Cherubim – Genesis 3:24

Prince – Daniel 10:13

Seraphs – Isaiah 6:1-3 (6 wings, 2 fly 2 cover faces, 2 cover feet)

Ministering Spirits/Angels – Hebrews 1:14

XII. Demon possession

Mark 5:1-13 – “Legion” at Gadara

Matthew 17:18-21 – sick man

Never give up control of your mind:

Occult

Channeling

Drugs

Remedy: Truth Encounter vs. Power encounter

XIII. False signs and wonders

2 Thessalonians 2:9 – The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of *counterfeit* miracles, signs and wonders.

Divine miracle	Satanic Signs or Magic

XIV. Purpose of Angels

Attend to God

Matthew 18:10 - See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

Psalms 103:20 – Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

Psalms 89:7 – In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.

Do God’s Will

Psalms 103:21- Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

Meet with God

Job 1:6 – One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.

Job 2:1 – On another day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them to present himself before the him.

Worship God

Psalm 148:2 – Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts

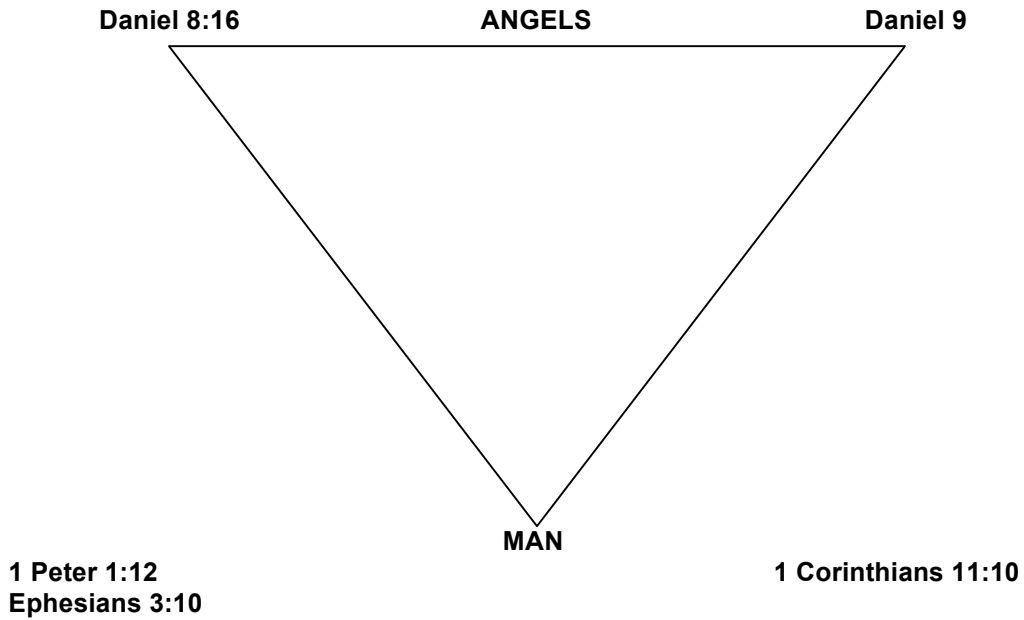
Revelation 4:8 - Each of the living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty

Isaiah 6:1ff, Ezekiel 10:1ff.,

Messengers of God

Daniel 4:13- In the vision I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. (see Daniel 9:20ff; Hebrews 1:14)

On the Knowledge of Angels



Anthropology and Harmatology

The Doctrine of Man and Sin

I. Origin of Man

Who created? God (Genesis 1:1)

Pantheism – ex Deo

Atheism – ex Materia - evolved

Theism – ex Nihilo

When Created?

In the beginning (1:1)

On the sixth day (1:31; 2:1, 2; Ex 20:11)

1. universe (1)
2. Earth (1)
3. Sea (6)
4. Land (9)
5. Plants (11)
6. Sea Animals (20)
7. Land Animals (24)
8. Man (27)

Creation is finished (2:1) (My Father is working until now-Jn 5:17)

How created? (divine fiat)

By the Word of the Lord (Ps 33:6)

God said (1:3; Heb 1:3; 2 Cor 4:6)

“Let them praise the name of the Lord. For He commanded and they were created.” (Psalm 148:5)

Why did God Create Man?

Lonely? – no, Trinity was sufficient

Imperfect? – no, implies a lack in God’s attributes.

For God’s _____(Ps 19:1; Rev 4:11) and our _____(Jms 1:17; 1 Tim 6:17)!

Question: Why did God create Man if he knew some would go to hell?

II. The Nature of Man

Man is made in the image of God

Genesis 1:27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 5:1; Col 3:10)

What is “image of God”?

*Port-hole for others to see an indirect glimpse of God much like a photograph is an image of its object. This implies responsibility. To obscure, distort, or slander the image of God is sin (James 3:9; Gen 9:6).

Representation –

Likeness –

Similarity –

Metaphysically –

Morally –

Intellectually –

Volitionally (1 Cor 10:13-freedom to escape temptation)–
Physically (male & female) – (Gen 1:27; 9:6)

Image of God retained after the fall

Genesis 9:6 – Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the *image of God* he made man.

Man composed of spirit/soul and body

Genesis 2:7 – And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Mark 8:35-36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? (see Matthew 10:28)

Acts 7:59 – And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

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

Dichotomy

Trichotomy

Psycho-somatic unity

Origin of the Soul

Pre-existence

Creationism

Traducianism

III. Harmatology (Sin)

Origin of Sin

Greek word: *hamartia*

Definition: to miss the mark, fall short, lawlessness, lacking, an offence

Condition: Man began innocent with perfect *conditions* (Genesis 2:8-9)

Command: God gave *command* not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17) (ought implies can)

Choice: Eve made the *choice* to disobey God by eating of the tree and giving some to Adam to eat (Genesis 3:6)

Consequences: Physical (Genesis 2:17), spiritual death
(Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1) and eternal death (Rev 20:14)

First promise of salvation: proto-vangelium (Genesis 3:15)

Nature of Adams Sin

Efficient cause (that by which) -

Final cause (that for which) -

Instrumental cause (that through which) -

Exemplar cause (that after which) –

Sin is:

Not meeting God's standard

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Lawlessness

1 John 3:4 – Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

Pride and Lust

1 John 2:15-17

Not doing Good

James 4:17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Extent of Sin

Romans 5

All of Humanity

Psalm 51:5 – Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me

Ecc1 7:20 – Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.

Romans 3:23 – For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 5:12 – through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned – aorist, we fell potentially, seminally & judicially in Adam

To the whole Person: Total Depravity (mind, will, emotions)

Image of God is *effaced* but not _____

Depravity is *extensive* but not _____

Depravity is *moral* or relational, not _____

Depravity is *separation*, not _____

Depravity means we are born with a *propensity, tendency, or inclination* to sin since our *nature* has been affected (Eph 2:1-3; Gal 5:17).

Depravity means we can't *initiate* or attain our own Salvation, but we can *receive* it. (John 1:13)

Models of Depravity

Poor – 2 Corinthians 8:9

Polluted – Titus 1:15

In Darkness – John 8:12

Sick – Luke 5:31; 1 Peter 2:24

In need of Physician – Luke 5:31

Dead – Eph 2:1; Col 2:13; Isaiah 59:2

Lost – Matthew 18:11

In prison – Isaiah 42:7

Separated – Isaiah 59:2

Blinded – 2 Corinthians 4:4

Dead – Ephesians 2:1ff

Effects of Sin

One the Mind

2 Corinthians 4:4

In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

On the Will (Romans 7)

Romans 6:16

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

On feelings

Romans 1:28-29

God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, malice, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips . . .

On the Heart (Genesis 6:5)

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?

Soteriology

The Doctrine of Salvation

The term “salvation” comes from the Greek *soteria* which means “safety” and *logos* which means “the study of.” Soteriology is the branch of theology that studies salvation. It examines those tenants pertinent to salvation such as depravity, election, will of man, role of the Holy Spirit, grace and faith.

I. Various Models of Salvation

Liberation Theology

Group of theological movements that focuses on delivering man from economic, political and social oppression. Feminist, Black, and third-world theologies deny sin as being rebellion against God and prefer salvation to be liberation from oppressive conditions. Revolution and political stratigizing may be necessary.

Roman Catholic Theology

Salvation is *initially* by grace through faith. Sin is rebellion against God and must be overcome with the cross and resurrection of Christ. Even though justification appears to be the same as evangelical protestant theology, it differs significantly.

Justification

Catholic view⁹⁹

Evangelical view

Grace is unmerited <i>initially</i>	Grace is unmerited <i>totally</i>
Faith is <i>necessary</i>	Faith is <i>sufficient</i> (alone)
Christ alone	Christ alone
Progressive Justification	Instant Just. & progressive sanct.
Believer <i>made</i> righteous (intrinsic) James 2:24	Believer <i>is</i> righteous (extrinsic, forensic) Jn 3:36; 1 Jn 5:13; Rom 4:1-5; 11:6

Five things in common with Roman Catholics:

1. One Bible
2. Two Testaments
3. Three Creeds
4. Four Councils
5. Five centuries

Five differences:

1. Added books to the Bible (Apocrypha)
2. Added Mary to Christ (co-redemptrix)
3. Added works to grace (progressive justification)
4. Added the Pope to the Apostles (infallibility)
5. Added prayer to the saints to the prayers to God (Hail Mary)

Secular Theology

Salvation occurs when man is self-sufficient and independent of God. This is accomplished through introspection, affirmation, and practice of scientific inquiry. Man becomes immature and irresponsible for relying on others (i.e. God) morality and rationality. In other words, come of age and be your own person. Christ, resurrection, and sin are either dismissed or not essential.

⁹⁹ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, (Liguori Publications), 481-490.

Existential Theology

This theology focuses attention on experience and encountering of truth. It is highly subjective. The historical affirmations in Scripture are not important, only the truth that it contains is important. Discover your true self and identity (Rudolph Bultmann – demythologizing).

Evangelical Theology

Salvation is received by grace alone by Christ alone through faith alone. Man is by nature a sinner separated from God in need of salvation. In order for salvation to be efficacious to man, Christ must be the object of faith.¹⁰⁰

II. Definitions of Salvation

Justification (removes believer from the penalty of sin)

From the Greek word *dikaioo* which means “to justify,” and “to pronounce, accept, and treat as just.” God pardons sinners and restores them to righteousness through faith in Christ.

Romans 4:5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have the peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

Sanctification (removes the power of sin)

From the Greek word *hagiasmos* which refers to the “separation” of the believer from sin to “make holy.” In other words, it is the gradual *experiential* development into what we have already become *positionally* in Christ. (extrinsic -> Intrinsic)

Galatians 3:2-3 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Romans 12:2 And do not be conform to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . .

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

How do we get daily power to overcome sin?

Recognizing (intellectually) – Romans 6:2, 9 – May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ...knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death is no longer master over him.

Reckoning (Faith) - Romans 6:11 – Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ.

Relinquishing (yielding) – Romans 6:13 – and do not present your member as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Glorification (removes from the presence of sin)

Is the future permanent state the believer will possess in the after life. No longer the presence of sin or evil in or around us. It is the end result of justification and sanctification.

Ephesians 5:25-26 that he may sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

Jude 24-25 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy . . . (Rom 8:30)

(see **1 Corinthians 15:32ff.** for the glorification of the body)

¹⁰⁰ See H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*, 92 to reference views of salvation.

Justification	Sanctification	Glorification
Also called <i>positional</i> Sanctification	<i>progressive</i> sanctification	<i>prospective</i> sanctification
God is judge	God is cleanser	God is perfecter
Single act	Continual action	Permanent state
Past tense (Jn 3:36)	Present tense (Heb 10:14)	Future tense
Relates to standing Before God	State on earth	State in heaven
Relation change	Practical change	physical/spirit
Done for us	Done in/with us	Done for us
Exodus	Leviticus	
“The just” (Romans)1:17,28	“shall live” (Galatians)	“by faith” (Hebrews) 3:3, 11

Extreme Calvinism

An “extreme Calvinism” is a position that is more Calvinistic than John Calvin (1509-1564), the founder of Calvinism.¹⁰¹ Those who argue that Christ died only for the elect have gone *beyond* the view of John Calvin who believed Christ died for the sins of the whole world,¹⁰² and therefore, should be distinguished as “extreme” or “hyper” Calvinists.

Although extreme Calvinism can be traced back to St. Augustine (AD 354-430), it was codified by John Calvin’s follower and contributor to the *Synods of Dort*¹⁰³ (1618-1619), Theodore Beza (1519-1605). The *Synods of Dort* were written as a confession in response to the Arminian Remonstrance of 1610. Extreme Calvinists identify themselves with the five points of these teachings: **T-U-L-I-P**.

T

U

L

I

P

Total Depravity

Extreme view:

1. Since the fall of Adam, man is *totally depraved* and unable to respond to God. This means that man can’t initiate, attain or *receive* salvation without the grace of God.
2. Man is spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-3). This death is *intensive* (destroying man’s *free will* to receive salvation).

¹⁰¹ Geisler, Norman L., *Chosen But Free* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1999), 55.

¹⁰² See John Calvin, *Institutes* 3.1.1; 3.24.17; Calvin’s Commentary Mark 14:24; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 5:9; Calvin’s *Mystery of Godliness*,

83.

¹⁰³ The Synod of Dort which met in the city of Dordrecht was a national synod of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands. It also had an international character since the synod was composed not only of Dutch delegates, but also of twenty-six delegates from eight foreign countries.

3. Some Calvinists believe that man can do “horizontal” good but incapable of any “vertical” or “spiritual” good.
4. Man is born with the unavoidable *necessity* to sin by nature. Will *necessarily follows* nature because free will is *doing what we desire*. Sin is unavoidable. Man’s will is in bondage to his sinful nature since he only desires evil.

Moderate view:

1. Man is depraved and can’t *initiate* or *attain* salvation (Jn 1:12-13), but can *receive* it *ought implies can*
2. “Spiritual death” in Scripture is *separation* (Isa 59:2) from God, not *annihilation*.

Extensive vs. intensive.

Other models of depravity

Rev 20:10 – 2nd death annihilation?

Separated *with* will not *from* it

3. Horizontal good has vertical implications, can’t separate the two.

Mt 22:39-40 - love thy neighbor

Mt 25:35-40 – serving man is serving God

4. Will doesn’t always follow sinful nature’s desires. Extreme Calvinists confuse *inevitability* (will sin) and *unavoidability* (must sin) of sin (1 Cor 10:13).

Free will: *decides vs. desires* (Rom 7)

Will didn’t follow nature with Adam & Satan’s sin

Adam and Eve willingly heard and responded to God as sinners (Gen 3)

Without free will to deny your sinful desires, relieves one of responsibility. Responsibility implies the ability to respond (Jn 9:41)

Unconditional Election

Extreme view:

1. No conditions placed upon God for the *giving* of salvation nor for man *receiving* it.

John 1:12-13 – But as many as received Him . . . He gave the right to become the children of God to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Romans 8:28 – “called according to his purpose”

Romans 8:29 – “those God foreknew he also predestined”

John 15:16 – “You did not choose me, but I chose you”

2. Faith is a *gift* of God given to man in order to believe. Salvation is entirely God’s responsibility and work. Free choice is a *work*, thereby disqualifying choice as a means of salvation since the receiver of salvation would get credit.
3. Man has no part in his own salvation since God regenerates the sinner so he/she can believe.

R.C. Sproul writes: *We do not believe in order to be born again; we are born again in order that we may believe. (Chosen by God, 72)*

4. God should not be blamed if someone goes to hell since man is justly guilty and condemned by nature.

Moderate view:

1. There is *no condition* placed on God in the *giving* of salvation, but there *is a condition* on man in *receiving* it (choice to believe).

John 1:11-12 – He came to that which was his own, but his own did not *receive* him. Yet to all who *received* him, to those *who believe* in his name, he *gave the right* to become children of God.

Predestination is in accord with God's knowledge, not in spite of or based on man's will.

- a. God's *knowledge* and *will* are one (no parts in God)
 - b. That means what God knows he determines, and what he determines He knows. (determinately knows and knowingly determines)
 - c. If salvation was *based on* man's will, man's free choice would be the basis of salvation (Arminianism). (if God is dependent on man's choice then God is a dependent being: since God's knowledge is identical to His being or essence)
 - d. Salvation is not *in spite* of man free will because:
 1. Love is rendered meaningless
 2. Moral responsibility is lost (forced to do it?)
2. "Faith" is not the "gift," salvation is.
 - a. "it" (*touto*) is neuter and "faith" (*pistis*) is feminine
 - b. John Calvin did not believe that "it" referred to the "gift" of "faith" (Calvin's commentaries Vol. 11, 145).
 - c. Greek scholar A.T. Robinson, *Word Pictures In the New Testament* (New York: R.R. Smith, 1931), 4:525
 - d. Free choice is a work, but is not *meritorious*. The giver of the gift gets credit (James 1:17), not the receiver.

John 6:28-29 – Then they said to Him, 'What shall we do that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.' ("do" is in singular)

R.C. Sproul says of faith, "It is a work, though not a meritorious one. Is it a good work? Certainly it is not a bad work. It is good for a person to trust in Christ and in Christ alone for his or her salvation." (*Chosen By God*, 25-26)

3. Regeneration follows faith.
 - a. Faith is the *means* to the end (salvation)
 - b. Scripture supports this:

Romans 3:24-25
Romans 5:1
Ephesians 2:8-9
 - c. Extreme Calvinism is based on a faulty view of depravity

Limited Atonement

Extreme view:

1. Jesus died only for a limited number of people, the elect.

John 10:15 – I lay down my life for the sheep

John 15:13 – Greater love have no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends

Ephesians 5:25 - Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Acts 20:28 – Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood

2. Jesus' death was *not* for the entire sinful world outside this elect group.

Verses that claim Jesus died "for us" "we" "our" identify that there is a special or specific group that He died for. (Jn 10:11; Rom 4:25; 2 Cor 5:21)

3. The non-elect will be eternally lost. God is not to *blame* for others outside the elect group for going to hell since man deserves it and God is Just.

Moderate view:

1. The Bible says clearly, that Christ's atonement is for the sins of the *whole* world, not only the elect (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4-6; Revelation 22:17).
2. There is a *logical fallacy* in thinking that because Christ died for His people, He did not die for those who are unbelievers.

The Scripture does not say that Christ died *only* for the elect. To say "I love my wife" would not mean that I *hate* my children.

3. Just because there are verses which identify the elect (we, us) with Christ's atonement simply refers to the *application*, not the *extent* of salvation.

Christ's atonement is limited in its *application* but unlimited in its *extent*. 2 Peter 2:1 says that even *false prophets* were purchased by Christ.

4. Jesus' *prayed* for the non-elect by asking the Father to forgive his crucifiers because they didn't know what they were doing (Luke 23:34). He *wept* (Mt 23:37) and even *prayed* that unbelievers would be saved (John 11:42).
5. If God could have saved *all* but only saved *some* brings His all-loving character into question. How can an all-loving being not love His creation enough to save them?

Question: Should you save all drowning victims if you can?

Irresistible Grace

Extreme View:

1. Holy Spirit overwhelms a sinner without prior consent.
2. Holy Spirit's grace can't be resisted nor thwarted.
3. Martin Luther and John Calvin taught irresistible grace

Moderate view:

1. God's grace is irresistible on the *willing* but not on the *unwilling*. Forced freedom is a contradiction in terms.

Coercion vs. Persuasion

2. Extreme Calvinists confuse what God wills *unconditionally* and what He wills *conditionally*.
3. Scripture affirms that Holy Spirit *can be resisted* by both believers and unbelievers.

Acts 7:51 – You stiff-necked people . . . You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

Matthew 23:37 – I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

(Matthew 12:50; 7:21; Luke 7:30; John 7:17; 1 John 2:17)

4. All the church fathers from the early Augustine until Martin Luther believed in free will. There is virtually no support for extreme Calvinism's view of irresistible grace except for the later Augustine.

Perseverance of the Saints

Extreme view:

1. All the elect will be saved. They will persevere to the end.
2. Perseverance depends on God's preservation.
3. Total assurance of salvation occurs when the believer goes to heaven.
4. Some extreme Calvinists imply that nobody who is truly saved will die in sin.

Moderate view:

1. All the elect will be saved. They will persevere to the end.
2. Moral assurance of salvation can occur immediately (1 Jn 5:13)
3. Some may die in sin, but will not be lost. (fellowship vs. Sonship)

Some Important Questions to Ask:

1. Why is extreme Calvinism absent within church history with the exception of later Augustine and reformers? All major theologians throughout the history of the church believed in free will as it pertained to salvation.
2. How did Lucifer and Adam sin if they originally had a good nature? Nature cannot possibly determine will!
3. Does "voluntarism" (the belief that something is good because God willed it) makes God arbitrary? Why not choose essentialism (it's good, therefore God willed it)?

The Co-existence of Determination and Free Will

God preordains the ends (salvation), and the means (choice)

Betrayal of Jesus

Predetermined – Luke 22:22a – And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined . . .

Freely betrayed – Luke 22:22b – but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!

The Death of Christ

Predetermined - Acts 2:23 –Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God . . .

Freely Given – John 10:17-18 – I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. (see Acts 3:12, 15, 18)

Joseph sold into slavery (see Acts 27:22, 23 cf. v31 shipwreck)

Intended by God – Genesis 45:8 – So now it was not you who sent me here, but God;

Intended by his brothers – Genesis 50:20 - But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

Salvation

Chosen by God and man – John 6:37 – All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. (Rom 10:13 "whoever"; 1 Pet 2:8 cf. Isa 8:14)

Rejection of Christ

Destined by God and chosen by man – 1 Peter 2:8 – They stumble because *they disobey* the message—which is also what they were *destined* for

Westminster Confession (1646)

Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet by the same providence he ordered them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

On the Will of Man

Indeterminism (actions and decisions are uncaused)

This position believes man's actions and decisions are uncaused and occur at random with no apparent explanation addressing how they came about.

Problems:

1. Violates the philosophical and scientific *principle of causality*
2. Removes moral responsibility since the actor does not have control over his decisions and actions. (They occur willy-nilly)
3. Doesn't seem to align itself with body Scripture that suggests man is responsible for his actions.
4. How would our judicial system convict or hold responsible felons who say their actions were uncontrollable?
5. Jonathan Edwards rejected the view that there is no cause for our actions since it is impossible that things arise without a cause (See Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*)

Determinism (all decisions, at least spiritual ones, are caused by another, whether it be God, Devil, or our own nature)

Problems:

1. Loss of moral *responsibility*. The actions are not *his* actions.
2. Loss of *praise* for courage or heroic action. Can't be *blamed* if you were forced to act or not act.
3. People don't always desire what they do or do what they desire (Romans 7)
4. If will follows nature, and God only gives the desire to do good, how did Adam or Satan sin since they had no sin nature¹⁰⁴

Self-determinism (all actions are caused by the self, i.e. me, myself)

1. Preserves moral *responsibility* with the individual
2. Preserves principle of *causality*
3. Explains Adam & Eves decision to sin apart from sin nature
4. Edwards confuses *self-caused being* and *self-caused becoming*

¹⁰⁴ See Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 142, 152, 172-173. Edwards believes that God gives good desires to do good and our evil actions are determined by the strongest desires of an evil nature left to itself. Also see R.C. Sproul, *Willing to Believe*, 163. Sproul says "The will cannot choose against its strongest inclination."

Ecclesiology

Doctrine of the Church

I. Meaning of Church

The English word “church” is related to the Scottish word *kirk* and the German designation *kirche*. Both words are derived from the Greek word *kuriakon* which means “belonging to the Lord”¹⁰⁵ or “the Lord’s house.”¹⁰⁶ However, the English word “church” also translates from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which is derived from *ek* meaning “out of” and *kaleo* which means “to call.” Hence the church is the “called out group.”¹⁰⁷

- A. *Ekklesia* used 114 times in N.T.
- B. Used 3 times in the *gospels* (Mt 16:18; 18:17 twice)
- C. Used 111 times in the *epistles*
- D. *Ekklesia* has a variety of usages:
 - 1. Congregation (Acts 7:38 people of Israel)
 - 2. Assembly (Acts 19:32 angry mob at Ephesus)
 - 3. Group of called-out believers: church (Acts 8:1; 11:2; 16:5)

II. Local and Universal Church

Local (group of believers in a particular locality)

- A. Most common usage of the word “church” refers to the *local* group of believers (Acts 8:1; 11:22; 16:5; Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 1:2)¹⁰⁸
- B. Local church usually met in homes, not large buildings like today (Philemon 2; Romans 16:5)
- C. Local church continued in the apostle’s doctrine (Acts 11:26; I Cor 4:17), fellowship (Acts 4:31), breaking of bread, prayers (Acts 2:42), worship (I Cor 11:18) and preparing for missionary work (Acts 13:2; 15:3).

Universal (all believers in the church age)

- A. Believers have been *baptized* into the Church by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13; Gal 3:27; I Peter 1:3, 22-25)
- B. Emphasis is its *unity* (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 4:4)
- C. One body with many members: which is *organic* (I Corinthians 12:12-26; Ephesians 2:11-22; I Peter 2:5)
- D. Church began at Pentecost:
 - 1. Mt 16:18 “I will build my church” – yet future
 - 2. John 7:39 “Holy Spirit had not yet been given”
 - 3. Acts 1:5 “You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” – future, yet imminent.
- E. Church was a *mystery* Ephesians 3:1-6
- F. Church built on the *foundation* of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20)
 - 1. Eyewitnesses to Jesus’ life (1 John 1:1-4)
 - 2. Eyewitnesses to His Word/Message (Hebrews 2:3-4)
 - 3. Eyewitnesses to His death (John 19:25, 35)
 - 4. Eyewitnesses to His resurrection (Acts 1:22)

¹⁰⁵ Robert Saucy, *The Church in God’s Program* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 11.

¹⁰⁶ Terry L. Miethe *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1988), 59.

¹⁰⁷ Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 347.

¹⁰⁸ See the beginning of Paul’s epistles.

The Nature of the Church body

¹² For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many.

¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where *would be* the smelling? ¹⁸ But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. ¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where *would* the body be?

²⁰ But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. ²¹ And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. ²³ And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable *parts* have greater modesty, ²⁴ but our representable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, ²⁵ that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. ²⁸ And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then ^f gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all workers of miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way. ¹⁰⁹

III. Descriptions of the Church

- A. **Body** (Unity, diversity, headship)
- B. **Bride** (Ephesians 5:2, 23-25) Rich in oriental wedding symbology. Love, purity, promise of future blessings, anticipation for the Groom
- C. **Building** (I Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:21) Under construction with Christ as cornerstone
- D. **Priesthood** (I Peter 2:5) We should offer spiritual sacrifices instead of animal ones; can approach God with boldness at anytime
- E. **Flock** (John 10:16) Shows our relationship to the Lord as sheep have to a shepherd
- F. **Branches** (John 15) Speaks of our vital union with Christ that enables us to flourish grow and bear fruit just as branches have a vital union to the vine that supports it.

IV. Church Government

Episcopal (overseer)

Presbyterian (elder)

Congregational (whole church; Christocracy)

^f Mark 16:18 ; 1 Cor. 12:9 ,

V. Lord's Supper (Communion)

Transubstantiation

Bread and wine literally change to Christ's body and blood.
Partake of Christ.

Consubstantiation

Bread and wine contain the body and blood of Christ.
Forgiveness of sins if taken in faith.

Reformed

Christ not literally present in elements, only spiritual presence. Receives grace.

Memorial

Christ is not present physically or spiritually.
Commemorates Christ's death until he comes.

Personal Eschatology

The Doctrine of the Afterlife

The English word "eschatology" comes from the Greek word *eschatos* which means "last." Therefore, the term refers to 'the doctrine of last things'. Although, eschatology is within its scope to deal with prophetic timetables, rapture scenarios and millennial chronology, we will limit our address to key aspects of the "personal" eschatology which focuses on the afterlife (human death, resurrection, heaven and hell).

I. Death

- A. Death will be experienced by all humans (Heb 9:27) except those who are alive at the coming of the Lord (1 Cor 15:51-53) (Enoch and Elijah: general vs. universal)
- B. Death is described in at least three ways:
 - 1. Spiritual death – separation (Isaiah 59:2; Ephesians 2:1)
 - 2. Physical death – separation (James 2:26; John 11:11-14)
 - 3. Eternal or Second death – separation (Rev 20:14-15)
 - * Sleep – observational language (John 11:11-14)
 - a. That "sleep" is a common word used to denote *death* (2 Sam 7:12; Ps 13:3; 1 Cor 15:20, 51; 1 Thess 4:13, 14)
 - b. "Sleep" here does not advocate "soul sleep", it simply is a word that describes from *phenomenological language* the appearance of the body at death (Rev 6), not the condition of the soul

SIX THINGS TO NOTE CONCERNING THE WORD "SLEEP":

- 1. Sleep is *harmless*. It is a friend and not a foe. (So is death for the Christian)
- 2. Sleep is something to *look forward to* after working hard all day (it's a time of rest; try to imagine living thousands of years in these present conditions)
- 3. Sleep is *temporary*, we lie down and wake-up again (death is sleep and resurrection is an awakening)
- 4. Sleep *shuts out the sorrows* of life. We are unconscious of the sorrows and toils of the day (in death we no more know of the tears shed on Earth)
- 5. Sleeps shows the *ease* with which the Lord will quicken our dead bodies. It will be like being gently woken-up. (we will hear His voice Jn 5)
- 6. Sleep is a time when the *body rejuvenates* for the next days challenges (in we awaken in the resurrection the limitations of this mortal body will not exist (1 Cor 15:35-58)

- C. Death is the separation of the soul/spirit from the body (Jms 2:26)
- D. Death is the wages of sin (Rom 6:23; 1 Cor 15:56)
- E. Death is not annihilation (Luke 16:19-31)
- F. Upon death, believers are immediately present with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23)

II. Afterlife

Intermediate state

The time after an individual dies and before he is resurrected is known as the “intermediate state.”

Body goes _____(Gen 3:19)

Soul/Spirit goes _____(2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23)

Resurrection

Resurrection refers to the future time when all will be raised from the grave to inherit life or death. This resurrection will possess the following facts:

- A. *All* will be resurrected (Dan 12:1-2; Jn 5:25-29)(quality vs. quantity)
- B. Resurrection will be in the *same* body, yet with changes in it
 - 1. Change *of* body vs. change *in* body (Jn 2:21-22; 1 Cor 15:35-58)
 - a. Primary qualities vs. secondary qualities
 - b. Qualities are “put on” not “replaced” (1 Cor 15:53)
 - c. Seed analogy shows sameness in body (v 35-44)
 - d. What is a “spiritual body” (v 44)
 - e. Can “flesh and blood” enter heaven? (1 Cor 15:50 cf. Mt 16:17)
 - 2. Resurrection, resuscitation, reincarnation contrasted

Heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2)

Atmosphere

Celestial atmosphere

God dwelling Place

Hell

One of the most disturbing concepts for one to think about is a family member, friend, loved one, or anybody for that matter, suffering eternal torment in Hell. This has led many to question the justice, morality, goodness, and motives of an All-loving God. If these stumbling blocks are to be removed, a clear understanding of eternal punishment in light of God’s loving nature is essential. Many objections to the doctrine of hell seem formidable when first encountered, however, a closer examination will illumine several flaws in the objector’s reasoning. Further, it is important that one approaches this subject with *humility* not standing as judge or jury over one’s eternal destiny.

- 1. What the Bible Says About Hell
- 2. Five Views on Hell
- 3. Doctrine of Hell

What the Bible Says about Hell

A. Words used in regards to life after death for the unsaved

1. *Sheol*- Old Testament word for the grave, hell, pit, or the abode of the dead (7585)
2. *Hades*- The place of departed souls, grave, hell (86)
3. *Gehenna*- A place or state of everlasting punishment (1067)
4. *Tartaros*- To *incarcerate* in eternal torment (5020)

In the New Testament three different words are used in regards to life after death for the unsaved. The Greek word *hades* is transliterated "Hades" in the NIV in five instances (Matt 16:18; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14); twice it is translated as "in the depths" (Matt 11:23; Luke 10:15), once as "hell" (Luke 16:23), and twice as "the grave" (Acts 2:27, 31). In general, the Greek word *hades* is equivalent to the Old Testament word *sheol* (used 65 times in Old Testament).

It is clear that *hades* is used of the temporary place (Rev. 20:14) of the unsaved after death. The most definitive term in the New Testament is *gehenna*, uniformly translated "hell" and refers to everlasting punishment (Matt 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6). This word is derived from the *Valley of Hinnom* (located south of Jerusalem, Joshua 15:8; 18:16; Jer 7:30-33), traditionally considered by Jews to be the place of final punishment of the ungodly. All references to *gehenna* are given by Christ Himself with the exception of James 3:6. One instance of the Greek word *tartaros* is found in 2 Peter 2:4; This word is translated "hell" and considered equivalent to *gehenna* (John Walvoord, "The Literal View" in William Crockett, ed. *Four Views on Hell* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, p. 19)

B. Scriptural references to Hell

Matthew 10:28

"But fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"

Matthew 13:40

"He will also say . . . depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels"

Mark 9:43

"It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched"

Luke 16:23

"And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom"

Revelation 20:13-14

"The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged. . . . Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire"

C. Definition of Hell

Hell can be defined as that place where unbelievers are eternally *separated from God in accord with their own free choice*. The real torment of Hell seems to be characterized by three elements: *privation, punishment, and pain*, (Luke 13:28; 16:23, 26).

II. Five Views on Hell

A. The literal view

The literal view holds that Hell is a place of eternal torment with literal smoke and flames (John Walvoord, Dallas Theological Seminary).

B. The metaphorical view

The metaphorical view holds that Hell is a place of eternal conscious punishment but not necessarily as being a literal fire (William V. Crockett, Alliance Theological Seminary).

C. The purgatorial view

The purgatorial view holds that there is a place of *temporal purification* for all those who die at peace with the church but are not yet purified. These people will eventually inherit heaven after their purification. Those who die in *mortal* sin, go directly to eternal punishment after death (Hell). (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1030, 1031, 1032, 1035)

D. The conditional view

The conditional view holds that the wicked begin in Hell, but eventually, God destroys the soul rather than punish them endlessly (Clark Pinnock). This is conditional annihilationism.

E. The annihilation view

This view says that after death one is immediately annihilated, destroyed, snuffed out of existence. This view has ancient Greek roots in Aristotle and has found in modern Atheistic movements and cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

III. Doctrine of Hell¹¹⁰

A. Why Hell?

B. Duration

C. Quality

D. The Equity of Hell

E. Why not annihilation

F. The Nature of Hell

G. The Longevity of Hell

¹¹⁰ William Crockett, ed., *Four Views on Hell* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); N.L. Geisler, *Questions About Hell* (Taped lecture).

General Eschatology

The question of the rapture refers to the end time “catching away” of the church to be forever with Christ. Though little was spoken of rapture eschatology in general in the early periods of the church, this doctrine has been almost universally accepted from the early medieval times to the modern church. Today the main dispute revolves around the timing of this great event. There are three main views:

A. Rapture of the Church

In Latin, the word for “caught up” is *rapturo*, from which comes the term “Rapture” (Gk: *harpazo* 1 Thess 4:17; 2 Cor 12:2-4; Acts 8:39 – means *to snatch* or *take away*). The rapture of the church describes the event when Christians are caught up to meet Christ in the clouds (cf. Acts 1:9).¹¹¹
(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:50-58; John 14:1-3)

1. Pretribulational Rapture

The *pretribulational* rapture position maintains that the living Christians (i.e. the church) will be caught up to be with the Lord in the air, though not before those who have died, (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) *before* the seven year Great Tribulation period known as Daniel’s 70th week (Dan 9:24-27).

a. History

1) Early church – imminence

Several documents are found to express imminency within the early apostolic fathers (Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, The Didache, The Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas)

Shepherd of Hermas reads: You have escaped from great tribulation on account of your faith, and because you did not doubt in the presence of such a beast. Go, therefore, and tell the elect of the Lord His mighty deeds, and say to them that this beast is a type of the rapt Tribulation that is coming. If then ye prepare yourselves, and repent with all your heart, and turn to the Lord, it will be possible for you to escape it, if your heart be pure and spotless, and ye spend the rest of the days of your life serving the Lord blamelessly.

2) Early medieval period

In the early medieval period, **Ephraem the Syrian** (4th – 6th century) in his sermon titled “Sermon on the Last Times” says: Why therefore do we not reject every care of earthly actions and prepare ourselves for the meeting of our Lord Christ, so that He may draw us from the confusion, which overwhelms all the world? . . . For all the saints and the elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins. (the later second coming of Christ is mentioned at the conclusion of the sermon.

3) Modern period

John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), of the Plymouth Brethren popularized the pretrib view in Europe then eventually spread to America through annual Bible conferences, publications, and books/Bibles during the turn of the century (early 1900’s). Eventually, Bible Colleges (BIOLA; MOODY B.I.) and seminaries (DTS) were planted with this doctrine as part of their official statements. Others such as John Walvoord, Lewis S. Chafer; H.A. Ironside; R.A. Torrey; Charles Ryrie have supported the pretrib view as well.

b. Theological characteristics

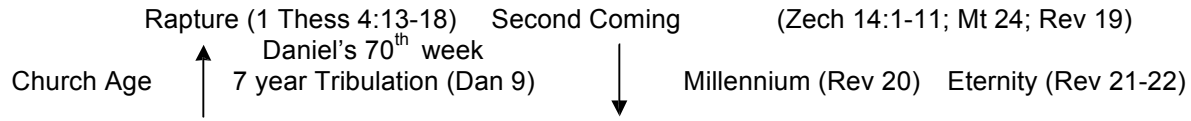
John 14:1-3

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 4:13-18; 5:9

Romans 5:9

¹¹¹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* . Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

Luke 21:36
Revelation 3:10



c. Twenty reasons supporting the pretribulational rapture:

1. Though some in the early church believed in the posttribulational rapture, many also believed in the *imminency* of the Lord's return, which is an essential doctrine of the pretribulational view.
2. The argument that says the pretribulational view is a "new" position, and therefore is false, are appealing to the chronological fallacy that says *age* determines truth. There are some recent views that are true (e.g. cleanliness prevents disease; irreducible complexity) and some old views that are false (e.g. earth has four corners). Some doctrines were not thoroughly developed during the early church period (e.g. justification; eschatology).
3. Pretribulationism is the only view that allows for a *literal interpretation* of crucial eschatological passages in both Old and New Testaments (e.g. Daniel 9; Revelation 20).
4. Pretribulationism distinguishes between Israel and the Church (Daniel 9; Romans 11:29).
5. The church is not appointed to wrath (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:9).
6. We are to pray that we may escape from the Great Tribulation (Luke 21:36; ought implies can)
7. The church will not be overtaken by the Day of the Lord, which includes the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:1-9)
8. The church of Philadelphia was promised deliverance from the hour of trial that was to test those living on the earth (Revelation 3:10)
9. Pretribulation view is consistent with deliverance before divine judgment is inflicted (Noah, Lot, Rahab; 2 Peter 2:5-9).
10. The exhortation to be "comforted" by the coming of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:18) would not make sense if the church were going to experience God's wrath since all Christians know that they are eventually going to heaven anyway.
11. The Scripture tells us to look for Christ's glorious appearing (Titus 2:13), but if the tribulation was to precede this event we ought to be looking for signs. The church is to look for the coming of the Lord, while unbelieving Israel the believers in the tribulation are to look for signs.
12. It seems best to view the Holy Spirit's removal from the world as part and parcel of the church being removed as well since the Holy Spirit in large measure has worked through Spirit-filled believers to accomplish His goals.
13. If the expression "except there be a falling away first" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) be translated literally, "except the departure come first," it would plainly show the necessity of the rapture *before* the beginning of the tribulation.
14. The Pretribulational view answers the problem of *who* would populate the millennial kingdom at Christ's second coming, thus eliminating the posttribulational view that advocates the rapture of all believers (Isaiah 65:20-25).

15. If the rapture took place at the second coming, there would be no need to separate the sheep from the goats at a subsequent judgment because the very act of His coming would have separated the sheep before Christ actually sets up His throne on earth (Mt 25:31).
16. The judgment of the Gentiles following the second coming (Mt 25:31-46) indicates that both saved and unsaved are still in their natural bodies. This would be impossible if the translation would have taken place at the second coming.
17. The rapture is described as imminent, while the second coming is preceded by definite signs (Mt 24).
18. The rapture will bring saints to where Jesus is (Jn 14:3), whereas, the second coming emphasizes the Lord coming to where the saints are (Mt 25).
19. If the 24 elders mentioned in Revelation 4:1-5:14 are representatives of the church, it would necessitate the rapture of the church prior to the tribulation period.
20. The word "church" is mentioned nineteen times in Rev 1-3 and once in Rev 22. The word doesn't even appear once in Rev 4-18 which describes the tribulation.
21. Pretribulation rapture is consistent with the typology of middle eastern marriage procedure of the bride and the groom (betrothal and ceremony – 1 week)

Posttribulationism Today

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Part XIII:

Pretribulationism as the Alternative to Posttribulationism

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John F. Walvoord

[John F. Walvoord, President and Professor of Systematic Theology, Dallas Theological Seminary, Editor, *Bibliotheca Sacra* .]

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the concluding article in this series, which was begun in *Bibliotheca Sacra* with the January-March, 1975 issue. The thirteen articles are available in book form under the title *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976).]

Throughout the discussion of posttribulationism in this series, the superiority of the pretribulationist view to posttribulationism has been pointed out. Although it is not the purpose of this study to present pretribulationism as such, as this has been done in the author's *The Rapture Question*,¹ a summary of pretribulationism is in order.

Clarity of Pretribulationist Premises

As demonstrated in the preceding articles, posttribulationism is faulty in its statement of its premises. Because posttribulationists are largely in confusion in their basic presuppositions, they are open to the charge of contradiction and illogical reasoning. By contrast, pretribulationists bring into focus the major issues that relate to eschatology.

The Authority and Accuracy of Scripture

While conservative posttribulationists usually concur with pretribulationists on the authority and accuracy of Scripture, they lack the unanimity evident in all pretribulationists in their doctrine of the Scriptures. It is not uncommon for scholars who defect from pretribulationism in favor of posttribulationism to defect also in their doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture.

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^{1,1}. John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question* (Findlay, OH: Dunham Publishing Co., 1957).

The Principle of Literal Interpretation of Prophecy

Among posttribulationists there is a wide divergence on the issue of the basic principles of biblical interpretation, especially as related to prophecy. Even conservative interpreters like J. Barton Payne, as previous discussion has demonstrated, spiritualize prophecies when they seem to contradict posttribulationism.² Robert Gundry, who attempts a literal interpretation of prophecy, spiritualizes when a literal interpretation would contradict posttribulationism.³ Lack of consistency among posttribulationists in principles of interpretation have undoubtedly contributed to their lack of agreement among themselves and confusion on important points in posttribulationism. Pretribulationists do not need to spiritualize prophecy in order to support the pretribulational rapture and are more consistent in their application of the principle of literal interpretation of prophecy.

The Church Contrasted with Israel

Although Gundry is a major exception, most posttribulationists fail to distinguish the scriptural program for the church, the body of Christ, and the program of God for Israel. The confusion of Israel and the church is one of the major reasons for confusion in prophecy as a whole, as illustrated in both amillennialism and posttribulationism. Gundry attempts to distinguish Israel and the church, but in order to support his posttribulationism he has to invent some novel explanations, as previous discussion has pointed out. Only in pretribulationism is the distinct program for the church clearly defined.

A Literal Future Tribulation

Posttribulationists are quite at odds among themselves as to the nature of the tribulation, some holding that it is a literal future period, and others that it is already past. Pretribulationism holds with clarity to a future great tribulation and to a literal fulfillment of the events and situations which will characterize this period. One of the principal causes for confusion among the posttribulationists is their lack of consistency on the subject of the future tribulation.

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Arguments for Pretribulationism

As presented in the author's *The Rapture Question*, there are at least fifty arguments for pretribulationism.⁴ Many of these have been alluded to in the preceding articles. For the purpose of establishing a suitable summary, some of the more important arguments can be restated.

Contrasts between the Rapture and the Second Coming

Probably the most important reason for pretribulationism is the evident contrast between the details revealed concerning the rapture and the description given of the second coming of Christ to establish His kingdom. As itemized in the preceding article, these contrasts describe these two events as different in purpose, character, and result.⁵

As previously noted, an analogy can be drawn between the contrasts in the Old Testament between the first and second comings of Christ, and the contrasts in the New Testament between the rapture and the second coming of Christ to the earth. In the Old Testament, the first coming and second coming of Christ were mingled, but can now be distinguished because of the major contrasts of the sufferings of Christ relating to His first coming and the glory of Christ relating to His second coming.

It is doubtful whether anyone comprehended the difference between the first and second comings of Christ until the prophecies of the first coming were fulfilled. In interpreting the distinctions between the rapture and the second coming of Christ, interpreters do not have the benefit of fulfilled prophecy as a basis of interpretation, but the same approach which enables us to distinguish the first coming from the second coming of Christ enables us to distinguish the rapture from the second coming to the earth.

Only the pretribulational interpretation can account for these sharp contrasts and the literal interpretation of the various factors relating to these two future events. Inevitably posttribulationists are forced to spiritualize to some extent in order to explain away the evident contrast.

2 2. J. Barton Payne, *The Imminent Appearing of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962).

3 3. Robert Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973).

4 4. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question*, pp. 191-99.

5 5. John F. Walvoord, "Unresolved Problems of Posttribulationism," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 134 (October-December, 1977): 299-313.

Silence of Scripture on a Posttribulational Rapture

Posttribulationists tend to make much of the fact that the Scriptures, in presenting the rapture, do not provide an ordered

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sequence of events which states in so many words that the rapture is first and the tribulation follows. Many eschatological problems, of course, would be resolved if the Scriptures specifically stated, for instance, that Christ's coming is premillennial or if the Old Testament clearly outlined the first coming of Christ to be followed by the present church age and then the second coming of Christ. The form of divine revelation given in Scripture does not always provide such an itemization.

While the argument from silence is never conclusive, most posttribulationists are not willing to admit that the silence in Scripture concerning a posttribulational rapture is much more significant than the silence in Scripture concerning the tribulation following the rapture. While no passage attempts to relate the rapture to a sequence of events, the second coming of Christ is revealed in a detailed way.

In Matthew 24, as well as in Revelation 4–19, specific revelation of events leading up to the second coming and a description of the second coming of Christ itself is provided. In view of this itemization, it is therefore most significant that the rapture is never mentioned at all when many other events are itemized. Accordingly, the rhetorical question of posttribulationists as to where the Bible teaches a pretribulation rapture actually boomerangs on the posttribulationist because he is unable to come up with any statement of a posttribulational rapture, even though the events preceding and following the second coming are given in great detail.

In the argument from silence, posttribulationists also attempt to evade the fact that the church, the body of Christ, is never mentioned in a tribulation passage. Many posttribulationists spiritualize the tribulation and make the church equivalent to the saints of all ages. The complete silence of the Scriptures on the subject of the church as such in the great tribulation has considerable weight. On the whole, the argument from silence is more damaging to the posttribulational view than it is to the pretribulational interpretation.

Imminence of the Rapture

As presented in all major passages on the rapture, the coming of Christ for His church is uniformly presented as an imminent event. This is in sharp contrast to the presentation of the doctrine of the second coming, which is consistently presented as following a sequence of events—including the return of Israel to the land, the rise of the dictator in the Middle East (sometimes referred to

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as the Antichrist), and the forty-two months of the great tribulation detailed in the Book of Revelation. The second coming of Christ to the earth in no proper sense can be called an imminent event, even though posttribulationists strain to redefine the English word *imminent* as meaning something other than an event which is immediately pending. Only by complete spiritualization of the major events leading up to the second coming of Christ can this problem be avoided by posttribulationism, and in this spiritualization a major principle of proper interpretation of eschatology is sacrificed.

The claim of many contemporary posttribulationists that they represent the historic position of the church is true only if they spiritualize the tribulation. Futurists like Ladd and Gundry offer a position that is quite different from the early church fathers and, as a matter of fact, it is more recent than pretribulationism as is commonly taught today. The fact that the rapture is presented as an imminent event is a major argument for distinguishing the rapture from the second coming of Christ to the earth.

The Doctrine of a Literal Tribulation

Pretribulationists regard the great tribulation as a future event and rightly place the rapture as occurring before this time of unprecedented trouble. By contrast, there is complete confusion among the posttribulationists on this point and an amazing lack of uniformity in applying the principles of interpretation. Posttribulationists are caught in the twin problem of either carrying the church through the great tribulation with resulting martyrdom for probably the majority of the church, or spiritualizing the period and thereby introducing the principles of interpretation that lead not only to posttribulationism, but also to amillennialism and a denial of any reasonable order of events for the endtime.

The difficulty of harmonizing the rapture as the blessed hope with the prospect of martyrdom and the problem of maintaining premillennialism while holding to posttribulationism has continued to plague some of the major interpreters of the posttribulationist view. By contrast, the pretribulationist view offers a clear and simple explanation. The blessed hope is the rapture of the church before the great tribulation. The second coming of Christ to the earth follows the tribulation. Pretribulationists accordingly are not forced to spiritualize or to evade the plain teaching of Scripture on the subject of the rapture or of the great tribulation.

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An Ordered Chronology of Events

The pretribulationist interpretation allows the interpreter of both the Old and New Testaments to establish an order for endtime events that makes sense. While many details may not be revealed, the major events of the endtime as commonly held by pretribulationists can be established. By contrast, it would be difficult to find two posttribulationists who agree on any system of events relating to the endtime. The reason for confusion among the posttribulationists is a lack of uniformity in principles of interpretation that results in disagreements as to the extent of spiritualization required. While large prophecy conferences are held by pretribulationists with evident agreement of the speakers on major events of the endtime, no such conference has ever been held by posttribulationists for the simple reason that they do not have any major agreement among themselves. Accordingly prophecy conferences are almost the exclusive domain of the pretribulationist interpretation.

Because of the confusion among posttribulationists as to how endtime events should be ordered, it is natural that there should be confusion on the interpretation of prophecy as a whole—and this is exactly what the contemporary theological scene reveals. While pretribulationism is a single system of interpretation on major events, posttribulationism is divided among many schools of interpretation, with great variation, even on major events. Pretribulationism continues to be the key to establishing a system of eschatological interpretation.

Exhortations Relating to the Rapture Harmonized with Pretribulationism

An important basis for pretribulationism is found in the nature of the exhortations given in connection with the revelation of the rapture. In John 14, the disciples were exhorted, “Let not your heart be troubled” (v. 1). If it were evident that they would have to go through the great tribulation first, they had every reason to be troubled. As a matter of fact, most of the disciples had already died as martyrs when the Apostle John recorded the words of John 14. It was evident that he is repeating these great promises because of their application to the church as a whole in keeping with the general revelation of the Upper Room Discourse in John 13–17.

In a similar way, the exhortation of 1 Thessalonians 4:18 extending comfort to the Thessalonians in the deaths of their loved ones, in harmony with the possibility of the return of Christ for them

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at any time, would be devoid of any real meaning if they had to go through the great tribulation first. While many generations of Christians have died before the rapture, it is evident that the exhortation given to the Thessalonians applies to each succeeding generation which continues to have the bright hope of an imminent return of the Lord for His own.

The exhortations of the major passage on the rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:51–58 are similar in their implications. Not a word of warning is given concerning a coming tribulation, but the readers are exhorted to live in the light of the imminent return of Christ. This hope is defined by Paul in Titus 2:13 as “that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.” The hope of a rapture after enduring the great tribulation is hardly a happy expectation, and this passage is difficult for posttribulationists to explain. The hope is not that of resurrection after death and martyrdom, but rather the coming and revelation of Christ in His glory to them while they are still living on the earth. The exhortations relating to the rapture constitute a major problem to posttribulationism.

The Rapture in Relation to Premillennialism

Posttribulationists who are premillennial are caught in the vise of a dilemma. If they spiritualize the great tribulation to avoid the problems of harmonization with a posttribulationist rapture as J. Barton Payne does, they are adopting principles of interpretation that lead logically to amillennialism, which spiritualizes not only the tribulation but also the millennium itself. If, as premillennialists, they take the great tribulation literally, then they have the problem of harmonizing the imminence of the rapture and exhortations relating to it with a posttribulationist rapture. The dilemma facing posttribulationism accounts for the general confusion that exists among them on endtime events.

Logically, posttribulationism leads to amillennialism and pretribulationism leads to premillennialism. Any compromise between these two points of view leads to confusion in principles of interpretation as well as in the interpretation itself. The obvious difficulty in moving from a posttribulational rapture into a millennium with saints on earth who have not been raptured forces interpreters like Gundry to postulate a second chance for salvation after the rapture, a doctrine nowhere taught in Scripture and expressly denied in the Book of Revelation (14:9–11).

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The evident trend among scholars who have forsaken pretribulationism for posttribulationism is that in many cases they also abandon premillennialism. For those who wish to think consistently and logically from principles of interpretation, the options continue to be (1) a pretribulational rapture followed by a premillennial return of Christ to the earth, or (2) abandoning both for a posttribulational rapture and a spiritualized millennium. It becomes evident that pretribulationism is more than a dispute between those who place the rapture before and after the tribulation. It is actually the key to an eschatological system. It plays a determinative role in establishing principles of interpretation which, if carried through consistently, lead to the pretribulational and premillennial interpretation.

Advantages of Pretribulationism

By way of summary, three major considerations point to the advantages of the pretribulational point of view.

Pretribulationism, A Logical System

While writers in all schools of biblical interpretation can be found who are guilty of illogical reasoning, careful observers of posttribulationism will find that so often their conclusions are based on illogical reasoning. In some cases their arguments hang on dogmatic assumptions which they do not prove. In other cases they draw conclusions from Scripture passages under consideration which the passages actually do not teach. The fact that an interpreter is a great scholar does not necessarily make him a logician; unfortunately, ability to do research and skill in linguistics do not necessarily lead to formation of logical conclusions. The writer believes that a major problem in posttribulationism is logical inconsistency. By contrast, pretribulationism moves logically from its premises and principles of interpretation to its conclusion.

Exegetical Advantages of Pretribulationism

In contrast with posttribulational treatment of major passages on the rapture which differs widely in interpretation, pretribulationists follow a consistent pattern of literal or normal interpretation. This allows the interpreter to explain the passage in its normal meaning—which in many cases is its literal meaning—without resorting to flagrant spiritualization in order to avoid pointed contrast between the rapture and the second coming of Christ to the earth.

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It is rather significant that, without any attempt to establish uniformity in eschatology, the Bible institute movement of America is predominantly premillennial and pretribulational. This has come from taking Scripture in its plain, ordinary meaning and explaining it in this sense. By contrast, educational institutions that have approached the Bible creedally tend to make Scriptures conform to their previously accepted creed with the result that most of them are liberal or, if conservative, tend to be amillennial.

Pretribulationism has continued to appeal to thousands of lay interpreters because it makes sense out of the passages that deal with the rapture of the church. While the majority of biblical scholars may disagree with pretribulational interpretation, it is also significant that they disagree radically among themselves as well; often abandonment of pretribulational interpretation results in abandonment of serious study in the area of prophecy.

Practical Advantages

In all the major rapture passages, the truth of the coming of the Lord is connected with practical exhortation. While it is undoubtedly true that eternal values remain in other interpretations, only the pretribulationists can consistently hold to a moment-by-moment expectation of the Lord's return along with the literal interpretation of the promises that are to be fulfilled following the Lord's coming. For the pretribulationist, the coming of the Lord is an imminent hope. For the great majority of others, there is only the somewhat blurred expectation of how the coming of the Lord really fits in to the pattern of future events. It is for this reason that pretribulationists hold tenaciously to their point of view, defend it earnestly, and believe the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ an important aspect of their future hope.

2. Midtribulational Rapture

The midtribulational rapture view holds that the rapture of the church will occur at the mid-way point of the tribulation period (after the wrath of men). Sometimes it is referred to as the pretribulational view since the rapture occurs before the tribulation of the last three years (the wrath of God). Proponents of this view are J. Oliver Buswell, Jr. and Gleason L. Archer.

a. Theology

MT view argues that the "last trumpet" spoken of in Revelation 10:7; 11:15 corresponds to the trumpet in 1 Corinthians 15:52. (trumpets have different usages)

Though the church will experience the wrath of men, it will be raptured before the wrath of God (Rev 16:1). (But see Rev 6:16-17)

The church cannot be represented by the 24 elders who sing the song of redemption since it is in the third person in the critical text ("ransomed men") (TR reads "redeemed us"), as if to say they are not speaking from first hand experience of salvation as their own. (But see Moses' song in Ex 15:13, 16-17 in third person).

3. Posttribulational Rapture

b. History

b. Theology

B. Millennialism

The doctrine of the millennium is discovered by reading Revelation 20:2-7 where no less than six times the millennium is stated to be 1,000 years. The Latin words *mille* and *annus* mean _____ and _____ respectively. The government of the millennial kingdom will be a theocracy with Jesus Christ visibly ruling as the absolute ruler (Rev 19:15) that will administrate immediate justice and punishment for sin amongst all (Isa 11:4; 65:20). Several characteristics mark this 1,000 year period:¹¹³

1. Christ will be the righteous King over all (Isa 11:5; 32:1)
2. Jerusalem will be the center of administration of Justice (Isa 2:3)
3. The city will be exalted (Zech 14:10) and a place of great glory (Isa 24:23)
4. It will have a temple (Isa 33:20) with sacrifices (Eze 40-48) and religious holidays observed (Eze 46:1-15; Zech 14:16) and be the joy of the earth (Ps 48:2)
5. There will be safety for Israel (Isa 26:1-4)
6. King David will have a prominent role in the kingdom under Christ (Jer 30:9; Eze 37:24-25)
7. The Church will have a part in governing the earth (Rev 5:10) in their resurrection bodies (1 Cor 15:52)
8. The subjects within the kingdom will be Jew and Gentile survivors of the tribulation period that will enter the millennium with their nature bodies:
 - a. All will be redeemed since the unredeemed will have already been judged at Christ's second coming (Mt 25)
 - b. There will be babies born who must decide their own relationship to the King (Jesus)
 - c. Natural people will live longer with babies dying at age 100 (Isa)
 - d. There will be peace between animals and natural people (Isa)
9. The millennial kingdom will be earthly and spiritual at the same time (not a contradiction)

¹¹²Dallas Theological Seminary. 1978;2002. *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 135*. Dallas Theological Seminary

¹¹³ Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986, 1999), 592-95.

10. The kingdom era will be a peaceful time when Egypt, Assyria, and Israel will be at peace with each other (Isa 2:4; 19:23-25; Zech 8:4-5)
11. The kingdom will be prosperous and fruitful (Isa 35:1-7), with one harvest following on the heels of another (Amos 9:13-14)
12. Death will be conquered at the end of the millennium (Rev 20)

1. Premillennial

The premillennial position (Revelation 20:1-7) holds that Jesus will return before the millennial kingdom which is interpreted as a literal 1,000 years. Sometimes premillennarians are referred to as *chiliasmists* from the Greek word *chilioi* which means “one thousand.” This view is seen as early as the church fathers (see handout of quotes). Several characteristics identify premillennialism:

- a. Christ will return at the end of this age (pre, mid, or post rapture)
- b. Israel will experience the blessings of God promised to Abraham and David regarding “land and throne” (Genesis 15)
- c. Church and Israel distinct – church not fulfilling the promises made to Israel (Romans 11)

Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4-6

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Introduction

Many will concede that a prima facie reading of Revelation 20:4–6 and its context yields the doctrine of an intermediate Messianic kingdom, i.e., a kingdom inaugurated by Christ at His second advent and terminating or merging with the eternal state. In fact, such a doctrine was held by the majority of the early church fathers.¹ In the third century the formidable Alexandrians, Dionysius, Clement, and Origen, declared war on premillennialism.² The doctrine was attacked with ad hominem arguments, accused of being Judaistic, and chided for using a literal hermeneutic.³ With the coming of Augustine and his development of the amillennial interpretation, the doctrine of premillennialism was all but obliterated, and only rarely did anyone venture to put forward a premillennial interpretation of Revelation 20:4–6 .

However, the present day has witnessed a reversal in the interpretation of John’s millennial vision. Hanns Lilje, T. F. Glassen, Albrecht Oepke, Austin Farrer, C. B. Caird, R. H. Charles, and Mathias Rissi, without necessarily embracing premillennialism, all understand John to be describing an intermediate Messianic kingdom

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in Revelation 20:4–6 .⁴ Yet not all the commentators just mentioned think John was correct in his view of the millennium or consistent with other New Testament writers. For instance, Farrer says:

But why did St. John believe in a millennial standstill, if St. Paul did not? It seems that the doctrine established itself in rabbinic theology towards the end of the first century A.D.; St. Paul would not have learnt it at the feet of Gamaliel, the Seer of Revelation might well learn [sic] it at whose ever feet it was he sat.⁵

1 1. Papias (ca. A.D. 60–130), Barnabas (70–132), Irenaeus (flourished ca. 175–195), Justin Martyr (ca. 100–165), and Tertullian (ca. 160/170–215/220) were some of the more prominent early premillennialists. Cf. Hans Bietenhard, “The Millennial Hope In the Early Church,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953); 12–30.

2 2. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

3 3. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

4 4. Hanns Lilje, *The Last Book of the Bible*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957); T. R. F. Glassen, *The Revelation of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); Albrecht Oepke, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:371; Austin Farrer, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1966); R. H. Charles, *Revelation*, The International Critical Commentary, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920); Mathias Rissi, *The Future of the World: An Exegetical Study of Revelation 19:11–22:5* (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1971).

5 5. Farrer, *Revelation*, p. 203. According to Farrer the Jewish doctrine had three basic causes. First, Rabbinic theology developed the idea of a cosmic week which was based on Psalm 90:4 and Genesis 2:2 . Second, some supposed that Ezekiel 35–48 “offered a continuous prediction of the last things.” Third, it seemed impossible to refer some of the Messianic prophecies to the eternal state. Therefore, the doctrine of an intermediate

According to John, however, the confirming authority for his doctrine of the intermediate kingdom was not found in Rabbinic theology, but in a vision (cf. Rev 20:4 , κα ε δον) which was given to him by the Master of that kingdom (Rev 1:1). This does not mean that Rabbinic theology or intertestamental literature is not important for a correct understanding of John's view of the millennial kingdom. Quite the contrary! One only has to consider how firmly entrenched the doctrine of an intermediate Messianic kingdom had become before John's writing. The doctrine of an intermediate kingdom was put forth in the second century B.C. in the books of 1 Enoch and Jubilees, in the first century B.C. in the Psalms of Solomon and the Sibylline Oracles, in the early first century A.D. in the Assumption of Moses and in 2 Enoch, and in the late first century A.D. in 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra.⁶ The Rabbinic authorities who held the doctrine of an intermediate kingdom are

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conveniently cataloged by Billerbeck.⁷ At least twice before the writing of Revelation the length of the Messianic kingdom was held to be one thousand years! The Book of 2 Enoch, which may be dated between A.D. 1 and 50, maintained that the Messianic kingdom would extend for one thousand years. The well-known Rabbi Eleazar b. Hyracanus (ca. A.D. 90) also held to a one-thousand year reign of the Messiah. One may conclude that the revelation of an intermediate Messianic kingdom would not have been foreign to John nor to his readers.

Context

The exegesis of Revelation 20:4–6 is determined largely by the interpreter's view of the immediate context of 19:11–20:15 . Does this section indicate a chronological progression from beginning to end, or does 20:1–6 recapitulate details in the book given before 19:11 ? This writer holds that the whole passage moves in a chronological progression.

It seems quite reasonable that 19:11–21 describes the second advent of Christ and the corresponding cataclysmic judgment on His enemies.⁸ Daniel 7 offers an instructive parallel to this event. The little horn of Daniel 7 parallels the beast of Revelation 13:1–8 . Both the little horn of Daniel and the beast of Revelation are said to have a worldwide empire (Dan 7:7 , 23 ; Rev 13:8). Both have victory over the saints for "a time and times and half a time" (Dan 7:25 ; Rev 12:14).⁹ Both are destroyed by the Messiah at His second advent (Dan 7:11 , 26 ; Rev 19:20). Both affirm that immediately following the destruction of the world ruler the kingdom is given to the saints (Dan 7:22 , 27 ; Rev 20:4–6). Thus it is apparent that at least up to the reign of the saints Revelation 19:11–20:6 is following the same pattern as Daniel 7 . Since the world ruler is yet future, the millennial reign must also be future for the saints do not reign or receive their kingdom until after his

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destruction.¹⁰ Thus on the basis of Daniel 7 it is more natural to read Revelation 20:4–6 as part of a chronological progression in its larger context (19:11–20:15) than as a recapitulation.

The literary connection between 19:11–21 and 20:4–6 also indicates that 20:4–6 is yet future. Revelation 19:11–21 presents a graphic picture of the Lord coming in glory and power,¹¹ while 20:4–6 presents a similar picture of the saints in glory and power. Since it is taught elsewhere in the Scriptures that the saints will be revealed in glory and power at the coming of the Lord, it is only natural to view 20:4–6 as following the second advent and as therefore yet future.¹²

It is also evident that Revelation 20:1–3 must be future. It is customary to refer to this passage as the "binding" of Satan, yet the passage is much stronger. Satan is not only bound, but is also completely imprisoned and cut off from

kingdom was developed in order to harmonize Messianic prophecies with the eternal state (ibid., p. 209). Direct support in the Old Testament for a future intermediate Messianic kingdom is found in Isaiah 24:21–23 .

6 6. The exact dates and specific citations are conveniently cataloged in Robert Henry Charles, *Eschatology: The Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, Judaism, and Christianity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), pp. 219-20, 239-40, 270-71, 273, 301-2, 315, 324-37.

7 7. Paul Billerbeck and Herman L. Strack, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 4, Die Brief des Neuen Testaments und die Offenbarung Johannis, 5th ed. (Munchen: C. H. Beckische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1926), pp. 823-27.

8 8. B. B. Warfield understands 19:11–21 to be describing the conquest of the gospel during this age, but he offers no conclusive exegetical support for his view ("The Millennium and the Apocalypse," in *Biblical Doctrines* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1929], p. 647).

9 9. In reference to the overcoming of the saints, Daniel 7:21 (Theodotion) has: ποιει πόλεμον μετ τω ν γίλων κα σχυσειν πρ σ α τούς . Revelation 13:7 has a similar description: ποιη σαι πόλεμον μετ τω ν γίλων κα νικη σαι α τούς .

10 10. Paul also views the world ruler as future. He describes him as the "man of lawlessness" who will be destroyed at the Lord's coming (2 Thess 2:1–12).

11 11. The effect is heightened by the interweaving of several great Messianic predictions: Isaiah 49:2 ; 63:1–3 ; Psalm 2:9 ; and Ezekiel 39:17–20 .

12 12. Cf. Colossians 3:4 ; 1 Peter 5:4 ; and Revelation 2:26–28 .

the earth. Those who do not believe that the millennial reign is future normally try to prove that Satan is presently bound. Rushdoony and Lenski introduce several passages in an attempt to prove that Revelation 20:1–3 is presently being fulfilled.¹³ However, on closer inspection these passages either speak about the binding of Satan in reference to individuals or they record his judgment but not its execution. None of the passages speaks about the complete imprisonment of Satan described in Revelation 20:1–3.

On the other hand, several passages in the New Testament seem to indicate that Satan is not yet imprisoned, and still has a great deal of influence in the world. First John 5:19 reveals that “the whole world lies in the evil one.” First Peter 5:8 also speaks of the freedom of Satan: “Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” In 2 Corinthians 4:3–4 Paul speaks of the power of the satanic veil which keeps men from perceiving the gospel. Neither does the witness of history indicate that Satan has been unable to deceive the nations. One

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only has to observe Nazi Germany or present-day Red China or Russia or even his own culture to convince him of Satan’s deceptive work among the nations. Of course, one may assign all this evil to the flesh in unregenerate people. But in the kingdom, when unregenerate persons will be born, the identity of the unregenerate is not known until the release of Satan (Rev 20:7–10). So man’s sinful nature alone seems inadequate to explain the corporate evil in the world. Therefore, it may be concluded that the imprisonment of Satan is yet future. In addition, the remainder of the twentieth chapter (20:7–15) is certainly future.

In review, Revelation 19:11–21 (the first division in this passage) must be future for it describes the second advent. The second division, the imprisonment of Satan (20:1–3), is likely future too. The last battle and the final judgment (20:7–15) are also future. Thus between these verses (19:11–20:3 and 20:7–15), which exhibit a clear chronological progression yet future, the millennial reign is found. And the millennial reign is introduced in 20:4 with the same phrase (κα ε δον “and I saw”) which introduces the visions of 19:11–21 ; 20:1–3 ; and 20:11–15 . The only exception is 20:7–10 which is introduced with the tempopal particle ταν (“when”)! Therefore, not only do the parallels with Daniel 7 and the exegetical connections with 19:11–21 argue for a futuristic interpretation of Revelation 20:4–6 , but also its setting in a context which is completely futuristic before and after argue for a yet future fulfillment. Unless there are compelling exegetical reasons to the contrary, Revelation 20:4–6 must be viewed as chronologically following the second advent and as therefore future.

Exegesis

John begins in verse 4 by describing the saints who reign in the millennial kingdom. Charles thinks that the first line, κα ε δον θρόνους , κα κάθισαν π α τούς (“and I saw thrones, and they sat upon them”) is so ungrammatical and unintelligible that it is either a marginal gloss from Daniel 7:22 or else it has been misplaced in the text.¹⁴ However, the use of the third person plural indefinite verb is not unknown to John (cf. 12:6 , τρέφωσιν ; and 13:16 , δω σιν). Furthermore, John has given his readers a similar construction in 4:2–3 . First he mentions a throne, followed by the indefinite καθήμενος , and then in verse 3b he gives a more elaborate

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description.¹⁵ So the present text is authentic and one must now determine who sits on these thrones.

Some, have suggested that the occupants of the thrones are the twenty-four elders.¹⁶ However, those who put forward this interpretation also view the twenty-four elders as representative of the church, or perhaps the church and Israel. Two observations preclude such a view. First, the twenty-four elders are individual beings rather than a representative group (5:5 ; 7:13–14). Second, Ladd points out the following concerning the vision in 7:9–11 :

First we have a great multitude of the saved which no man can number; then the various concentric ranks of heavenly beings round about the throne; first the angels, then the elders, and finally the four living creatures.

13 13. E.g., John 12:31 ; 16:11 ; Luke 10:18 ; 11:21–22 ; Colossians 2:15 ; Hebrews 2:14 ; 1 John 3:8 ; Genesis 3:15 ; and Isaiah 53:12 . Rousas John Rushdoony, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1971), p. 212; and R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Revelation* (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1935), p. 579.

14 14. Charles, *Revelation*, 2:182.

15 15. Rissi points out that Charles has no trouble accepting 4:2–3 as authentic (*The Future of the World*, p. 96, n. 60).

16 16. John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 296.

See also a similar order of the heavenly beings in 19:1–4 . The elders are grouped with other angelic beings in distinction to the redeemed.¹⁷

Since the twenty-four elders are more likely an order of angels they cannot be the occupants of the thrones, for the saints will judge the angels (1 Cor 6:3).

Beckwith suggests that the martyrs must be in view here.¹⁸ However, this is not likely since the martyrs are not raised until after John has already seen the thrones and their occupants. Bullinger suggests that the occupants are Christ, God, the seven angelic assessors, and the Apostles.¹⁹ Although Christ and God have thrones and reign, it is doubtful that κρίμα δόθη α τοι ς (“judgment was given to them”) could be predicated of them. The angels are precluded by 1 Corinthians 6:3 and by Hebrews 2:5 . The Apostles may be likely candidates (Matt 19:28), but why should the occupancy of the thrones be limited to them? It is more likely that all the saints are in view. In several places John records the promise of a share in Christ’s throne and reign (2:26–27 ; 3:21 ; 5:10).

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Paul also maintains that the saints will judge the world (1 Cor 6:2). Therefore, in 20:4 John saw the saints of all ages on the thrones.²⁰

The fact that John saw them seated on thrones suggests that the phrase κρίμα δόθη α τοι ς (“judgment was given to them”) refers to their authority to judge rather than judgment passed in their favor. Regarding the nature of this judicial activity, McClain remarks:

Since this kingdom will begin on earth with the actual situation existing here as the coming of Christ finds it, there will be many crucial matters needing to be settled by such action without delay.... Since throughout the millennial kingdom human life will continue with the possibilities of sin and error, though greatly restrained and controlled, it should be obvious that there will be need for such judicial activity then as well as now.²¹

After viewing the reigning saints, John saw a second group, the martyrs of the great tribulation. The participle τω ν πεπελεκισμένων (“those who had been beheaded”) is more graphic than the τω ν σφαγμένων (“those who had been slain”) of 6:9 . It stresses the fact they were put to death by the state rather than merely recording that they were slain.²² Their “crime” is recorded in the following clauses.

First, their obedience is stated positively by the two δι (“because of”) constructions. ησου (“Jesus”) is probably an objective genitive thus indicating that the martyrs were faithful in proclaiming Jesus. The second δι clause could be taken as a hendiadys, but since it is broader than the previous clause it probably points to the martyrs’ obedience to the commandments of God. Therefore, they were put to death because they proclaimed Jesus and because they were obedient to God’s Word.

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Next their obedience is stated negatively. There is some debate whether or not the κα ο τινες (“and they”) introduces a new group or further qualifies the martyrs. Lenski thinks a new group is in view because the ο τινες is preceded by a κα .²³ But the κα may be ascensive in force or merely conjunctive because John is describing a new aspect of their obedience. Bullinger also thinks a new group is introduced because the ο τινες does not agree in gender with ψυχ ς .²⁴ Yet this phenomena, *constructio ad sensum* , is not at all uncommon in Revelation.²⁵

17 17. George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), p. 75.

18 18. Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1919), p. 739.

19 19. E. W. Bullinger, *The Apocalypse* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1902), p. 613.

20 20. It may be likely, however, that John does not see the totality of the saints of all ages reigning, but rather, only those who have been faithful and who have “overcome” (cf. Rev 2:26 ; 3:21). The same idea may be behind the promise of various “crowns” elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Cor 9:27 ; 2 Tim 4:8 ; James 1:12). One might also compare such passages as 2 Timothy 2:11–13 ; 1 Corinthians 3:10–15 ; and Matthew 25:26 .

21 21. Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), pp. 484–85.

22 22. The axe was “the traditional instrument of capital punishment in republican Rome, which, though under the Empire superseded by the sword (Acts 12:2), still lingered in the memory of the provincials” (Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968], p. 262).

23 23. Lenski, *Revelation* , p. 584.

24 24. Bullinger, *Apocalypse* , p. 615.

25 25. Cf. Revelation 1:15 , 19 , 20 ; 5:6 ; 11:4 , 9 , 11 , 15 ; 14:7 ; 17:3 ; 19:1 .

Two observations indicate that a new group is not in view. First, the same phrase, καὶ οἱ τινες, is used in Revelation 1:7 where it includes members of the previous clause. Second, if a new group is in view, nothing is said about their death, and therefore it is difficult to see how the following ζῆσαν (“they came to life”) can refer to them. Thus a new group is not in view, and instead καὶ οἱ τινες gives a further qualification of the obedience of the martyrs.

The martyrs identified themselves with Jesus by proclaiming Him and obeying Him. They separated themselves from the state by refusing to worship the beast or his image and by refusing to receive his mark.²⁶ In doing so they paid the penalty of death (13:15). So from the state they received death, but what would they receive from God?

The answer to this question comes quickly and dramatically. These godly martyrs will receive “life” and a kingly rule from God! But what does John mean by “life”? Is John describing (1) the regeneration of the soul, (2) a symbolic resurrection, (3) the soul’s entrance into heaven, or (4) a literal physical resurrection? The answer hinges on the meaning of “they came to life” (ζῆσαν) in verses 4 and 5 as well as the phrase “the first resurrection” (νάστασις πρώτη) in verse 5 .

Augustine argued that the resurrection in view was the regeneration of the soul.²⁷ Swete thinks that a symbolic resurrection is meant. The fact symbolized is the triumph of the martyrs’ principles

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in society.²⁸ Both of these views may be dismissed from consideration for they use an allegorical technique which produces interpretations that are diverse and limited only by one’s fantasy. Also both views go against the usage of νάστασις (which will be discussed shortly).

On the exegetical side of the question Hughes produces three arguments in favor of understanding ζῆσαν of verse 4 as a constative aorist. Therefore, he would translate ζῆσαν as “they lived” (rather than “they came to life”). This would allow him to take the νάστασις πρώτη as a reference to the soul’s rising into heaven at the time of death.²⁹ He first argues that if ζῆσαν is ingressive (i.e., “they came to life”) then the following βασιλεύσαν must also be ingressive (i.e., “they began to reign”). Of course, βασιλεύσαν must be constative, for the martyrs did not “begin to reign for a thousand years.” Yet what rule of logic or grammar dictates that ζῆσαν *cannot* be ingressive while βασιλεύσαν is constative? Recognized grammarians have not felt this tension. Nigel Turner takes ζῆσαν as ingressive.³⁰ A. T. Robertson also understands ζῆσαν to be ingressive while taking βασιλεύσαν as constative.³¹ So Hughes’s first argument cannot stand.

His second argument for understanding that ζῆσαν is a constative rather than an ingressive aorist is that ζῶω has an ingressive force in only two places in the New Testament (Rev 2:8 and Rom 14:9 , both of which refer to the resurrection of Christ). This is not quite correct, however, for Luke 15:32 and Revelation 13:14 are clear examples of the ingressive use of ζῆσαν , according to Turner.³² Thus Hughes’s second argument also loses some of its force.

Finally, Hughes understands the ψυχῆς of verse 4 to refer to disembodied souls, and maintains that it would be impossible for the soul to “come to life” since the soul never dies. Berkouwer, himself an amillennialist, replies, “Such a critique, however, is not decisive, for there seems to be no soul-body dichotomy in view

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here. John sees simply that those who had been beheaded come to life again and sit on thrones.”³³ Similarly, Schweizer sees no distinction between the noncorporeal and corporeal state intended by John’s use of ψυχῆς in 6:9 or in 20:4 .³⁴ The use of ψυχή to refer to the whole person is well known (Acts 2:41 , 43 ; 3:23). Furthermore, John

26 26. The χάραγμα (“the mark”), which was the technical term for the Imperial stamp, may indicate nothing more than submission to the state (Swete, *Apocalypse* , p. 173). Or possibly, as Charles suggests, it may travesty the Jewish custom of wearing the tephillin on the left hand and over the brow (Charles, *Revelation* , 1:362–63).

27 27. Augustine *The City of God* 20.6.

28 28. Swete, *Apocalypse* , pp. 263, 266.

29 29. James A. Hughes, “Revelation 20:4–6 and the Question of the Millennium,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 35 (1973): 290-92.

30 30. Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* , 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 3:71.

31 31. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1943), p.

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32 32. Turner, *Grammar* , 3:71.

33 33. G. C. Berkouwer, *The Return of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), p. 304.

34 34. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* , ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, s.v. “ψυχή,” by Edvard Schweizer, 9(1974): 654.

has previously used ψυχή with a qualifying genitive to refer to the whole person (ψυχῆς ἀνθρώπων in 18:13).³⁵ Also the masculine οἱ τινες , the nearest antecedent of ζήσαν , supports the contention that John is thinking in terms of persons rather than disembodied souls. Thus it does not seem that Hughes's arguments are strong enough to preclude the natural ingressive understanding of ζήσαν .

On the other hand, several weighty reasons can be adduced for the ingressive use of ζήσαν . One might add to the previous four uses of ζάω as ingressive³⁶ the ζήσαν of Ezekiel 37:10 in the Septuagint, which refers to dry bones coming to life. Ezekiel 37–39 has a structure similar to that of Revelation 20 , and Rissi thinks John is intentionally alluding to Ezekiel 37 .³⁷ Finally, one more thing should be noted about the ingressive use of ζάω . In both Ezekiel 37 and Luke 15 it is clear that the aorist use of ζάω is equivalent to ἀναζάω (“to come to life again”; cf. Ezek 37:5 , 10 and Luke 15:24 , 32). Of course, this usage of ζάω is to be expected since, as Moulton observes, “The ingressive especially belongs to verbs of state or condition.”³⁸ Thus both grammar and usage indicate that ζήσαν has an ingressive force and refers to a literal physical resurrection.

Another cogent reason may be given for understanding the ζήσαν of verse 4 to refer to a physical resurrection. Alford pointed out long ago that the ζήσαν of verse 4 and also of verse 5 must be understood in the same sense.³⁹ If one is spiritual, then the other

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must be spiritual, and vice versa. Now the resurrection of verse 4 must refer to believers while the ζήσαν of verse 5 must refer to unbelievers.⁴⁰ If ζήσαν in both verses refers to a physical resurrection, there is no problem. But if ζήσαν refers to a spiritual resurrection in both verses, then the exegete is confronted with an insurmountable problem. For this would imply that the unbelieving dead of verse 5 live spiritually in heaven like the martyrs of verse 4 after the thousand years is completed. Hughes tries to escape this dilemma in the following way:

This verse does not say that after the thousand years were finished the rest of the dead lived. In fact, the expression “the rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were finished” is equivalent to saying that “the second death had power on the rest of the dead during the thousand years.” And those on whom the second death has power are never released from its power. So the “rest of the dead” did not live until the thousand years were finished, nor did they live after the thousand years were finished. And they will never live, i.e., they will never be released from the power that the second death has on them. That the word ἄχρι (until) does not of itself imply that a change occurs after the point to which it refers is reached is shown, for example, by citing Romans 5:13a : “For until (ἄχρι) the law sin was in the world.” Sin was in the world up to the point of the coming of the Mosaic expression of the law. Does this imply that sin was no longer in the world after the coming of the Mosaic expression of the law? Absolutely not! For of course sin is still in the world.⁴¹

This argument is invalidated by Hughes's failure to notice that ἄχρι has two basic uses. It may be used as an improper preposition with the genitive, in which case it has several forces. This is its use in Romans 5:13 where it has the meaning of “before.” However, ἄχρι may be used as a conjunction as it is here in Revelation 20:5 . When ἄχρι is used as a conjunction with the aorist subjunctive, it always has the force of a future perfect, “until, to the time that.”⁴² Now ἄχρι occurs three other times in Revelation with the aorist subjunctive (7:3 , ἄχρι σφραγίσωμεν ; 15:8 , ἄχρι τελεσθῶσιν ; and 20:3 , ἄχρι τελεσθῆ τ χίλια τη). In each of these uses the ἄχρι more

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than implies a change which “occurs after the point to which it refers is reached.” Furthermore, exactly the same expressions are used in 20:3 and 20:5 , ἄχρι τελεσθῆ τ χίλια τη ; and 20:3 clearly contemplates a change after the thousand years are completed. So the rule which states that the two uses of ζήσαν must have identical meanings must also apply to the two uses of the same phrase in 20:3 and 20:5 . By seeking to avoid a glaring

35 35. Cf. ψυχῆ ἀνθρώπου in Romans 2:9 .

36 36. Luke 15:32 ; Romans 4:9 ; Revelation 2:8 ; 13:4 .

37 37. Rissi, *The Future of the World* , p. 97, n. 72.

38 38. James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), p. 130.

39 39. Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* , 4 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), 4:732.

40 40. Even if one does not believe that all the dead of verse 5 are unbelievers he must concede that some are, and that is enough of a concession for the present argument.

41 41. Hughes, “Revelation 20:4–6 , ” pp. 301-2.

42 42. Cf. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 4th rev. ed., s.v. “ ἄχρι , ” p. 128. Also cf. Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s.v., “ ἄχρι , ” p. 91.

inconsistency in regard to the two uses of ζῆσαν, Hughes has overlooked the distinctive usages of χρι and fallen into an even greater inconsistency regarding the use of the χρι constructions in 20:3, 5. Therefore, the only interpretation of ζῆσαν which is consistent with grammar, usage, and the context is that it refers to a physical resurrection.

In the context of Revelation 20:4–6 the time of the saints' reigning was shown to be future, beginning with the second advent of the Lord. Since no compelling exegetical reasons against such a view have been encountered, the place of the saints' reign may now be considered. At least four arguments favor the earth as the location of the saints' reign. First, Christ is "regarded as personally present on the earth following His return (19:11–16)" ⁴³ and the saints are said to reign with Him (20:4). Second, at the conclusion of the thousand years the saints are still on the earth for this is where Satan comes to attack them (20:9). ⁴⁴ Third, Revelation 5:10 claims that the saints will reign on the earth. Fourth, the Old Testament Messianic prophecies also looked forward to an earthly kingdom. ⁴⁵

If the reign is to be on earth, over whom shall the saints reign? The subjects of the reign must be the believing Gentiles and Jews who passed safely through the tribulation and were alive at the second advent. Three lines of evidence support this conclusion. First, it seems likely that they must reign over someone for "it would be a singularly empty recognition of their services if they were to reign over a world of which they were the sole inhabitants." ⁴⁶ Second, there are no unbelievers left alive for all the unbelievers followed the beast (13:8) into the battle of Armageddon, and were made to drink of the "wine of the wrath of God"

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(14:10 ; 19:15) which brought about their death (19:21). Since the reign cannot be over unbelievers it must be over believers. Third, the saints were promised a reign over the entire world, over both Jew and Gentile (Matt 19:28 ; 1 Cor 6:2 ; Rev 2:26–27).

The length of the reign, τ χίλια τη, is mentioned six times in 20:2–7. The repetition underscores the importance of this age in the divine plan. It is regarded as a great period for it begins the consummation of all history. Paul points out in Romans 8:22 that all creation longs for this epoch, all the saints long for it, and God Himself longs for it. Are the thousand years to be taken literally or symbolically? Augustine was not dogmatic about its meaning when he wrote *The City of God*, but he suggested that if it were symbolic then it was used to mark the perfection or fullness of time. "For one thousand is the cube of ten." ⁴⁷ Lenski enthusiastically echoes this idea when he speaks of ten "raised to the third degree, that of highest completeness." ⁴⁸ Yet one is driven to ask why ten to the third degree refers to "highest completeness." Why not ten to the fourth or fifth degree, or better still, ten to the tenth degree? What could be more complete than that, unless perhaps ten to the hundredth degree?

No one has yet demonstrated from ancient literature why the number one thousand should have any symbolic significance. In fact, there is no discernible symbolic significance of אלף in the Old Testament or of χίλιοι in the New Testament. Furthermore, a concordance study will reveal that both שנה ("year") when used with a number and תוס ("year") when used with a numeral are always literal years. It is futile to argue for a symbolic meaning of τ χίλια τη in Revelation 20:4–6 on the basis of Psalm 90:4 or 2 Peter 3:8, for the latter are not saying that a thousand years are a day. Rather they point to God's transcendence in respect to time. Nor can one secure a symbolic sense for τ χίλια τη merely by repeating the shibboleth that Revelation is a symbolic book, for not everything is symbolic in the book, and one must give reasons why a certain passage is symbolic. Also, it is not likely that John used τ χίλια τη in a nontemporal way merely to indicate "the sign of the Messianic time." This interpretation is based on the view that τ χίλια τη had become a standard expression in Rabbinic theology to indicate the Messianic age. ⁴⁹ However, there are only two

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possible occurrences in earlier literature where the duration of one thousand years is assigned to the Messianic kingdom. ⁵⁰ Thus the only safe course to follow is Davis's dictum that all numbers "should always be taken at face

43 43. Glassen, *Revelation*, p. 111.

44 44. However, this may refer not to the resurrected saints but to the believers living in the kingdom who are yet to be glorified.

45 45. Psalm 2:8, for example, predicts an earthly kingdom for Messiah. The connections with Daniel 7 have already been pointed out.

46 46. Caird, *Revelation*, p. 251.

47 47. Augustine *The City of God* 20.7.

48 48. Lenski, *Revelation*, p. 577.

49 49. Rissi, *The Future of the World*, p. 34.

50 50. *Supra*, pp. 59-60 and nn. 6 and 7.

value and understood as conveying a mathematical quantity unless there is either textual or contextual evidence to the contrary.”⁵¹ Therefore, the duration of the saints’ reign is a literal thousand years.

The quality of the reign is described by the phrase “with Christ” (μετ̄ τοῡ Χριστοῡ). Since the saints will reign by virtue of Christ’s power and guidance they will fulfill their roles perfectly. For the first time in history human government will be perfectly righteous, and there will be universal peace. Some have objected to an earthly reign of glorified saints among nonglorified saints.⁵² Ladd points out that a precedent was set by the Lord who “in His resurrection body enjoyed forty days of intercourse with His disciples (Acts 1:3).”⁵³

In verse 5 John sees that the unbelieving dead have no part in the millennial kingdom. Since the interpretation of the phrase “the rest of the dead...” (ο̄ λοιπο̄ τω̄ ν νεκρω̄ ν) has already been discussed the meaning of “the first resurrection” (νάστασις̄ πρώτη) may now be considered. While some try to view this resurrection as a regeneration of the soul or as the soul’s entrance to heaven at death, the usage of νάστασις̄ precludes such an interpretation. In over forty occurrences the word always refers to the resurrection of the body. The only exception to this usage is Luke 2:34 where the word is used in its etymological sense of “rising.” So the resurrection in view in Revelation 20:5 is a literal resurrection which, according to verse 6 , is reserved for believers.

Aldrich points out, “The resurrection event for believers has various titles in Scripture. It is called ‘the first resurrection’ in Revelation 20:5 , ‘the resurrection of life’ in John 5:29 , ‘the resurrection of the just’ in Luke 14:14 , and ‘a better resurrection’ in Hebrews 11:35 .”⁵⁴ Since not all who have a part in the “first resurrection” are raised at the same time, the term νάστασις̄ πρώτη refers

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not to a single event but to the kind of resurrection.⁵⁵ The participants of the “first resurrection” are all the saints who enter the millennium. The “first resurrection,” therefore, precedes the “resurrection of judgment” (John 5:29) by one thousand years. Some have objected that since there seems to be no temporal distinction in John 5:29 between the two resurrections they must occur at the same time. However, just as later revelation demonstrated that there must be a temporal gap between Isaiah 61:2a and 2b (cf. Luke 4:16–21), Revelation 20:4–6 has demonstrated that there must be a temporal gap between the “resurrection of life” and the “resurrection of judgment” in John 5:29 .

The stark contrast, afforded by the juxtaposition of the resurrected and reigning saints over against the “rest of the dead” calls forth the fifth of seven beatitudes in the book (20:6). The blessedness and holiness of the saints rarely seems brighter than when it is seen against the dark background of the final fate of the unbelieving. Swete points out that the ground of their blessing is threefold. First, the second death has no authority over them, and this is a great blessing, for the second death is identified in 20:14 as entrance into the lake of fire. And Revelation 14:11 vividly underscores the eternity of this death by pointing out that “the smoke of their torment goes up forever.” Second, they are priests of God and of Christ. The genitives θεοῡ and Χριστοῡ are either objective (i.e., they serve God and Christ) or possessive (i.e., they belong to God and Christ). The linking together of Christ and God in the phrase “of God and Christ” is in keeping “with the general

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tendency of the Book to regard Christ as the Equivalent of God.”⁵⁶ And the third ground of their blessing is that they reign with Christ for a thousand years. The future βασιλεύσουσιν (“they will reign”) confirms the fact that this beatitude is also an interpretation of the vision of verses 4 and 5 . In the vision of verse 4 the reign of the saints is seen as though it had already taken place and so is described with the aorist βασιλευσαν̄ , but the interpretation given by

51 51. John J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), p. 155.

52 52. Cf. L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1941), pp. 715-16.

53 53. Ladd, *Revelation*, p. 268.

54 54. Roy L. Aldrich, “Divisions of the First Resurrection,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 128 (1971): 117.

55 55. Meredith G. Kline has argued that “the first resurrection” refers to the death of the Christian and presumably therefore to his entrance into heaven rather than a bodily resurrection (“The First Resurrection,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 37 [Spring 1975]: 366-75). The primary support for this view is based on the usage of πρῶτος (“first”) in Revelation 21 ; Hebrews 8–10 ; 1 Corinthians 15 ; and Romans 5 . From these passages Kline concludes that πρῶτος must refer to the present world order. This argument, however, begs the question. The decisive term is not the adjective “first” but the noun “resurrection” which it modifies. It is noteworthy that Kline emphatically avoids any discussion of the New Testament usage of “resurrection,” which, as mentioned above, refers to bodily resurrection. Philip Edgeumbe Hughes, himself an amillennialist, says at the outset of his discussion of the first resurrection, “In Scripture, resurrection has no proper meaning if it is not understood as bodily resurrection” (“The First Resurrection: Another Interpretation,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 39 [Spring 1977]: 315). For a more detailed criticism of Kline’s view, see J. Ramsey Michael, “The First Resurrection: A Response,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 39 (Fall 1976): 100-109, and Kline’s response (“The First Resurrection: A Re-affirmation,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 39 [Fall 1976]: 110-19).

56 56. Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 264.

verse 6 places the reign in the future. This fact constitutes one of the strongest arguments for viewing Revelation 20:4–6 as future, and therefore as yet unfulfilled.

Conclusion

Both the general context and the exegetical details of Revelation 20:4–6 demonstrate that John predicted an earthly kingdom of Messiah which He will inaugurate at His second advent, and which will continue in its earthly form for one thousand literal years.¹¹⁴

2. Amillennial

This view holds that there will not be a future earthly 1,000 year reign of Christ. Until Christ's second coming there will be a parallel development of both good and evil (God's kingdom and Satan's). After Christ's return at the end of the world there will be a general resurrection and general judgment of all people. Several characteristics are present within amillennialism.¹¹⁵

- a. Two views exist regarding the millennium: those that see the fulfillment of millennial passages to be in this present age by the church on earth (e.g. Augustine, *City of God* xx.9, Roman Catholics, Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*), and those who see the fulfillment by the saints in heaven now (B.B. Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines* 1929)). Both believe there will be no future earthly kingdom.
- b. Christ is now ruling in heaven on the throne of David, and Satan is now bound between the two advents.
- c. The promises to Israel (Land, nationality, and throne) are conditional and are now being fulfilled in a spiritual way among believers in the church
- d. Reformers were amillennial (Luther and Calvin)
- e. The amillennial hermeneutic

3. Post Millennialism (see Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium*)

This view holds that Christ will return bodily to the earth at the *end* of the millennium to usher in the general resurrection and judgment. This millennium will be brought in by Christianizing society through preaching the gospel message and through social action (legislation).

- e. The millennium is not a literal 1,000 year period.
- f. During this kingdom, Christ will rule from heaven in the hearts of the people.
- g. The church, not Israel, will fulfill the promises made to Abraham and David.
- h. The millennium will be a time of peace, material prosperity, and spiritual welfare though there still will be sin present.
- i. Today we are not yet in the millennium since Satan is still free. At the start of the millennium Satan will be bound according to Rev 20.
- j. Postmillennialism and WWII

¹¹⁴Dallas Theological Seminary. 1978;2002. *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 135*. Dallas Theological Seminary

¹¹⁵Roy Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), 231.