

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION
CHRIST'S DEATH
GOD
HEAVEN
TRINITY
CREATION
BIBLE
HOLY SPIRIT
CHRISTIAN
PRAYER
JUSTIFICATION & ADOPTION
SANCTIFICATION & PERSEVERANCE
ELECTION
MAN
CHURCH
ANGELS
DEMONS
& SATAN
FINAL JUDGEMENT

THEOLOGICAL CLARITY AND APPLICATION

EQUIPPING LEADERS IN BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

BY SCOTT THOMAS

Theological Clarity and Application: Equipping Leaders in Biblical Doctrine

By Scott Thomas

Interactive Curriculum based on Wayne Grudem's book, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005) with reference to Grudem's *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

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ENDORSEMENTS

“Paul’s first piece of advice to his hand-picked church planter Titus was to get elders in the churches in Crete. Church planters often ignore this advice to get many other important things done. This shouldn’t be. Scott Thomas has given us a valuable tool to help us develop men that “hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught” and are “able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9). I look forward to using this book to develop elders to do those things.”

Elliot Grudem
Editor of Christian Beliefs

“Scott Thomas’s guide to Grudem’s Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know, will undoubtedly stimulate discussion about these key doctrines and help drive home their importance to both new and mature Christians, church leaders and members, young and old alike. His questions are razor-sharp and don’t shy away from difficulties and mysteries provoked by these cardinal Christian beliefs.

Dr. Gregg R. Allison
Professor of Christian Theology
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

“With this resource, Scott Thomas provides a clear and helpful way to prepare believers for dealing with the difficult doctrinal environment of our day. In this simple but effective guide, the leaders and members of your church can be challenged to deepen their understanding of biblical doctrine through serious study and meaningful conversations.”

Dr. Ed Stetzer
President of LifeWay Research

“To provide compelling leadership for our churches, we need more than good intentions. We need strong theology. In Theological Clarity and Application Scott Thomas has provided us all with a rich resource as we grow together. I commend his work enthusiastically.”

Dr. Ray Ortlund
Immanuel Church, Nashville

“This is a fantastic resource to theologically develop Christian leaders. Biblical, simple, practical, and helpful.”

Mark Driscoll, Pastor of Mars Hill Church
Founder of Resurgence, President of Acts 29

“Leaders in Christ’s church today must have more than a superficial knowledge of the faith. If they are to help churches contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, they must be steeped in Scripture and deep in theological insight. Scott Thomas has provided a remarkable guide to assist leaders in their theological growth.”

Dr. Alvin L. Reid
Professor of Evangelism and Student Ministry
Bailey Smith Chair of Evangelism, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

“An insightful and practical training manual that helps make systematic theology accessible for men who aspire to the office of elder.”

Darrin Patrick
Vice President, Acts 29 Network
Pastor of The Journey Church St. Louis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	PREFACE
5	INTRODUCTION
6	CHAPTER 1 / WHAT IS THE BIBLE?
9	CHAPTER 2 / WHAT IS GOD LIKE?
14	CHAPTER 3 / WHAT IS THE TRINITY?
17	CHAPTER 4 / WHAT IS CREATION?
20	CHAPTER 5 / WHAT IS PRAYER?
23	CHAPTER 6 / WHAT ARE ANGELS, DEMONS, AND SATAN?
25	CHAPTER 7 / WHAT IS MAN?
27	CHAPTER 8 / WHAT IS SIN?
30	CHAPTER 9 / WHO IS CHRIST?
33	CHAPTER 10 / WHAT IS THE ATONEMENT?
36	CHAPTER 11 / WHAT IS THE RESURRECTION?
38	CHAPTER 12 / WHAT IS ELECTION?
41	CHAPTER 13 / WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN?
44	CHAPTER 14 / WHAT ARE JUSTIFICATION AND ADOPTION?
47	CHAPTER 15 / WHAT ARE SANCTIFICATION AND PERSEVERANCE?
50	CHAPTER 16 / WHAT IS DEATH?
52	CHAPTER 17 / WHAT IS THE CHURCH?
55	CHAPTER 18 / WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN CHRIST RETURNS?
58	CHAPTER 19 / WHAT IS THE FINAL JUDGEMENT?
61	CHAPTER 20 / WHAT IS HEAVEN?

PREFACE

This study guide is an interactive curriculum of the book, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005) written by Wayne A. Grudem and edited by Elliot Grudem.

Christian Beliefs (160 pages) is a condensed version of Grudem's book, *Bible Doctrine* (528 pages), and that itself is a condensed version of Grudem's award-winning *Systematic Theology* (1,290 pages).^{*} This guide is designed to introduce Christians to the core beliefs of Bible doctrine in preparation for church leadership or to help new Christians to distinguish truth from error. This guide can be used to prepare elders, deacons, small group leaders, Sunday School teachers and all those who want to learn more about maturing in their Christian faith and becoming equipped to give a gentle and respectful answer to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you (1 Peter 3:15). An instructor in a class or small group or in a one to one environment can facilitate the questions or it can be utilized as a self-study or as a tool to equip a family in Biblical doctrine.

Theological Clarity and Application seeks to preserve the contents of Grudem's *Christian Beliefs* by using questions to stimulate further understanding and application. The participants in this curriculum would benefit by first reading each chapter in *Christian Beliefs* before answering questions. It is also highly recommended to have a respected study Bible and a copy of Grudem's *Systematic Theology* available for reference.

Each chapter of this guide corresponds to the chapters in *Christian Beliefs*. At the end of each section, a prayer text and Scripture memory is included. Additionally, a reference to the corresponding chapters and supplementary readings in Grudem's *Systematic Theology* are included as well as further readings by noted conservative scholars and authors who contribute to the specific topic covered in the chapter.

This material is not something that should be rushed through to complete. It is a refrigerated locker full of meat that must be eaten regularly and systematically one meal at a time, allowing ample time to chew and digest the information and ideally to savor with others. One can complete the study in 20 weeks by covering one chapter a week or complete it in 40 weeks (approximately one school year) by covering one chapter every two weeks. The latter allows for a deeper reading of the accompanying *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem.

^{*} Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, ed. Jeff Purswell (Grand Rapids: Zondervan; Liecester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999) and Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan; Liecester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

INTRODUCTION

The question I get asked most often by church planters and pastors of young churches is, “How can I train people in preparation for leadership in the church?” We often point them to Wayne Grudem’s Systematic Theology—referred affectionately among our tribe as simply, “Grudem’s.” Most people are not sure what to do with the nearly 1,300-page book with 57 chapters. The lay leaders with regular jobs are nearly traumatized when the 4-pound book arrives in their mail!

When Elliot Grudem gave me a copy of Christian Beliefs, I immediately identified a valuable resource to help pastors walk their leaders and potential leaders through the excellent larger treatise. This interactive curriculum is an attempt to break down the doctrinal development of a person for Christian leadership into more granular, bite-sized chunks with a fair reflection of Grudem’s full resource. This is still a huge undertaking in systematic theology. With this resource, church leaders, pastors, small group leaders, bible study facilitators and student ministers can hopefully equip people in Biblical doctrine in an interactive manner. The twenty lessons correspond chapter by chapter to twenty basics beliefs every Christian should know summarized in Grudem’s Christian Beliefs.

Acts 29 believes that the gospel drives everything. In order to image the gospel properly, a gospel-centered church must continually proclaim the Good News through Spirit-empowered leaders. For gospel multiplication, it is imperative that leaders are equipped in Biblical doctrine and churches must make a commitment to the ongoing theological and missional development to faithfully follow the mission of God to all people groups.

Jesus is the model leader. He rules through his Word and by his Spirit. God has gifted all His people, and he has commissioned His followers to make disciples of all nations through the clear proclamation of His Word. No authority exists in the church except that of the Word of God. The call to obey leaders in Hebrews 13:17 is a call to submit to the Word as it is rightly taught. The nature of leaders’ authority is that they herald the Word of God. The focal point for all of God’s people is that we are obedient to God’s Word and not primarily to the leaders. Leaders have to communicate the gospel and also live in step with the truth of the gospel (Gal. 2:14). The only authority in the church is God’s Word. Jesus does not delegate His authority to leaders; He is still King Jesus ruling His church and He still raises up leaders whose life and teaching come under His authority.

Leadership is important, but it is leadership that gives expression to the continuing leadership over His people by King Jesus. Gospel leaders faithfully proclaim God’s Word as the authoritative principle in life and persistently conform to the cross-shaped leadership of Jesus Himself.

May God use His Word to raise leaders who proclaim truth rightly for His own glory.

Humbly submitted,
Scott Thomas

CHAPTER 1

what is the bible?

KEY TEXTS

2 Timothy 3:14-17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 3:14-16

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. ¹⁵ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

2 Peter 1:16-21

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

AUTHORITY

1. Critics argue that the Bible's proof is based upon circular reasoning. Upon what is this accusation based? What do you think about this accusation?
2. What are some other "authorities" in life that attempt to compete with the supreme authority of the Scriptures?
3. Why are some things in the Bible difficult for you to believe or obey?

CLARITY

1. How can we say that the Bible is clear, when Peter in the text above (2 Peter 3:14-16) says that some things in it are "hard to understand"?
2. What are some obstacles Grudem points to that prevent us from understanding Scripture rightly? Which one is most difficult for you personally?
3. What is the primary cause of your misunderstandings of Scripture?

4. Compare 2 Timothy 2:15 with your ability to “accurately” handle the word of truth.

5. At times, experts and seminary professors disagree on the interpretations of Scripture and church members wonder what hope there is to truly understand Scripture. How does the doctrine of the clarity of Scripture help guard against that temptation?

NECESSITY

1. List some things you would know about God without the aid of Scripture?

2. List some things that you would have no way of knowing without the Scriptures?

3. Explain the difference between general revelation and specific revelation? What texts can you give in support of your explanation?

4. If food is necessary for physical well-being, the Scriptures are likewise necessary for spiritual well-being. What makes us so spiritually insensitive that we feel physical hunger much more acutely than spiritual hunger? What is the remedy for you personally?

SUFFICIENCY

1. Grudem says the Bible is sufficient. What three generalities does he cite?
2. What topic do you wish that the Bible would say more than it does? What is at the root of this desire? How should the teaching on sufficiency affect this desire?
3. What does Grudem mean by “humble hesitancy”? In what way do you characterize this approach to the Bible?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Psalm 19

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ² Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. ⁴ Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, ⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. ⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. ⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; ⁸ the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; ⁹ the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. ¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. ¹² Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. ¹³ Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression. ¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Authority

pp. 73-85.

Clarity

pp. 105-111.

Necessity

pp. 116-126.

Sufficiency

pp. 127-136.

FURTHER READINGS

Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

D. A. Carson and John Woodbridge, eds., *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986).

G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008).

Noel Weeks, *The Sufficiency of Scripture* (Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1988).

R. C. Sproul, *Scripture Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine*, (P & R Publishing, 2005).

Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007).

GOD IS ETERNAL

1. God is eternal. Why does this matter to you? What kind of perspective does this give you on your ministry?

2. How is time relative to God's existence? Explain using texts.

GOD IS OMNIPRESENT

1. If God is separate from His creation and time, how can He be present in it?

2. Explain how the omnipresence of God can be both a comforting and a terrorizing thought.

GOD IS SPIRIT

1. What are the practical implications of worshipping God in Spirit?

GOD IS INVISIBLE

1. According to the Bible, has anybody ever seen God in any form?

2. Will anybody ever see God? Explain.

GOD IS OMNISCIENT

1. How vast is the knowledge of God (Psalm 139)?

2. What ideas come to mind as one realizes that nothing is hidden from God (Heb. 4:13)?

GOD IS WISE

1. What is the difference between God being all-knowing and being all-wise?

2. What does 1 Corinthians 1:24 mean when it says that Christ is the “wisdom of God?”

GOD IS TRUTHFUL

1. What is the risk in denying that God is always truthful?

GOD IS GOOD

1. What are some unbiblical ways to define “good”? How can the Bible correct these perspectives? How does this affect our attempt to do good things?

2. Answer this objection: “If God is good, why do people suffer?” Use texts.

GOD IS LOVE

1. What evidence in the Bible do we have for God's love?

2. What do you think about the love extended to us even as we rebel against God?

GOD IS HOLY

1. Define holiness according to the Bible. Provide texts.

2. What does it mean to “share in” God’s holiness (Heb. 12:10)? How should this affect our perspective on sanctification?

GOD IS RIGHTEOUS AND JUST

1. What are the differences between righteousness and justice?

2. Is God more loving than he is just? Explain.

3. How are love and justice expressed through the person of Jesus?

GOD IS JEALOUS

1. What does it mean when the Bible speaks of God as jealous?

2. How is God's jealousy justified?

GOD IS WRATHFUL TOWARD SIN

1. Is God's wrath simply directed toward sin, or is it also directed against sinners? Explain using texts.

2. In what ways is it right for us to imitate this wrath, and in what ways is it wrong for us to do so?

GOD WILLS WHAT HE WILL

1. What is the difference between God's secret will and his revealed will?

2. List one common misconception regarding "God's will" and answer it from Scripture.

GOD HAS FREEDOM

1. What is God free to do? Provide a Bible text to support your answer.

2. How does this relate to our desire to find out “why” God acts in certain ways? How can you explain this pastorally to someone who is suffering?

GOD IS OMNIPOTENT

1. What is the extent of God’s power?

2. What does 1 Corinthians 1:24 mean when it says that Christ is the “power of God”?

GOD IS PERFECT

1. How does God’s perfection relate to our sanctification?

2. To what extent can we really “be perfect as God is perfect” (Matt 5:48)?

GOD IS BLESSED

1. If God fully delights in himself, how is this not vanity or egotism?

2. How could you personally delight in the things of God?

GOD IS BEAUTIFUL

1. How can the beauty on earth point us toward God?

2. How can it point us away from Him?

GOD IS UNITY

1. How do the attributes of God compare with His other attributes?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Psalm 139

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

O LORD, you have searched me and known me!² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.³ You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.⁵ You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.⁷ Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!⁹ If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,"¹² even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.¹³ For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from

you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them. ¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! ¹⁸ If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you. ¹⁹ Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me! ²⁰ They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain! ²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? ²² I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies. ²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! ²⁴ And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Exodus 34:6-7

⁶ The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

God Exists

pp. 141-148.

God Is Knowable

pp. 149-155.

God Is Independent

pp. 160-163.

God Is Unchangeable

pp. 163-168.

God Is Eternal

pp. 168-173.

God Is Omnipresent

pp. 173-177.

God Is Spirit

pp. 186-188.

God Is Invisible

pp. 188-190.

God Is Omniscient

pp. 190-193.

God Is Wise

pp. 193-195.

God Is Truthful

pp. 195-197.

God Is Good

pp. 197-199.

God Is Love

pp. 199-200.

God Is Holy

pp. 202-203.

God Is Righteous and Just

pp. 204-205.

God Is Jealous

pp. 205-206.

God is Wrathful toward Sin

pp. 206-207.

God Wills What He Will

pp. 211-216.

God Has Freedom

pp. 216.

God Is Omnipotent

pp. 216-218.

God Is Perfect

pp. 218.

God Is Blessed

pp. 218-219.

God Is Unity

pp. 177-181.

FURTHER READINGS

A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).

John Piper, *The Pleasures of God: Mediations on God's Delight in Being God* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2000).

John Piper, *Desiring God: Mediations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2003).

J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, Il.: IVP, 1993).

CHAPTER 3

What is the Trinity?

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 3:16-17

¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

THREE ESSENTIALS

God Is Three Persons

Each Person Is Fully God

There Is One God

1. What are some texts in the Old Testament that imply plurality in God? How do we reconcile this with the strong monotheism found in the Old Testament?

2. What are some texts in the New Testament that imply plurality in God?

2. What are specific distinctions between the persons of the Trinity in their roles in creation and redemption?

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

1. Why doesn't the submission of the Son to the Father imply a difference in essence between the Father and the Son? Are both equally God in every sense?

2. How do the different ways the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit relate to one other provide us with a model for the ways we relate to each other?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Ephesians 1:3-14

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Three Essentials

pp. 226-248.

Distinct Roles/Unity and Diversity

pp. 248-257.

FURTHER READINGS

Bruce Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationship, Roles and Relevance* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005).

Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology and Worship* (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005).

CHAPTER 4

What is Creation?

KEY TEXTS

Psalm 148:1-6

¹ Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! ² Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts! ³ Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! ⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! ⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he commanded and they were created. ⁶ And he established them forever and ever; he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.

Colossians 1:15-17

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

THE CREATED CREATION

1. How should science affect our understanding of the Bible and its account of creation?

2. How should the Bible affect our understanding of science?

3. In what way was the creative process for mankind different from all other creation? What does that communicate to us regarding our value to God?

4. God's role in creation is one that is constantly under attack. Why is it an important enough doctrine to defend and believe?

THE DISTINCT BUT DEPENDENT CREATION

1. What are some implications of the eternal distinction between God and his creation?

2. What are some implications of the creation's fundamental dependence on God?

THE GLORY-GIVING CREATION

1. Consider the following argument:

God must do that which brings him the greatest glory.
The creation of the universe brings God the greatest glory.
Therefore, God had no choice but to create the universe.

Is this an accurate summary of the Bible's teaching? Why or why not?

THE GOOD CREATION

1. Did the fall affect the “goodness” of God’s creation? Explain.
2. What are some ways that the goodness of creation should affect our views of food and drink? Can you think of any other areas of life concerning which the goodness of creation should have an affect on our thinking?
3. Augustine said, “He loves Thee too little who loves anything together with Thee, which he loves not for Thy sake.” Is this a biblical statement? Why or why not? If so, how should it affect our view of creation?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Psalm 146

¹ Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! ² I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. ³ Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. ⁴ When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish. ⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, ⁶ who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever; ⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; ⁸ the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. ⁹ The Lord watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. ¹⁰ The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Nehemiah 9:6

You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The Created Creation

pp. 262-267.

The Distinct but Dependant Creation

pp. 267-271.

The Glory Giving Creation

pp. 271-272.

The Good Creation

pp. 272-273.

FURTHER READINGS

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David Wilkinson, *The Message of Creation: Encountering the Lord of the Universe* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002).

CHAPTER 5

what is prayer?

KEY TEXTS

Luke 11:1-13

¹ Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ² And he said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread, ⁴ and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

⁵ And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Mark 11:22-25

²² And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. ²³ Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

THE REASON FOR PRAYER

1. Compare the common assumptions concerning the meaning of and reason for prayer between unbelievers and professing believers. In what ways are these assumptions appropriate or inappropriate? Provide Scripture.

4. What does it mean to ask for something “in Jesus’ name”?

OUR ATTITUDE IN PRAYER

1. What kind of heart disposition best aligns with prayer that is “according to God’s will”? Why?
2. How do we know what is “according to God’s will?” What ought we to do if we are unsure about God’s will? What things do you pray that are clearly in accord with God’s will? What things do you pray for but are unsure whether and how they align with God’s will?
3. What ways does sin hinder our prayers? List as many ways as you can.
4. Should the fact that sin exists in our lives paralyze us from ever pursuing prayer? Why or why not?
5. Why is confession related to prayer? Prayer and confession are often assumed to be personal, private matters between an individual and God. Why does Grudem, pointing to the book of James, speak of a public, corporate, inter-relational element of prayer and confession as essential to a growing and deepening Christian faith?

6. What should be our response to prayers that seem to be unanswered? What are some reasons such prayers may strike us as unanswered?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The Reason for Prayer

pp. 376-377.

The Effectiveness of Prayer

pp. 377-382.

Our Attitude in Prayer

pp. 382-392.

FURTHER READINGS

E. M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963).

Arthur Bennett, ed., *The Valley of Vision: Puritan Prayers and Devotions* (London: Banner of Truth, 1975).

Graeme Goldsworthy, *Prayer and the Knowledge of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005).

Thomas Watson, *The Lord's Prayer* (London: Banner of Truth, 1960).

3. According to Hebrews 1:14, what are angels' primary responsibilities? What practical difference should this reality make for us?

DEMONS AND DEMONIC ACTIVITY

1. Compare the way media depicts demonic activity with the Bible's descriptions.
2. Why do you think Satan is referred as a roaring lion?
3. In what ways does Scripture tell us to deal with demonic activity in our lives?
4. How much power and influence do demons have? How should this reality affect our ministry to those who are oppressed by demons?
5. According to Hebrews 2:14-15, what has Christ's death done to Satan? In light of this, what should be our attitude towards Satan and other demons?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Romans 16:17-20, 25-27

¹⁷ I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. ¹⁸ For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. ¹⁹ For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. ²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

²⁵ Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶ but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1 Peter 1:12

It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Angels

pp. 397-411.

Demons and Demonic Activity

pp. 412-436.

FURTHER READINGS

Fred Dickason, *Angels, Elect and Evil* (Chicago: Moody, 1975).

Fred Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian: A New Perspective* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991).

C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1961).

CHAPTER 7

what is man?

KEY TEXTS

Genesis 1:27-28

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

Colossians 1:15-18

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

CREATED FOR HIS GLORY

1. What does it mean to glorify God?

2. In what ways can you glorify God?

3. Answer this objection: "It seems that God created man out of a sense of need."

CREATED IN HIS IMAGE

1. What does it mean to be created in the "image of God"?

2. How does the above answer relate to Jesus being the "image of God"?

3. Read Genesis 1:27 carefully. Do you think it is significant that both man and woman are singled out as bearing God's image?

4. How might this affect your view of gender roles?

5. Why is it that sin only distorts God's image in us instead of obliterating it? What texts do we have to show this?

RESPONSIBILITIES AS CREATURES IN GOD'S IMAGE

1. What are some of the “kingly” responsibilities that man is granted?
2. What are some obstacles that sin presents when man attempts to fulfill his responsibilities?
3. What promises does Scripture give us with regard to overcoming these obstacles?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Psalm 73:25-28

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ²⁷ For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. ²⁸ But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Genesis 1:27-28

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Created for His Glory

pp. 440-441.

Created in His Image/Responsibilities as Creatures in God's Image

pp. 442-450.

FURTHER READINGS

J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian View of Man* (London: Banner of Truth, 1965).

Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986).

Charles Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997).

John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006).

CHAPTER 8

What is Sin?

KEY TEXTS

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 14:23b

For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

WHAT SIN IS

1. Define sin in your own words. What Scriptures led you to define sin in the way you did?
2. In what ways is your definition similar and in what ways is it different from Grudem's definition of sin as "any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude or nature"?
3. Why is it important to acknowledge that sin is more than bad actions, but that it also includes a wicked state of the heart as well as attitudes, inclinations, desires, and affections?

4. Describe what it means to say that sin is in our nature so that we are “by nature children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3).

5. By what criteria do we know that although we are sinful by nature, it does not mean that every one of us is as bad as we possibly could be?

6. Why does God hate sin? How does this hatred relate to His nature as a loving God who, in fact, identifies himself as love itself?

WHERE SIN CAME FROM

1. Why is it “healthy for us to allow a substantial element of mystery” in our attempts to address the problem of evil and the origin of sin?

2. How did sin enter into the human world? How might this help us to better understand the nature of sin?

3. Why is it important to acknowledge that we inherited not only Adam’s sinful nature, but also Adam’s guilt?

4. Imagine you are talking with someone who thinks that it is unfair for God to consider everyone guilty in Adam. How would you respond to their objections?

HOW SIN AFFECTS US

1. Grudem describes how every part of our being is tainted by sin, and suggests as a representative list: “our intellects, our emotions, our desires, our hearts, our goals, our motives, and even our physical bodies.” What are some ways that sin affects each of these spheres? To the best of your ability point to Scriptures that show us such affects.
2. When Scripture speaks of the penalty of sin being death, what kind(s) of death does it refer? Provide Scripture.
3. Describe the difference between our legal standing before God and our relational standing before God. Explain how sin affects both standings before God for the believer.
4. What, according to Grudem, is the implication of habitual or long-term patterns of sin?
5. Describe how you would counsel a person you observe engaging in habitual and growing patterns of disobedience (perhaps even yourself). Explain the dangers of such a path, along with its sadness and consequences and the harm it brings upon one’s self and others.

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Psalm 130

¹ *Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!* ² *O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!* ³ *If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?* ⁴ *But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.* ⁵ *I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;* ⁶ *my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.* ⁷ *O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.* ⁸ *And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Psalm 51:1-4

¹ *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.* ² *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!* ³ *For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.* ⁴ *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.*

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

What Sin Is

pp. 490-492.

Where Sin Came From

pp. 492-493.

How Sin Affects Us

pp. 494-510.

FURTHER READINGS

C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

D. A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006).

Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2007).

Justin Taylor, *Overcoming Sin and Temptation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006).

CHAPTER 9

WHO IS CHRIST?

KEY TEXTS

John 1:1-3

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Colossians 1:15-18

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Hebrews 2:17-18

¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

JESUS – FULLY MAN

1. Why is it necessary to affirm the doctrine of Christ's humanity?

2. What implications does His humanity have pertaining to His sufficient death for our sins?

JESUS – FULLY GOD

1. How does John 8:57-58 affirm the deity of Christ? How does it compare with Exodus 3:14?
2. What makes the deity of Christ essential to the Christian faith? What would be lost without this doctrine?
3. What does Colossians mean when it says that Jesus is the “image of God”?

JESUS – FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN

1. Why is it necessary for Jesus to be both fully human and fully divine?
2. Read Philippians 2:5-11. Considering what you know about the person of Jesus, is it possible that the Apostle Paul means that Jesus gave up his divinity for a season? What does it mean when it says that Jesus “emptied himself” (v. 7)? Explain.

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12

¹³ Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. ¹⁴ As many were astonished at you- his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind- ¹⁵ so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

¹ Who has believed what they heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? ⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Jesus – Fully Man

pp. 529-543.

Jesus – Fully God

pp. 543-553.

Jesus – Fully God and Fully Man

pp. 553-563.

FURTHER READINGS

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Jonathan Edwards, "Excellency of Christ," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000), vol. 1, 680-89.

Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998).

CHAPTER 10

WHAT IS THE ATONEMENT?

KEY TEXTS

Isaiah 53

¹ Who has believed what they heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? ⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Hebrews 7:23-28

²³ The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. ²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

THE CAUSE OF THE ATONEMENT

1. Based on what you know about the Old Testament sacrificial system, do you think that Old Testament believers would have understood that their sacrifices pointed to a greater sacrifice yet to come? Are there any hints in the Old Testament that something greater was to come?
2. Why can't the blood of bulls and goats take away sin (Heb 10:4)? Why was Jesus' death necessary for a true atonement?
3. How is the atonement both perfectly just and perfectly loving?

THE NECESSITY OF THE ATONEMENT

1. After the fall, was God under any obligation to save humanity? Why or why not?
2. Grudem says that once God decided to save people, "God's justice made it necessary for Christ to live the life he lived and die the death he died." How is this true? Was there really no other way to save mankind? Explain your answer.

THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT

1. Why was Christ's perfect sinless life necessary for a complete atonement?

2. Theologians often refer to Christ's death as "penal substitution." That is, on the cross, Christ bore the penalty that we deserved for our sin and provided Himself as a substitute for us. However, recently one theologian compared this doctrine to "divine child abuse," because it depicts a Father pouring out his wrath on his innocent Son. What Scripture would you apply to refute this claim?
3. When talking about the death of Jesus, we often emphasize His physical suffering. Was physical suffering the greatest aspect of Jesus' suffering? Why is it important that we understand this correctly?

THE RESULT OF THE ATONEMENT

1. What is the result of Christ's atonement? Consider this truth in direct application to yourself, your family, and church.
2. What is the proper response to what Christ has accomplished for those who trust him?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Romans 3:23-26

²³ For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The Cause of the Atonement

pp. 568-569.

The Necessity of the Atonement

pp. 569-570.

The Nature of the Atonement

pp. 570-594.

The Result of the Atonement

pp. 594-603.

FURTHER READINGS

John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1986).

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Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965).

Charles E. Hill and Frank A James, ed., *The Glory of the Atonement* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004).

Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Death by Love: Letters from the Cross* (RE: Lit: Vintage Jesus) (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008).

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984).

CHAPTER 11

What is the Resurrection?

KEY TEXTS

Luke 24:4-7

⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵ And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise."

Romans 6:5-11

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

DETAILS OF THE RESURRECTION

1. What distinguishes Jesus' resurrection from earlier "resuscitations," such as the widow of Zarephath's son in the Old Testament (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Lazarus in the New Testament (John 11)? Explain the difference in terms of both the nature and the duration of the resurrection.

2. Some claim that: a), Jesus never really died but rather passed out and was placed in the tomb. Upon waking up, he simply snuck away and later claimed to have risen from the dead, or b) Jesus didn't actually rise bodily. His disciples either experienced a mass hallucination or when they spoke of resurrection they were simply referring to a "spiritual" resurrection. Respond to these claims.

RESULTS OF THE RESURRECTION

1. According to Romans 6:5-11, how does the resurrection affect us in the present?
2. Consider the physicality of Jesus' resurrection body. We are promised a resurrection body like his. What does the physicality of our resurrection bodies say about God's commitment to his creation? How should looking forward to a physical resurrection change the way we think about heaven?
3. According to 1 Corinthians 15:14, if Christ didn't rise from the dead, Paul's preaching is in vain and our faith is in vain. Why is the resurrection such an essential doctrine?

JESUS' ASCENSION

1. When Christ ascended into heaven, he was "exalted at God's right hand" and began his reign in heaven (Acts 2:33). What effect does Christ's present reign have on our lives right now?
2. What effect, if any, should this reality have on our understanding of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

1 Peter 1:3-7

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Details of the Resurrection

pp. 608-614.

Results of the Resurrection

pp. 614-617.

Jesus' Ascension

pp. 617-620.

FURTHER READINGS

N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

Paul Beasley-Murray, *The Message of the Resurrection: Christ is Risen!* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001).

George E. Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

Adrian Warnock, *Raised with Christ: How the Resurrection Changes Everything*, (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2010).

CHAPTER 12

What is election?

KEY TEXTS

Romans 8:28-30

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 9:20-24

²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? ²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory- ²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

Ephesians 1:3-6

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

ELECTION

1. Define election in your own words and give three texts as evidence from the New Testament to support your definition.

c. Election means that unbelievers never had a chance to believe.

d. Election is unfair.

e. The Bible teaches that God wills to save everyone (1 Timothy 2:4).

COMMON GRACE

1. How is God's love for unbelievers different than his love for believers?
2. Does the command to love your enemies apply to God? Explain.
3. Can common grace save? Why or why not?
4. Does an unbeliever do everything sinful and evil? Explain your answer in relation to common grace. Provide Scripture.

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Psalm 51

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. ⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. ⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. ¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. ¹⁸ Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem ¹⁹ then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Ephesians 1:3-6

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Election

pp. 669-679.

Objections

pp. 680-684.

Common Grace

pp. 657-668.

FURTHER READINGS

John Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will: A Defence of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice against Pighius* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002).

Thomas Schreiner and Bruce Ware, eds. *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspective on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983).

R. C. Sproul, *Willing to Believe: The Controversy over Free Will* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).

CHAPTER 13

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

KEY TEXTS

1 Corinthians 15:1-5

¹ Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you- unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

1 Peter 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

EFFECTIVE CALLING

1. Why does the effective call of God guarantee a response? How does it guarantee that response?

GENERAL CALLING AND THE GOSPEL CALL

1. Why does general calling not guarantee a response to the Gospel?

2. Why is general calling necessary?

ELEMENTS OF THE GOSPEL CALL

1. What are some barriers that might prevent people from believing the three “facts concerning salvation” that Grudem lists? Which do you think is the most difficult to communicate in our culture?

2. Why is the simple statement of Grudem’s three “facts concerning salvation” an insufficient presentation of the Gospel?

HOW THE CALL IS RECEIVED

1. What is regeneration and who is responsible for it?

2. How can one tell they have been regenerated?

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Effective Calling

pp. 692-694.

The General Calling and the Gospel Call/Elements of the Gospel Call

pp. 694-696.

How the Call Is Received

pp. 699-708.

How the Call Is Responded To

pp. 709-721.

FURTHER READINGS

John Murray, "Effectual Calling," in *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 88-94.

J. I. Packer, "Regeneration," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Walter Elwell; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 924-926.

Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1987).

CHAPTER 14

What are Justification and Adoption?

KEY TEXTS

Romans 3:21-26

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it- ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 8:14-17

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs- heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

JUSTIFICATION IS A LEGAL DECLARATION BY GOD

1. Does God's act of justification actually change our internal nature? Why or why not?

2. While Protestants typically teach some form of “imputation” as described by Grudem, the Roman Catholic Church, along with some Protestants, teach that Christ’s righteousness is “imparted.” That is, rather than being credited with Christ’s righteousness, which is not our own, Christ’s righteousness is slowly imparted to us so that it does become our own righteousness. How might this concept be damaging to the Gospel?

A DECLARATION THAT WE ARE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD

1. Read Proverbs 17:15. In light of that verse how can God declare us righteous when we are guilty sinners?

2. What if we sin after we are forgiven? Does justification cover that? Explain.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE

1. How active are you in exercising faith? How is this faith not a work in itself? In other words, how are we not justified by the work that is faith?

2. Why do Roman Catholics believe that some sacraments are a “means of grace”? Are they right? Why or why not?

3. Why do you think God chooses faith as the instrument for receiving justification?

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Justification Is a Legal Declaration by God

pp. 723-724.

A Declaration That We Are Righteous before God

pp. 725-726.

Justification by Faith Alone

pp. 730-732.

Adoption: Membership in a Family

pp. 736-745.

FURTHER READINGS

John Murray, "Justification" and "Adoption," in *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 117-140.

Michael Horton, *Putting Amazing Back into Grace* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994).

Jonathan Edwards, *Justification by Faith Alone*, (Soli Deo Gloria, 2000).

CHAPTER 15

What are Sanctification and Perseverance?

KEY TEXTS

Romans 8:28-30

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 6:11-14

¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

SANCTIFICATION IS A PROCESS

1. How is sanctification different from justification?

2. What are the similarities between sanctification and justification?

3. Why isn't sanctification something that God does instantaneously? How is it a process?

4. What is the primary obstacle to sanctification in a person's life? Explain.

GOD'S ROLE IN SANCTIFICATION

1. Grudem says God equips his children through the power of the Holy Spirit. What are some ways you have grown in holiness that are only explicable because of the Holy Spirit's power?

OUR ROLE IN SANCTIFICATION

1. What does it mean to be "passive" and "active" in sanctification? How can ignoring either one prove to be a danger?

2. Answer this objection: "Isn't striving to be holier legalistic? Shouldn't we just let go and let God?"

WHAT IF THE SANCTIFICATION PROCESS ENDS?

1. Can the process of sanctification ever end in a Christian's life? Explain with texts.

PERSEVERING THROUGH THE PROCESS

1. What should one do if they doubt their salvation?
2. What dangers are there (if any) in a person who continually doubts their salvation?
3. What dangers are there (if any) in a person who has never doubted their salvation, but shows no clear sign of growth?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

¹³ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴ It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. ¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, ¹⁷ comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Sanctification is a Process

pp. 747-753.

God's Role in Sanctification

pp. 753-754.

Our Role in Sanctification

pp. 754-756.

The Perseverance of the Saints

pp. 788-809.

FURTHER READINGS

John Owen, *The Mortification of Sin* (Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 2004).

J. C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots* (Peabody, Ma.: Hendrickson, 2007).

John Piper, *The Purifying Power of Living by Faith in Future Grace* (Sister, Ore.: Multnomah, 2005).

Sinclair Ferguson, *Grow in Grace* (Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1989).

Thomas Schreiner and A. B. Caneday, *The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance* (Downers Grove, Il.: IVP, 2001).

CHAPTER 16

What is death?

KEY TEXTS

Hebrews 9:26-28

²⁶ Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷ And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57

⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O death where is your victory? O death where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

WHY DO CHRISTIANS DIE?

1. If the penalty of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and all have sinned (cf. Rom. 3:23), how can death not be a penalty for Christians?

2. What is the purpose of death for the believer?

WHEN CHRISTIANS DIE

1. How can we grieve with hope when believing loved ones die? What are they hoping in? Explain with specific texts.

WHEN NON-CHRISTIANS DIE

1. Why is it important to maintain that there is no second chance to trust Christ after death?

2. How would you answer someone who claims that some people will be given another chance to trust Christ after they die?

WHEN ARE CHRISTIANS RAISED FROM THE DEAD?

1. Why is it necessary for the Christians to be resurrected if they are already in the presence of God?

2. What will the Christian's resurrected body be like? Provide Scripture.

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Philippians 1:18-26

¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn

out for my deliverance,²⁰ as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.²³ I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.²⁴ But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith,²⁶ so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1 Corinthians 15:54-55

⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Why Do Christians Die?

pp. 810-813.

When Christians Die

pp. 813-815.

When Non-Christians Die

pp. 815-816.

When Are Christians Raised From the Dead

pp. 828-839.

FURTHER READINGS

J. I. Packer and Richard Baxter, *A Grief Sanctified: Through Sorrow to Eternal Hope, Including Richard Baxter's Timeless Memoir of His Wife's Life and Death* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002).

Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology* (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1987).

Anthony Hoekema, "The Resurrection of the Body," in *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 239-52.

CHAPTER 17

What is the church?

KEY TEXTS

Ephesians 5:25-30

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body.

Matthew 16:18

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

1 Corinthians 5:11-13

¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler- not even to eat with such a one. ¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you.

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

THE INVISIBLE YET VISIBLE CHURCH

1. Who are those considered to be the church?

2. What are the differences between the visible and the invisible Church?

3. What do people mean when they say “universal church”? Is this biblical? Explain.

OTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CHURCH

1. Why does the New Testament give so many different metaphors for the Church?

2. How far should we take each metaphor? What should we do if two or more metaphors seem to imply different things about the Church?

3. What is the difference between the Church and Israel?

4. What is the difference between the Church and the Kingdom of God? How are the two related?

WHAT MAKES A CHURCH A CHURCH?

1. What are the traditional “marks” of the Church? Where do these appear in the New Testament?
2. Traditionally, many believe that only those churches that practice the ordinances correctly are “true churches.” Do you believe this? Defend your answer. What do you think of other churches that clearly preach the Gospel but disagree with you about the mode of baptism?
3. How would a church pursue holiness among its members?
4. Describe the ways a church operates in unity?

WHAT IS THE CHURCH SUPPOSED TO DO?

1. Describe how a church practically fulfills these primary functions?
 - a. Ministry to the Lord

b. Ministry to its members

c. Ministry to the world

2. Where do you think your church is weak in the three-fold ministry listed above? What are some practical ways that it could improve in that area (answer this with all humility)? What are your roles in these improvements needed?

THE CHURCH'S POWER TO FULFILL ITS MISSION

1. What is the Church's mission?
2. Why do people receive different gifts to fulfill this mission? Are certain gifts better than others? Explain.

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Ephesians 5:25-30

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Ephesians 5:25-27

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The Invisible yet Visible Church

pp. 855-858.

Other Descriptions of the Church

pp. 858-864.

What Makes a Church a Church?

pp. 864-867.

What is the Church Supposed to Do?

pp. 867-869.

The Church's Power to Fulfill Its Mission

pp. 887-903; 1016-1087.

FURTHER READINGS

Edmund Clowney, *The Church* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1995).

Mark Dever. *Nine Marks of Healthy Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004).

Mark Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2009).

Gregg R. Allison, *The Assembly of the Way: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, forthcoming).

John R. W. Stott, *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007).

CHAPTER 18

What Will Happen When Christ Returns?

KEY TEXTS

Revelation 20:1-6

¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. ⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Matthew 24:3-14

³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" ⁴ And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. ⁹ "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

c.

2. Which of these interpretations do you think is best? Explain.

3. Explain the difference between pretribulational premillennialism and historic (post-tribulational) premillennialism.

4. How important is agreement on these issues? Should agreement on the millennium be required for church membership?

5. How necessary is it for the elders of a church to agree on this issue?

THE VICTORIOUS KING

1. The book of Revelation portrays Christ as both a lion and a lamb. Take a moment to consider these images. How do they contribute to the ultimate victory of Christ?

2. How should we view evil and suffering in this present age in light of the ultimate victory of Christ?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

Revelation 22:12-20

¹² "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." ¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." ¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. ¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The Return of Christ

pp. 1091-1095.

The Timing of the Return

pp. 1095-1108.

The Millennium

pp. 1109-1139.

FURTHER READINGS

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CHAPTER 19

What is the Final Judgement?

KEY TEXTS

Revelation 20:11 – 20:15

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw- ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Revelation 14:9-11

⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE FINAL JUDGMENT?

1. What are some differences between the judgment of unbelievers and the judgment of believers?

2. If we are justified by faith alone, what is our motivation to do good deeds?
3. Describe the rewards for believers at the final judgment.
4. Read Revelation 4:10-11. What ideas come to mind as you think about the destination of the rewards given to the believers?

THE PURPOSE OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT

1. What two attributes of God will the final judgment put on display? Is there any other place where these two attributes are put on display? Explain.
2. How can the final judgment be “entirely fair” if everyone is a sinner and deserving God’s wrath?

THE APPLICATION OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT

1. How does the doctrine of the final judgment affect how we perceive injustice in this life?

2. How would you encourage a fellow believer to live a righteous life in light of the final judgment? How does it motivate you toward righteous living?

3. What does the delay in the judgment gives us opportunity to do?

WHAT ABOUT HELL?

1. Answer these objections using Scripture.
 - a. The teaching on Hell is inconsistent with teaching about a kind and benevolent God.

 - b. Hell is not a place but a state of mind.

 - c. Hell will not last forever. Unbelievers will be annihilated.

2. What makes the doctrine of hell so hard to accept for most people? How would you respond to someone who asks how a loving God could send anyone to hell?

PRAYER TEXT

Psalm 72

¹ Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! ² May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! ³ Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! ⁴ May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor! ⁵ May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! ⁶ May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! ⁷ In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more! ⁸ May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! ⁹ May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust! ¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! ¹¹ May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! ¹² For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. ¹³ He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. ¹⁴ From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight. ¹⁵ Long may he live; may gold of Sheba be given to him! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day! ¹⁶ May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field! ¹⁷ May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed! ¹⁸ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. ¹⁹ Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! ²⁰ The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Revelation 20:11 – 20:13

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

What Happens at the Final Judgment?

pp. 1140-1146.

The Purpose of the Final Judgment

pp. 1146-1147.

The Application of the Final Judgment

pp. 1147-1148.

What About Hell?

pp. 1149-1153.

FURTHER READINGS

C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (New York: HarperOne, 2001).

Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 253-73.

William Crockett, ed., *Four Views on Hell* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson, eds., *Hell Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).

CHAPTER 20

what is heaven?

KEY TEXTS

Isaiah 65

¹⁷ "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. ²⁰ No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³ They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord, and their descendants with them. ²⁴ Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the Lord.

Revelation 21:1-7

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

THE RENEWED HEAVEN, EARTH, AND CREATION

1. Describe some of the aspects of the renewed Heaven and earth.

2. How does our culture typically view heaven? What aspects of this perception might undermine the Gospel?
3. Grudem mentions music, other artistic activities, creativity and technology as features of human culture that will be present in the new creation. How should the permanence of these things affect how we view them in the present?

THE UNDENIABLE GLORY OF GOD

1. Heaven is sometimes called a “return to Eden.” In what ways will the new creation be like Eden, and in what ways will it differ from Eden?
2. When you think about heaven, what do you look forward to more: reunion with friends and relatives who have gone before, or eternity basking in God’s presence and glory? What does your answer say about what you value?
3. What are some practical ways that you can cultivate a desire for God’s fellowship and presence in anticipation of the new creation?

PRAYER TEXT

Pray through the following text in light of this chapter:

John 14:1-4

¹ Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Revelation 21:3-4

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The New Heaven, Earth, and Creation

pp. 1158-1163.

The Undeniable Glory of God

pp. 1163-1164.

FURTHER READINGS

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