

# INTRODUCTION TO DOGMATICS BIBLICAL TRUTHS IN-DEPTH SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

# TRUTHS IN-DEPTH SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

# THE CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDIES AT CROSSROAD BIBLE INSTITUTE

# INSTRUCTOR ANSWER KEY



Crossroad  
BIBLE INSTITUTE

P.O. Box 900  
Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900



INTRODUCTION TO DOGMATICS

**BIBLICAL TRUTHS IN-DEPTH**  
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

**General Editor: H. David Schuringa**

*In Memory of Prof. Dr. Alexander C. De Jong*

---

Copyright © 2008 Crossroad Bible Institute. All rights reserved. Chapters 2-7, 9 and most of 8 were adapted, with permission, from *An Introduction to Biblical Truths* by Alexander C. De Jong.

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, *New International Version*®. Copyright ©1994 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

## **COURSE INTRODUCTION**

We at Crossroad are pleased that you have made it this far in your studies. We pray that God has used these courses to strengthen your faith in His Son Jesus Christ and has given you the desire and strength to live for Him no matter where you are or what your circumstances. Before you begin this course on systematic theology, please read this brief introduction to help you understand the basic layout and theme.

In this course, we will be learning about God and His Word in an organized fashion. The topics we will be discussing are arranged in a manner that is easy to follow. Please note that the order we have chosen is not the specific order the Bible follows; however, all the concepts are Biblical truths.

Please take some time right now to ask God to help you as you do these lessons. Ask God to give you wisdom and understanding as you read portions of the Bible to learn more about Him, His Son Jesus Christ, His Holy Spirit and even yourself. When you work through these lessons, keep in mind other Bible courses or lessons you may have done as well as your overall knowledge of the Bible. When you answer the questions, try to incorporate as much Scripture as possible. Remember, this course is not based upon opinion or human reason, but upon God's inerrant Word. Our prayer is that Scripture might always be in your thoughts and on your lips. Remember that the Christian's primary goal in life is not to become arrogant because of our knowledge, but to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Our prayer for you is Paul's prayer found in Philippians 1:9-11, "*...that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ... to the glory and praise of God.*"

### ***LEARNING OBJECTIVES***

Throughout this course, our goal is that you will:

1. Know more about God, His Son Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit.
2. Be able to explain and understand certain Biblical doctrines and historic Christian truths found in God's Word.
3. Develop a theological, doctrinal and spiritual balance as you learn many different aspects of God and who He is.
4. Be able to teach and disciple those who are new to the Christian faith.
5. Be well grounded in the absolute truth of Scripture as God's Word.

### ***COURSE STRUCTURE***

There are ten lessons in this course, and each lesson follows the same basic structure. Every lesson focuses on a certain topic of Christian doctrine. You will find fill-in-the-blanks, short answer questions and essay questions. There is also an "in-depth" section that gives a detailed commentary on a certain doctrinal point of each lesson. Please read the lessons and questions carefully—pay attention to detail. This course is intended to push you! As you read through the lessons, be sure to answer all of the fill-in-the-blank questions because they are a good way to review what you've just read and learned. At this point in your studies, we assume you are intelligent and able to comprehend and evaluate more difficult questions and concepts. When answering questions, make sure that your answers are full of Scripture references, because God's Word is our final authority for faith and life.

### ***RESOURCES INCLUDED***

In the appendix, you will find a dictionary of biblical and theological terms. We've included the terms found in this course along with other important biblical and theological words.

### ***ESSAY QUESTIONS***

You will be asked to write structured essays. A structured essay is not simply your thoughts written randomly. In a structured essay, you are expected to write in a planned and organized manner. Be sure to think over your answer before you begin writing. You may find it helpful to jot down some notes on a separate piece of paper, making an outline of how you will lay out your essay. You should begin your essay introducing and defining the topic you are writing about. After the introduction, move on to the body, or main part, of your essay. Be sure that you completely answer the question(s) asked, clearly stating your main points and providing Scriptural support for each one. Write clearly and concisely. Finally, end your essay by summarizing the main points while giving a definite conclusion.

### ***IN-DEPTH SECTIONS***

You will notice the following phrase in some lessons: [IN-DEPTH]. This appears when content relating to a subject discussed in the lesson is elaborated on at the very end of the lesson. Several lessons do not have an [IN-DEPTH] symbol in them, but they nonetheless will have an In-Depth essay and question at the end of the lesson. The In-Depth Essay is important because it will help you engage the doctrines discussed in each lesson more deeply. The very last page of each lesson contains the In-Depth essay. You will be corrected on the question based on this essay, which is found at the end of the "Digging Deeper" questions. Be sure to complete these In-Depth questions thoroughly after reflecting on the In-Depth Essay.

### ***OTHER***

Let your Instructor know if you have any additional questions or comments about this course or a doctrinal point in this course. Please remember that you are not doing this course to please us, but to glorify God by learning more about Him and who He is.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lesson 1.	<b>The Word Before:</b> <i>Prolegomena</i>	1
Lesson 2.	<b>Getting to Know God:</b> <i>The Doctrine of God</i>	17
Lesson 3.	<b>God Cares for His World:</b> <i>The Doctrine of God and His Creation</i>	33
Lesson 4.	<b>Enter the Enemy:</b> <i>The Doctrine of Humanity</i>	51
Lesson 5.	<b>The Great Substitution:</b> <i>The Doctrine of Christ (I)</i>	69
Lesson 6.	<b>The Victorious Lord:</b> <i>The Doctrine of Christ (II)</i>	85
Lesson 7.	<b>The Life-Giving Christ:</b> <i>The Doctrine of Salvation</i>	103
Lesson 8.	<b>The New Life in Fellowship:</b> <i>The Doctrine of the Church</i>	121
Lesson 9.	<b>New Obedience:</b> <i>Christian Ethics</i>	139
Lesson 10.	<b>Defending the Faith:</b> <i>Apologetics</i>	159
Appendix 1.	Dictionary of Biblical and Theological Terms	175
Appendix 2.	Ancient Christian Creeds	183



## LESSON 1

# The **WORLD** Before

## *P r o l e g o m e n a <sup>1</sup>*

### **T h e o l o g y**

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word “theology”? Perhaps you’ve heard that theology is just for professors and preachers, or that “average” Christians should stay out of theology. But what is it? Have you ever really looked into theology? Simply put, **theology** is the study of God. The first thing we must recognize when embarking on a theological journey is that as we learn more about God our attitude must be a dependent and receptive one. We must approach God and His Word allowing Him to change us, allowing His Word to shape our beliefs. We must submit to His sovereignty and the authority of His Holy Word. Theology is different than biology and geology because in theology we are dependent upon God taking the first step to approach humanity. Only as far as He has shown Himself can we know Him. God must take the initiative in showing Himself to us.

1. Theology is the **STUDY** of **GOD**.
2. God must come to **US** before we can **GO** to **HIM**.

### **R e v e l a t i o n**

God has shown Himself to us! Isn’t it wonderful to recognize that God didn’t simply create the world and then leave it to wind down on its own? Not only did God create the world, but He also chose to reveal Himself to His creation. There are two ways in which God makes Himself known to us. The first way He reveals Himself to us is in

creation itself. Psalm 19:1 says, “*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*” In the next verse the psalmist tells us that the heavens speak of and declare God’s glorious handiwork. Many theologians describe this way that God shows Himself to us as *general revelation*. **General revelation** is God revealing Himself to humans in creation. Paul says in Romans 1:19-20 that what may be known about God is clearly seen, because God has shown it to us. Even since the beginning of time, Paul continues, God’s power and divinity have been plainly seen.

But general revelation isn’t enough. By itself this kind of revelation can never lead us to an intimate knowledge of God, nor can it cause us to love and adore Him as Savior. General revelation only leaves us “*without excuse*” (Romans 1:20). Unbelievers cannot claim that it is God’s fault that they do not worship Him. God has shown Himself to all people in creation, but in our sinfulness we “*neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him...their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened*” (Romans 1:21). We can call this a guilty knowledge of God. Although the heavens declare God’s glory, humans, by nature, refuse to glorify God as God, nor do we thank Him for what He has given us. This makes us guilty before His presence. By nature we can never reason or rationalize our way to a saving knowledge of God. We need more than general revelation to show us who God is and how we can be delivered from the misery caused by sin.

3. One way **GOD** has shown Himself to us is **GENERAL** revelation.

<sup>1</sup>*Prolegomena* means “to say before.” *Prolegomena*, in theology, deals with important topics that must be covered before one begins studying the basic truths of the Christian faith.

4. **GENERAL** revelation is God revealing **HIMSELF** to humans in **CREATION**.

5. We need more than **GENERAL REVELATION** to show us who **GOD** is and how **WE** can be delivered from our **MISERY** and **SIN**.

God has gone beyond simply revealing His existence through creation. While the magnificent sunset declares God's abounding glory, and the snow-capped mountains echo His power and splendor, they do not explain how we, as sinners, can stand blameless before a holy and righteous God. We need *special revelation* to show us the way of salvation. **Special revelation** is God's Word. God made Himself known specifically and precisely as He spoke to His people through His chosen messengers. Special revelation is necessary for us to understand God's saving grace through the work of His Son, Jesus Christ. The special revelation of God is His revelation of redemption. In the Bible, God clearly shows us our sin, the way of salvation in Christ and grateful response of service to God. Special revelation, God's Word, tells us that "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*" (1 Timothy 1:15). Special revelation also illumines our minds, shows our will what is right in God's eyes and prepares us for our heavenly home (Psalm 19:8 & 119:105).

6. **SPECIAL** revelation is God's **WORD**.

7. **SPECIAL** revelation is necessary to **SHOW** us God's **SAVING** grace in the **WORK** of His Son, **JESUS CHRIST**.

Although many people have tried to make vain speculations about God and who He is, we need not speculate about the nature of God; He has specially and explicitly revealed Himself to us. We have the record of God's mighty acts in history and His own interpretation of those acts, better known as the Bible. **[IN-DEPTH]** God has revealed who He is in His Word. God wants His

people to know Him—the Bible reveals God to us, Jesus reveals God to us and the Spirit reveals the things of God through His Word to us. Theology is the study of the three-in-one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A careful reading and study of the Bible is necessary as God has not revealed the way of salvation anywhere else. The theologian J. I. Packer once said, "We must seek, in studying God, to be led to God. It was for this purpose that revelation [the Bible] was given, and it is to this use that we must put it."<sup>2</sup>

8. God has clearly **REVEALED** who He is in **HIS WORD**.

## Systematic Theology

The primary concern of this course is theology, and the specific method adopted to approach this subject is called *systematic theology*. Let's define **systematic theology** as the presentation of the truths of Scripture in an orderly arrangement. In this course, we will be looking at the major Christian doctrines<sup>3</sup> and putting them in an organized sequence. Most teachers and scholars put the truths of Scripture in the following order:

- 1) The Doctrine of God (Theology Proper)
- 2) The Doctrine of Man (Anthropology)
- 3) The Doctrine of Christ (Christology)
- 4) The Doctrine of Redemption/Salvation (Soteriology)
- 5) The Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)
- 6) The Doctrine of the Last Things (Eschatology)

In this course, we will be following a similar outline:

- 1) The Doctrine of God (Theology Proper)
- 2) The Doctrine of Man (Anthropology)
- 3) The Doctrine of Christ (Christology)
- 4) The Doctrine of the Last Things (Eschatology)
- 5) The Doctrine of Redemption/Salvation (Soteriology)
- 6) The Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)
- 7) Christian Ethics
- 8) Apologetics

<sup>2</sup>Packer, J.I. *Knowing God*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. 1973.

<sup>3</sup>Doctrine means principle, instruction or truth.

Remember, the topics in this outline are not in historical order, nor are they in the order in which they appear in the Bible; rather, they are organized in a topical order, helpful for studying Biblical doctrines. Another theological approach, Biblical theology, traces the flow of history from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, while systematic theology puts the major Biblical doctrines in topical order. When they are used in a complementary manner, both approaches are coherent, helpful ways to understand God and His Word.

9. Systematic theology is the **PRESENTATION** of the **TRUTHS** of Scripture in an **ORDERLY** arrangement.

10. Doctrine means **PRINCIPLE, INSTRUCTION** or **TRUTH**.

### Knowing Our God

Why should we learn more about God? Why can't we just leave these things to college professors and preachers? There are many reasons. For example, Scripture calls us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Scripture also says, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Maybe you haven't really thought through these ideas, or maybe they have been on your mind for years. Either way, the words of the Psalmist should be your words: "My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Psalm 84:2). We challenge you not to ask the question, "Why should I learn more about God?" Ask instead, "Why *shouldn't* I learn more about God?" If you belong to Christ then God has chosen you to be His treasured possession. If you are His, He is yours!

One teacher has said, "...since on our behalf and for our salvation He has condescended to work and speak in the form of time...let us also seek to know Him as the One that is, that was, and that is to come, in order that no note may be lacking in

that psalm of praise to be sung by the Church into which all our theology must issue."<sup>4</sup> Consider also Paul's fervent yearning in Philippians 3:7-11, where he says, "...I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ...I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection." If you do not wish to learn more about God, His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, you had better start asking yourself some serious questions!

11. Scripture calls us to, "**GROW** in the **GRACE** and **KNOWLEDGE** of our Lord and **SAVIOR** Jesus **CHRIST**".

12. Paul says in God's Word, "I **WANT** to **KNOW** Christ, and the **POWER** of his **RESURRECTION**."

Another reason to learn systematic theology is to assist us in our fight against our natural tendency to be doctrinally one-sided, studying only what interests us. To be one-sided doctrinally is to be one-sided spiritually. Think about it: if you didn't study all the aspects of God in His Word, couldn't you inadvertently downplay some of His most important aspects? Paul told the Ephesian Christians, "I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will [or counsel] of God" (Acts 20:27). We need the whole counsel of God, whether or not it makes us feel good. Some things God reveals to us in His Word will perhaps frighten us, others will cut to our very souls by the truth they declare, yet others will make us sing a new song of joy to the Lord. A study of systematic theology will help us maintain a healthy balance as we look into the whole counsel of God and who He is. If we are doctrinally balanced, by God's grace we will be spiritually balanced as well.

<sup>4</sup>Vos, Geerhardus, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*. P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ. 1999.

13. A study of systematic theology will help us **MAINTAIN** a healthy **BALANCE** as we look into the **WHOLE COUNSEL** of **GOD** and who **HE** is.

Learning about God also compels you to learn about yourself. If you do not truly know yourself, you will not truly know God. This means that before you seriously endeavor to know God, you must understand the truth about yourself. Once you see that your condition apart from God is nothing but sin, death, misery and darkness, you will truly know of your desperate need for divine help and deliverance. You will then turn to God and His Son, by His grace. And once you learn about God and His goodness, splendor, power and righteousness, you will also be driven to the dust as you realize that you are not good or righteous on your own. You will never know your true condition until you gaze upon God's majesty and holiness. John Calvin, a preacher from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, put it this way, "...man is never sufficiently touched and affected by the awareness of his lowly state until he has compared himself with God's majesty."<sup>5</sup>

14. Before you seriously endeavor to **KNOW GOD**, you must **UNDERSTAND** the **TRUTH** about **YOURSELF**.

## Who God Is

The Bible does not contain an exact definition of God. Although we can put verses together and learn many things about who God is, we cannot turn to one verse and read a clear definition. The closest we can come to a concise definition of God in the Bible is found in John 4:24, where Christ says, "*God is spirit.*" By this statement, we can conclude that God does not have a body, and is no way visible to the physical human eye. God is also a personal God, with whom we can communicate, and is distinguished from His creation by His infinite power and absolute sovereignty.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI. 1981.

Our God is infinitely perfect, as the children of Israel sang, "*Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory...the LORD will reign for ever and ever*" (Exodus 15:11 & 18). Paul also uses beautiful words to describe God in 1 Timothy 6:16, "[God,] *who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever.*" While God is spirit, personal and perfect, He has revealed Himself to us as a "simple" God. That is, God and His perfections are one. He is not made up of many different parts, but He is one with His attributes, or characteristics. In other words, every attribute of God is co-extensive with His being.

15. "**God is SPIRIT.**"

## The Attributes of God

God tells us in His Word that He has different attributes. In theology, we take different aspects of who God is and define them so we can know more of His power and might. Some characteristics of God emphasize the absolute distinction between God the Creator and man the creature. These attributes are called **incommunicable attributes**, which humans do not "share" with God, because they are unique to Him alone. One incommunicable attribute of God is that He is self-existent. That means that God exists in Himself, and does not depend on anything or anyone to support Him. We as creatures are dependent upon God, and need Him to give us life, breath, food and so on. But God necessarily exists independently. God is also immutable. Immutable means that God is unchangeable. God Himself declares, "*I the LORD do not change*" (Malachi 3:6). He is omnipotent, or all-powerful, as the prophet says, "*...nothing is too hard for you*" (Jeremiah 32:17). God is also infinite; He is not subject to limitations. He is absolutely perfect, from everlasting to everlasting. He is not bound by time or space. God is omniscient, or all-knowing. He doesn't

<sup>6</sup>Sovereignty means that God is completely and wholly all-powerful over everything, and includes the fact that He upholds all things with His power and determines the ends to which they were created to serve. See Psalm 115:3, Romans 9:15-18 and Revelation 4:11 for more information.

learn; He has always known all things in their totality.

These things make us bow and adore almighty God, saying with the apostle Paul, *“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord...For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen”* (Romans 11:33-36).

16. God’s **INCOMMUNICABLE** attributes are **UNIQUE** to Him alone.

17. God is immutable, which means **UNCHANGABLE**; God is omnipotent, which means **ALL-POWERFUL**; God is infinite, which means He is not **SUBJECT** to **LIMITATIONS**; God is omniscient, which means **ALL-KNOWING**.

God’s **communicable attributes** are those qualities of which we find some resemblance in humans. We must remember, however, that man is finite (limited), and even the attributes that God “shares” with humans are only a faint glimmer within us. God’s communicable attributes are: knowledge, wisdom, goodness, love, holiness and righteousness, along with several other characteristics that God has revealed in His Word.

18. God’s **COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES** are those **QUALITIES** of which we find **SOME RESEMBLANCE** in **HUMANS**.

### The Names of God<sup>7</sup>

*“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth”* (Psalm 8:1). Even by declaring His name, God has come down and revealed Himself to us. Although God uses many different names to show Himself to us, it is good to remember that these names simply express different characteristics of the same one true God. We didn’t make these names up; God has declared them to us

so that we might know Him better. In order for us to know and understand Him, God used human language to describe Himself. Think of a parent talking to a young child. The parent uses “baby-talk” to converse with the child. They must stoop to the child’s level of understanding to communicate. In the same way, God stooped down to our level and revealed His true nature to us by using our language and terms we can understand.

The most common name for God in the Old Testament is EL (or ELOHIM). As you read the Old Testament and come upon the word “God,” most likely the Hebrew word behind it is EL or ELOHIM. This name for God is found over 2,300 times in the Old Testament. EL or ELOHIM means being first, being Lord, God, god or being strong and mighty. See Genesis 1:1, 1 Samuel 1:17, Psalm 56:1 and Isaiah 35:4 for a few examples of this name.

19. God **STOOPED** down to our **LEVEL** and revealed His true **NATURE** to us by using our **LANGUAGE** and terms we can **UNDERSTAND**.

20. The most common name for God in the Old Testament is **EL** or **ELOHIM**.

You are probably accustomed to seeing the name for God (capitalized), “LORD.” When you see the name LORD, this is the English word for the most sacred and holy name of God. The Hebrew word which is translated into LORD is YAHWEH.<sup>8</sup> This name of God, LORD, appears in the Old Testament around 6,500 times. It means the self-existing one: He that always was, that always is and ever is to come.<sup>9</sup> The law of God declares that *“anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death”* (Leviticus 24:16). When you read LORD, remember that this is God’s covenant name, the name which is holy, and means “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14-15).

<sup>7</sup>In this section, we are simply looking at the most common names for our God found in Scripture. Just remember that there are many more. Perhaps you can keep track on your own while you go through this course.

This is the name of God that He used in His covenant bond with His people to create a gracious and merciful relationship. The LORD is the author and sustainer of this covenant relationship.

The New Testament also has different names for God. The most common New Testament name for God, “*theos*,” is just like EL or ELOHIM in the Old Testament. *Theos* is a Greek word which simply means God, or god (see Mark 5:7, Luke 1:75 and Acts 7:48 for more information). *Theos* appears in the New Testament over 1,100 times. We derive the word *theology* from this name for God.

**21. The covenant name of GOD, His most holy name, is (Hebrew) YAHWEH. We usually write it like this: LORD(capitals).**

**22. The most common New Testament name for God, THEOS, is just like EL or ELOHIM from the OLD TESTAMENT.**

When discussing the name of God, it is important to remember that there is one primary and brilliant instance of God’s name. The clearest manifestation of God’s name is in His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself declared, “*before Abraham was born, I am*” (John 8:58). In this verse we see God-in-the-flesh, Immanuel, declaring His name, I AM (see also Matthew 1:23). Jesus prayed to God, “*I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world*” (John 17:6 KJV). Remember God’s name, remember Jesus Christ, God’s Son and remember that “*there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12). Remember that God gave Jesus “*the name that is above every name*” (Philippians 2:9). “*On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*” (Revelation 19:16).

Learning about God’s name leads us to rejoice simply because we *can* know the name of our God. As we think about Jesus, whose name is the Word of God, the Prince of Peace and Mighty

God, we humbly adore Him as our King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Isaiah 9:6 and Revelation 19:16). Christians can take pleasure in the fact that when the earth is removed and heaven is our eternal dwelling place, we will see the Lord’s face, and His name will be on our foreheads (Revelation 15:2 and 22:4).

---

<sup>8</sup>Some translations of Scripture also use JEHOVAH, which is derived from the same Hebrew word for LORD and YAHWEH

<sup>9</sup>For further study, see Psalm 90:2, Isaiah 44:6, John 8:58, Hebrews 13:8, Revelation 1:4, 1:8 and 4:8.

## Short Answer Essays

1. Explain in your own words how theology is different from biology and geology, and why it is important for Christians to study theology.

**Students' answers will vary here.** The student should explain that in theology we are dependent upon God to take the first step in approaching us, showing us who He is. We couldn't know anything about God if He had not first come down to our level and revealed Himself to us. Also, we can only know as much about God as He has shown to us. There are many excellent reasons for Christians to study theology. Scripture clearly admonishes us to seek God and to learn more about Him through Jesus Christ (Psalm 84:2, John 17:3, Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 1:10, Philippians 3:7-11, 1 Peter 2:2 and 2 Peter 3:18). As God's children, we should also want to know more about the One who delivered us and now watches over us so intimately.

**EXTRA:** R.C. Sproul writes, "For the soul of a person to be inflamed with passion for the living God, that person's mind must first be informed about the character and will of God. There can be nothing in the heart that is not first in the mind. Though it is possible to have theology in the head without its piercing the soul, it cannot pierce the soul without first being grasped by the mind" (Sproul, R.C. Essential Truths of the Christian Faith).

2. Explain general revelation and give Scriptural support for your answer.

General revelation, or natural revelation, is the biblical truth that God reveals Himself to humans in creation. The following verses speak of God showing Himself in creation: Psalm 19:1-4 and Romans 1:18-23. In general revelation, God has clearly shown Himself to all humans so clearly that only a fool says that there is no God (Psalm 14:1). The student should also mention that general revelation cannot give us a saving knowledge of God or deliver us from our sin. General revelation simply leaves all humans without an excuse to know God (Romans 1:18).

3. Explain special revelation and give Scriptural support for your answer.

Special revelation, or supernatural revelation, is God's Word, the Bible. Even before the Fall, special revelation existed. Now, after the Fall, special revelation is necessary to show us the way of salvation in Jesus Christ. Special revelation tells us that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15; see also Psalm 19:8, Psalm 119:105, Romans 4:3, Romans 10:11, Galatians 3:8&22, 2 Timothy 3:16 and 1 Peter 2:6).

4. If God has clearly shown Himself to all humans (Romans 1:18-20), why is special revelation necessary?

Special revelation is necessary because general revelation does not tell us that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. General revelation does not tell us that we need deliverance from our sin. All that general revelation can do is leave all humans inexcusable before God. No human can complain, "God, you never showed Yourself to me!" We need special revelation, or God's Word, to show us our sin, the way of salvation in Jesus, and the life of service we live as God's people.

5. Read Judges 13:22, Job 38 and 42:1-6, Isaiah 6:5, Luke 5:8 and Revelation 1:17. What did the people in these passages learn about God and themselves?

These people learned that the holiness and majesty of God is something to be feared. Judges 13:22 – *"We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. 'We have seen God!'"* Job 38 – This chapter is the LORD (YAHWEH) answering Job out of a storm. YAHWEH declares His power and majesty. In this text, "Job is reminded of his fleeting life in contrast to the antiquity of the world and God's eternal being...a contrast between man and God is implied in these verses" (The New Bible Commentary, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition [Job 38]). Job 42:1-6 – *"...My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."* Isaiah 6:5 – *"Woe is me!" I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty!'"* Luke 5:8 – *"When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!'"* Revelation 1:17 – *"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead..."* These people all understood their wickedness compared to God's holiness. God's eyes are too pure to look on evil (Habbakuk 1:13). The Isaiah 6:5 passage is clear: after the prophet had seen the Lord seated on the throne, surrounded by seraphs, he understood his wickedness and said, as it were, "I'm much too sinful to stand in the presence of a holy and righteous God! Woe is me!"

6. What do the following verses say about knowing God: Jeremiah 24:7, 2 Corinthians 4:6 and Colossians 1:10?

Jeremiah 24:7 – *"I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart."* 2 Corinthians 4:6 – *"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."* Colossians 1:10 – *"And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God."* These verses say several things about the Christian's knowledge of his/her God. First of all, notice that the first two texts tell us that God gave us the desire to know Him—that is, we don't somehow create within ourselves a desire to know Him—it is a gift, just like faith (Ephesians 2:8-10). These verses also speak implicitly about a human's condition apart from Christ—spiritual darkness and no desire to know God. Also note the fact that God's people have hearts to know Him, His glory, and the desire to grow more in the knowledge of Him.

7. What is an “incommunicable” attribute? Name and define at least three of God’s incommunicable attributes.

An incommunicable attribute is an attribute of God that He does not “share” with humans. These attributes, or qualities, are unique to God alone. Humans, even those who are God’s people and assured of heaven, will never share these qualities with God. God’s incommunicable attributes listed in the lesson are:

Self-existent: God exists in Himself, and does not depend upon anyone, or anything, for His existence.

Immutable: God does not change.

Omnipotent: God is all-powerful.

Infinite: He is not subject to limitations.

Omniscient: God never learns; He knows all things in their totality.

8. Explain the significance of “baby-talk” and what that tells us about how God reveals Himself to us.

As an aspect of Special Revelation, God has declared His name to humans. God has shown His name to His people, and although He has many names, they all simply declare different characteristics of the same one true God. God has condescended, or stooped down, to speak to us in human language, in time and history, and told us His names. It is similar to how a parent speaks to a child. As a mother speaks with her son, she uses “baby-talk,” that is, words that the young child will know.

9. What is the most common Old Testament name for God? What does it mean, according to Psalm 86:10?

EL or ELOHIM is the most common Old Testament name for God. EL or ELOHIM means being first, being Lord, God, god or being strong and mighty. According to Psalm 86:10b it means, “God.” Psalm 86:10b – *“You alone are God.”*

## Digging Deeper

1. Compare general revelation and special revelation and explain how both are used by God to reveal Himself to us. Define each and explain these concepts as if you were sharing them with someone who had never heard them before. Use any verses that come to mind, as well as the following: Psalm 19, Acts 14:17, Romans 1:18-32, Psalm 103:7, John 1:18 and Hebrews 1:1-2.

General revelation is God revealing Himself to humans in creation. General revelation leaves all people without excuse that there is a God. Special revelation is God’s Word, and shows us the way of salvation. Special revelation is necessary to show us God’s saving grace in the work of His Son, Jesus Christ; it is His revelation of redemption. In the Bible, God clearly shows us our sin, the way of salvation in Christ and our grateful response of service to God.

We need both, because general revelation isn’t enough. It will never lead us to an intimate, saving knowledge of God. General revelation shows everyone that there is a God, and special revelation leads us to an intimate knowledge of that God.

**EXTRA:** “We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to see clearly the invisible things of God, even His everlasting power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says (Romans 1:20). All which things are sufficient to convince men and leave them without excuse. Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation” (The Belgic Confession Article 2).

2. What is your ultimate aim and object in occupying yourself with the study of God? How can you truly know God? Use Scripture references that come to mind. Also look at the following references to guide your answer: Genesis 1:1, Psalm 46:10, Isaiah 44:6, Jeremiah 10:10, 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 and 1 John 5:20.

We hope that each student seeks to glorify God by learning more about Him. Answers might also reflect the fact that a student simply has a longing to learn more about God and His Word. If the latter is the case, praise God with the student for that longing. We pray that answers are not simply aimed at the increase of intellectual power or for any other prideful reasons, but to learn more about God because He is God and worthy to be praised.

**EXTRA:** The only way to truly know God is through Jesus His Son. “The Son leads believers to the Father, and they are in the love and favor of both; in union with both, by the indwelling and working of the Holy Spirit. Happy are those to whom it is given to know that the Son of God is come, and to have a heart to trust in and rely on him that is true! May this be our privilege; we shall thus be kept from all idols and false doctrines, and from the idolatrous love of worldly objects, and be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto eternal salvation. To this living and true God, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary on 1 John 5:20).

3. Do *you* want to learn more about God? Why or why not? Also, can you think of any reasons (other than those listed in this lesson) why it is good for *you* to study systematic theology?

**Each student will answer differently.** Encourage the student in his/her study of God and His Word.

4. Using the appropriate section from the lesson and the following verses, write several paragraphs that describe and define God's name YAHWEH, or LORD: Genesis 2:7, Genesis 14:22, Genesis 15:1, Exodus 3:13-16, Psalm 135:13 and Isaiah 44:6 (see also John 8:58 as compared to Exodus 3:14).

Genesis 2:7 declares that YAHWEH ELOHIM created Adam and breathed the breath of life into him. Genesis 14:22 is Abram speaking to the king of Sodom, stating that the LORD Most High is the great Creator of heaven and earth. In Genesis 15:1, YAHWEH speaks to Abram saying, "*I am your shield, your very great reward.*" The Psalmist proclaims that the name of the LORD, YAHWEH, endures forever in Psalm 135:13. YAHWEH is Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty, the first and the last—apart from Him there is no God (Isaiah 44:6). In John 8:58, Jesus declares that He is the "I AM," the same name that YAHWEH revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14.

**5. IN-DEPTH LESSON 1 ESSAY:** Christians are not the people of a faith based on myths or fairy tales. Rather, we know that our faith is historic, which means that it is based on events that actually occurred in history. Why is it significant that God spoke and acted in history?

The Creator of heaven and earth was most glorified by making Himself known to His creatures. Rather than be completely unconcerned and far from them, He sovereignly chose to reveal His name to sinful humans. God did not use some kind of metaphysical history, but came down to earth in time, in human language, to show sinners who He is. God even mercifully and graciously chooses to save sinners.

It is essential to our Christian faith to realize that God has acted in history. God chose to dwell among His people through the tabernacle in the dusty wilderness during Israel's wanderings. God spoke to humans, God showed His might and power in the plagues, in the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians, in the episode when the sun stood still and when He struck down 70,000 Israelites (2 Samuel 24:15).

The most spectacular historical act of God is His coming to earth in the person of Jesus Christ, who is Immanuel, God-with us. In history, Jesus was born under the law, lived a life of perfect obedience to God, died on a cross, was buried, rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven. If we take away the fact that God is a historical God who has shown Himself to humans on earth, we have no salvation!

## Challenge Questions: Read and Respond

The following are excerpts from classic theologians of the Christian faith. They have studied the Scriptures and have written extensively about the topics you will study in this course. Critically read the following excerpts and respond to the questions that follow.

Theologian Stephen Charnock (1628-1680) wrote about the attributes of God in his book *The Existence and Attributes of God*. This is what he says about God's unchangeableness or immutability:

“Immutability is a glory belonging to all the attributes of God. It is not a single perfection of the Divine nature, nor is it limited to particular objects thus and thus disposed. Mercy and justice have their distinct objects and distinct acts; mercy is conversant about a penitent, justice conversant about an obstinate sinner. In our notion and conception of the Divine perfections, his perfections are different: the wisdom of God is not his power, nor his power his holiness, but immutability is the centre wherein they all unite. There is not one perfection but may be said to be and truly is, immutable; none of them will appear so glorious without this beam, this sun of immutability, which renders them highly excellent without the least shadow of imperfection. How cloudy would his blessedness be if it were changeable! How dim his wisdom, if it might be obscured! How feeble his power, if it were capable to be sickly and languish! How would mercy lose much of its lustre, if it could change into wrath; and justice much of its dread, if it could be turned into mercy, while the object of justice remains unfit for mercy, and one that hath need of mercy continues only fit for the Divine fury! But unchangeableness is a thread that runs through the whole web; it is the enamel of all the rest; none of them without it could look with a triumphant aspect.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Why does Charnock call God's immutability the “thread that runs through the whole web”?

Charnock points out that God's immutability is essential to the goodness of all his other attributes. All God's other attributes: His goodness, mercy, justice, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, etc. would mean nothing if God were not immutable. If God were not immutable, He would be good on one day and evil on another. If God were not immutable, He would be merciful on one day and exacting on another. We could not call God good or just or kind or lovely if He were changeable. Neither could He be described by His attributes at all because they would be constantly changing, constantly different than the day before.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1996), 318.

Herman Bavinck (1854-1921) was an influential nineteenth century theologian. He wrote three volumes of systematic theology entitled *Reformed Dogmatics*. On the subject of general revelation, he writes the following:

“In its origin all revelation is supernatural. God is always working (John 5:17). That work of God outward began with the creation. The creation is the first revelation of God, the beginning and foundation of all subsequent revelation. The biblical concept of revelation is rooted in that of creation. God first appeared outwardly before his creatures in the creation and revealed himself to them. In creating the world by his word and making it come alive by his Spirit, God already delineated the basic contours of all subsequent revelation. But immediately linking up with the event of creation is the action of providence. This, too, is an omnipotent and everywhere-present power and act of God. All that is and happens is, in a real sense, a work of God and to the devout a revelation of his attributes and perfections. That is how Scripture looks at nature and history. Creating, sustaining, and governing together form one single mighty ongoing revelation of God. No nature poetry has surpassed or even equaled that of Israel. To the devout everything in nature speaks of God. The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. God’s voice is in the great waters. That voice breaks the cedars; it rumbles in the thunder and howls in the hurricane. The light is his garment, the heavens his curtain, the clouds his chariot. His breath creates and renews the earth. He both rains and causes his sun to shine upon the just and the unjust. Herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, indeed, all things come not by chance but by his fatherly hand. The Bible’s view of nature and history is religious and hence also supernatural.”<sup>2</sup>

2. Why does Bavinck believe that creation is the first revelation of God? How does everything in nature speak of God?

Bavinck believes that all of God’s work is His revelation because in all of His work He speaks to us, revealing Himself to us. Creation was the first revelation of God; it was before His Word and before His Son. Creation set up the pattern of God’s revelation; first He spoke the world into existence by His word; then He made it come alive by His Spirit. In the same way, God spoke the Word, and then His Spirit makes the words of the Word come alive in our hearts.

According to Bavinck, everything in nature proclaims that there is a God who creates, sustains and governs. God’s voice is in the seas and the hurricane winds; His causes the rain to fall and the plants to grow. By growing and chirping and hopping and blooming, all creation speaks of the glorious God who made and sustains all things.

---

<sup>2</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Prolegomena*, vol. 1, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 307-308.

## Definitions

---

Theology: The study of God.

General Revelation: God revealing Himself to humans in creation.

Special Revelation: God's Word, the Bible.

Systematic Theology: The presentation of the truths of Scripture in topical order.

Incommunicable Attributes: God's qualities which are unique to Him alone.

Communicable Attributes: God's qualities of which we find some resemblance in humans.

## What I Confess

---

1. As I seek to learn more about God, my attitude is one that depends upon Him to show me who He is.
2. God has shown Himself to me in creation, where I behold His glory in the beauty of the skies and seas.
3. God has more clearly shown Himself to me in His Word, where I learn of His redemptive plan through Jesus Christ.
4. I want to learn more about God, because He is *my* God; my chief goal in life is to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.

## IN-DEPTH LESSON ONE

---

Revelation, or the process of God showing Himself to people, is historical. That is to say, in history, God revealed Himself to people, beginning with Adam. We must remember that God revealed Himself in history, in time, on earth. God revealed Himself to His people in words and in historical acts. For example, God spoke with Adam, and He also showed His power to the Israelites as they were dramatically saved from the bondage of Egypt. These acts of God need no elaboration; they speak for themselves. We know that the flood, another mighty act of God, was a means of redemption for Noah and judgment for the sinful world. The action *itself* was an act of redemption. God's redemptive acts in history speak loud and clear of His supernatural power of salvation.

The brightest and most spectacular work of redemption, the pinnacle of God's mighty acts, is Jesus Christ—His life, crucifixion, death and resurrection. All of the Old Testament acts of redemption point us forward to this greatest act of redemption—Jesus Christ on the cross. Geerhardus Vos said it beautifully 100 years ago, “All Old Testament redemption is but the saving activity of God working toward the realization of this goal, the great supernatural prelude to the Incarnation and the Atonement.”<sup>10</sup>

In history, Christ clearly reveals God to us. He came to declare who God is, but He also served a definite purpose in God's plan of salvation. God spoke in Christ and acted in Christ. Jesus is the Word, but He is also the final Sacrifice. As we'll learn in upcoming lessons, He revealed God to us and He took our place on the cross; He was God in the flesh, but He was made sin for us. He is the way to the Father, but He was made a curse. If you want to see God's redemption, look to Christ. If you want to see God's love, go to the cross!

---

<sup>10</sup>Vos, Geerhardus. *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*. P&R Publishing, Philipsburg, NJ. 1999.



# Getting to Know God

## The Doctrine of God

God refuses to debate the question, “Does God exist?” He does not permit the sinful luxury of treating His existence as a problem in geometry or as a laboratory specimen to be dissected. In the Bible God graciously condescends in many ways to tell us *who* He is. But He never stoops to argue *that* He is. The opening words of the Bible are, “*In the beginning God created...*” (Genesis 1:1). At the very end of Scripture God says, “*if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life*” (Revelation 22:19). In laying down the moral law God says, “*I am the LORD your God...you shall have no other gods before me*” (Exodus 20:2-3). Without apology, with His divinely unique intolerance, God confronts His people saying, “*This is what the LORD says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God*” (Isaiah 44:6). God declares Himself to be who He is.

Everyone believes in a god of some kind. Because we are made in God’s image, we cannot help believing. We must worship and devote ourselves to something—some power, some person, some element of life. We may make a god of human reason, social success, community opinion, material goods, money, country or—and most often—ourselves. In the face of this, God does not defend His existence, but rather calls us to acknowledge Him as He is and as He has made Himself known. The choice here is belief in a man-made god or belief in the self-revealing God. The issue today is as it was on Mount Carmel, “*How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him, but if Baal is God, follow him*” (1 Kings 18:21).

1. God never **STOOPS** to argue **THAT** He **IS**.

2. **EVERYONE** believes in a **GOD** of some kind.

### God Is a Triune God

God is the one God who lives as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. [IN-DEPTH] The Westminster Shorter Catechism describes the doctrine of the Trinity in these words: “There are three persons within the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Spirit); and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.”

To some this statement presents a baffling question of arithmetic, a puzzling juggling of numbers. However, the Christian does not claim to teach that God is one and three in the same sense. The doctrine is indeed a mystery, but it is not a numerical contradiction.

The doctrine of the Trinity means that God is one in one respect, namely in substance or essence. “*Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one*” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Yet the Bible is equally clear in asserting that the one God exists as three distinct persons, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (see Genesis 1:1-2, Mark 2:28, John 1:1-14, John 8:58, Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Philippians 2:9-11 and Colossians 1:19). The threeness of God’s trinitarian life concerns these personal distinctions. When the church confesses that the living God is a triune God, it states that the one life substance, Deity, exists consciously as three persons.

This doctrine of the Trinity is the key to many of the teachings which concern the salvation of humanity. If God is not triune, Jesus Christ would not be God. Without the fact of the Trinity, the Christian could never really celebrate Christmas, for there would be no real incarnation (God in the flesh). If God is not triune, the Holy Spirit would not be God. What would happen then to the strengthening and abiding presence of God in our lives?

The Biblical teaching of the Trinity is not a luxury for a few “deep thinkers” who love to juggle ideas. It is the keystone of Christian truth. Although the Christian cannot fully understand the mysterious depths of God’s trinitarian life, we confess this truth as the foundation of our Christianity. The sinner saved by Christ lives in dynamic fellowship with the one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Christian’s God is great and greatly to be praised.

3. God exists as **THREE** distinct **PERSONS**: Father, **SON** and **HOLY SPIRIT** .

4. This doctrine of the **TRINITY** is the **KEY** to many of the **TEACHINGS** which concern the **SALVATION** of **HUMANITY**.

### An Important Question

The Christian is often asked, “How do you know you are right? There are many conflicting views about God, humanity, sin, Christ and salvation. Are they all equally correct? How do you know for sure that your views alone are correct?” Such persistent questions deserve an honest answer.

In answering we follow the lead given by Christ Himself. He gave content to His views and supported His claims by using the Holy Scriptures. When Peter tried to prevent the Lord from going to the cross, our Savior appealed to the Word of God in the Old Testament, saying, “*But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?*” (Matthew 26:54). When the scribes, experts in understanding the Old

Testament, challenged the Lord’s claim to be God’s Son, Christ appealed to God’s Word in Psalm 82:6. The Word of God was Christ’s last court of appeal, His final authority.

The basis for conviction about Christian truth is the Bible. The standard by which we measure the content of faith is God’s Holy Word. The Holy Writings are the final authority. We can know with certainty because God speaks with certainty.

5. The **BASIS** for conviction about Christian **TRUTH** is the **BIBLE**.

### The Bible

The word *Bible* means “book.” It is the biggest little library in the world. It is divided into two testaments. All the books written before Jesus was born are called the Old Testament. All the books written after His birth are called the New Testament. The Old Testament contains thirty-nine books and the New Testament twenty-seven.

These books are called God’s Word, meaning that God Himself is the author. It is the Word which He speaks. Just as your words originate from yourself, the Word of God comes from God. God’s Word, the Bible, is inspired, that is, “*God-breathed*” (2 Timothy 3:16). God so worked in the minds and lives of the Bible writers that they wrote down God’s thoughts and words. The product of their pens is a divine product.

That is why the Bible is infallible. **Infallible** means that the Bible is incapable of erring. The original writings as recorded in the Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) languages are free from error. Every thought, idea, and word is true. We are sure of this because God’s authorship lies behind the human writers. He controlled their hearts, heads, and hands. What God says is unalterably true. “*God is not man, that he should lie*” (Numbers 23:19). The Psalmist declares, “*the words of the LORD are flawless*” (Psalm 12:6; see also 2 Samuel 22:31, Psalm 18:30 and Proverbs 30:5).

6. Infallible means that the **BIBLE** is incapable of **ERRING** .

7. What **GOD** says is **UNALTERABLY TRUE**.

## The Bible Claims to Be God's Word

Throughout the entire Bible God testifies that He is speaking and writing. There are approximately two thousand places in the Old Testament where we read the phrase "*This is what the sovereign LORD says,*" or phrases like it (Isaiah 7:7, 10:24, 28:16, etc.). God signs His own name to these thoughts, ideas and words. These writings warrant belief simply because they come from God.

Look closely at how Jesus Christ used the Scriptures as God's own Word. Listen to Him as He replied to Satan during His temptations in the wilderness: when tempted to turn stones into bread, He answered, "*It is written, 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'*" (Matthew 4:4). When the devil urged Christ to jump from the pinnacle of the temple the Lord answered, "*It is also written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'*" (Matthew 4:7). When Satan urged Christ to bow down to Him, the Master answered, "*Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only'*" (Matthew 4:10). The Bible regulated the life of our Lord. Jesus refused to do anything which contradicted the Bible. He was convinced it was the very Word of God.

When our Lord's enemies challenged His claim to be God's Son, He turned to the Bible and said, "*scripture cannot be broken*" (John 10:35). Eagerly He walked the way of conduct laid down in the Bible. In the Sermon on the Mount He said, "*Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished*" (Matthew 5:17, 18). Because the Master

viewed the law, the prophets and the psalms as God's Word, He patterned His life to the claims of Scripture.

Paul, the church's first great missionary, believed as Jesus did. Paul said, "*All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness*" (2 Timothy 3:16). As one of the Bible writers, he knew that the Holy Spirit was directing his words, and thus he could claim that his words were God's words. "*When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God*" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Remember this: Paul's writings make up about one half of the New Testament!

8. There are approximately **TWO THOUSAND** places in the **OLD TESTAMENT** where we **READ** the phrase, "***THIS is what the SOVEREIGN LORD says,***" or phrases like it.

9. "*All scripture is **GOD-BREATHED** and is **USEFUL** for **TEACHING** , rebuking, **CORRECTING** and training in **RIGHTEOUSNESS**" (2 Timothy 3:16).*

## The Testimony of the Holy Spirit

Many people, however, do not accept the Bible's claim to be God's inspired Word. They view the Biblical writings as purely human. They think the Bible is subject to all the limitations of error and insight common to humankind. These people act as judges of God's Word. They reject what does not fit into the pattern of their minds. They accept only what agrees with their views.

This fact underscores the need for a special work of the Holy Spirit. Before anyone will bow to the authority of the Bible, they must be worked on by God. This work is called the **testimony of the Holy Spirit**. In this work, God opens the Christian's mind to the evidence in the Bible that-

points to its divine authority. God opens the Christian's ear so that they hear the Bible message as God's own speech. Christ's sheep hear and recognize His voice (John 10).

All people are naturally sinful. They are inclined to resist God's will as made known in the Bible. *"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned"* (1 Corinthians 2:14). Sin-power makes life and its meaning revolve around ourselves. We need the special work of the Holy Spirit to break through this limited circle of our self-centered views. When God breaks through our self-centered worlds, our hearts and minds are opened up to God's Word. This is what Jesus had in view when He said, *"No one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again"* (John 3:3). God must break into our world before we can be convinced that the Bible is God's inspired Word.

Think of the artist. With their sensitive eyes, they catch the austere beauty of the lonely pine. The artistically insensitive see the same tree but no beauty. Or think of musicians. With their sensitive ears, they hear the symmetry and harmony of the score. The musically illiterate have the same sound waves strike their ears but hear only a confusion of noise. God must give us the eyes and ears to see and hear the Bible as His Word.

Therefore, we approach the Holy Writings in the attitude of prayer. We need God's work in our lives. Together with the writer of the Psalms, we pray, *"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law"* (Psalm 119:18).

10. *"The man without the **SPIRIT** does not accept the **THINGS** that come from the **SPIRIT OF GOD**, for they are **FOOLISHNESS** to him, and he **CANNOT UNDERSTAND** them, because they are **SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED**"* (1 Corinthians 2:14).

11. **GOD** must break into our **WORLD** before we can be convinced that the **BIBLE** is God's **INSPIRED** Word.

## Short Answer Essays

1. Explain the fact that the Bible never questions God's existence.

The Bible never questions God's existence, from the first sentence onward (*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,"* Genesis 1:1). It is true that some humans have questioned God's existence, and some are even recorded in Scripture (*"the fool says in his heart 'There is no God,'"* Psalm 14:1 and 53:1). Neither God nor His infallible Word, however, wonders if He exists. His existence is a presupposed fact of Scripture.

2. Read Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 28:18-19, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 Peter 1:2 and Titus 3:3-7.

Explain what these texts tell us about the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:13-17 is the account of Jesus' baptism where we read of God the *Father* speaking, the *Holy Spirit* coming down as a dove, and the *Son* being the object of baptism. Note how Christian baptism also declares the name of the Trinity in Matthew 28:18-19. 2 Corinthians 13:14 is Paul's trinitarian benediction using the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Father and the Holy Spirit. In 1 Peter 1:2, Peter declares the work of the Trinity in salvation: God the *Father* chose His people through the sanctifying work of the *Holy Spirit* and the sprinkling of *Jesus'* blood for obedience. Titus also beautifully reflects the doctrine of the Trinity in 3:3-7, where he declares that our merciful and loving *God* saved us through the washing of the *Holy Spirit* who was poured out on His people through *Jesus Christ* our Savior.

3. Explain why salvation would not be possible if God were not triune.

If God were not triune, Jesus would not be God and there would have been no real incarnation. If Jesus were not God, He could not have had perfect obedience to the Law and He could not have suffered and overcome the terrors of sin, death, the grave and hell. If God were not triune, He would have no Spirit to wash us, regenerate us and dwell in us. Also note that Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 28:18-19, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 Peter 1:2 and Titus 3:3-7 would be irrational texts that speak about some "thing" called the Holy Spirit and some "mere man" called Jesus.

#### 4. What is the Bible?

The word Bible means “book.” It contains the Old and New Testaments, totaling 66 books. It is the inspired Word of God because He is the author (see Psalm 12:6, 18:30, Proverbs 30:5 and 2 Timothy 3:16).

**EXTRA:** “The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience, although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in diverse manners to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God’s revealing His will unto His people being now ceased” (Article I of the London Confession of Baptist Faith, 1689).

#### 5. Describe in your own words what infallible means.

The course’s definition of infallible is “incapable of erring.” That is, there is no possible way that the Scriptures can err, or be in error, because God and His words are always truthful (Psalm 119:160; see also 2 Samuel 22:31). Your student should understand this definition and be able to articulate it in his/her own words.

#### 6. Explain how and why the Bible is our final authority.

The Bible is our highest authority because it is God’s Word to us. Since God is sovereign, what He says is the final authority for us. The Bible is perfect, and we have no other perfect standard with which to measure thoughts, words and deeds. The Bible regulated Jesus’ life, the Bible regulated Paul’s life and the Bible should regulate the life of the church.

**EXTRA:** “We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God, and also because they carry the evidence thereof in themselves. For the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled” (The Belgic Confession, Article V).

7. Can we consider any writings or sayings of humans equal to the Bible? Defend your answer.

We can never regard the words of people over the words of God. The Bible is God's Word which must regulate our lives and actions. This is what the phrase, "Sola Scriptura" means. God's words are perfect and without error, they can be fully trusted. The words spoken by humans are sinful and with error, and cannot always be trusted. Romans 3:4 says, "*Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: 'So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.'*" Be sure to note the following texts: 2 Samuel 7:28, Psalm 19:8, Psalm 33:4, Psalm 119:160, Proverbs 30:5, Romans 3:4, Romans 7:12, 2 Corinthians 1:18 and Revelation 22:6.

**EXTRA:** Martin Luther noted Scripture's authority beautifully in his defense before the Council of the Roman Church at the Diet of Worms in April of 1521. When asked to recant of what he had written, Luther replied, "Unless I am convinced by the testimonies of the Scriptures or by evident reason (for I believe neither pope nor councils alone, since it is manifest they have often erred and contradicted themselves) I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted; my conscience is held captive by the Word of God, and as it is neither safe nor right to act against conscience, I cannot and will not retract anything. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen."

8. Some people say that the Bible is mostly true, but there are some errors in it. How would you respond to this statement?

We pray that your student responds that the Bible is completely true and authoritative. The Bible is also inerrant which means that it is without error. The student should respond to this statement by saying that the Bible is not *mostly* true, it is *totally* true, and there are *no* errors in it. Sometimes there may seem to be tensions or discrepancies between parts of Scripture, a good tool to use when encountering these tough passages is to let Scripture interpret Scripture.

Refer to the above Scripture references for questions 5, 6 and 8.

**EXTRA:** John Piper, Pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, says, "When you find two parts of Scripture that may seem to be in tension with each other, don't make the liberal mistake of jumping to the conclusion that the Bible is inconsistent or self-correcting or in process of moving from enthusiastic error to realistic truth. Instead, picture the things that seem in tension as spoken by a person who means both of them, and regards both of them as true. Then work toward a coherent understanding of them as best you can. This will take you much deeper into the reality of God's truth. And you will honor the divine Author of Scripture."

9. Describe the connection between the Bible and Jesus.

Jesus viewed the Scriptures as His authority (His Father's Word) and the Scriptures view Jesus as their authority. The lesson speaks of Jesus patterning His life after the Scriptures (Old Testament). It would also be helpful to understand that the Scriptures were patterned after His life, because He is the center of all Scripture (John 5:39). Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament Laws and promises, beginning with Genesis 3:15. When He was walking on the road to Emmaus with two disciples, He declared that the entire Old Testament was about Him (Luke 24:13-35; see also Deuteronomy 18:15, John 1:45, Acts 26:22-23, Romans 1:2, 1 Peter 1:10-11 and Revelation 19:10). We cannot give up the fact that Jesus is the "Word" of God and that the Word of God is all about Jesus (John 1:1-2).

10. Explain why many people refuse to acknowledge the Bible as God's inspired and infallible Word (remember what you learned about the testimony of the Holy Spirit; also see 2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

People who refuse to acknowledge the Bible as God's inspired and infallible Word do not have the internal working of the Holy Spirit in their lives to give them a true knowledge of God's glory. Those who reject the Bible are not in Christ and therefore they do not know the things of God in a saving way. An unsaved sinner will never acknowledge the Bible to be God's inspired and infallible Word, because *"the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 4:4). Without the Holy Spirit's internal testimony—God making His light shine in our hearts—we would never have a true knowledge of God's glory (2 Corinthians 4:5-6). Those who are not in Christ do not know the things of God in a saving way (see Isaiah 61:10, John 12:35 & 40, Acts 26:18 and 2 Corinthians 3:13-18).

11. Read Psalm 119:18, Matthew 16:15-17, Romans 8:5-8, 1 Corinthians 2:14 and 2 Corinthians 4:3-6. Describe how these passages relate to what we learned in this lesson about the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Each of these texts proclaims that we are dependent upon God to show us the beauty of His Word. If God sends His Spirit into our hearts, we can know the glory of the Gospel, the things of God and the beauty of His Kingdom. No Spirit, no understanding. No Spirit, only darkness and death.

Psalm 119:18 is a prayer asking God to open the Psalmist's eyes so that he would see wonderful things in the law. Matthew 16:15-17 speaks of Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus replies to Peter, telling him that a human didn't reveal that confession to him, but God the Father. Paul, in Romans 8:5-8, clearly shows the complete antithesis between unsaved sinners (who have their mind set on sinful earthly desires) and saved sinners (who live in the Spirit and have life and peace). The sinful mind is hostile to God and in bondage to sin. In 1 Corinthians 2:14, Paul again pointedly states that the human without the Spirit does not accept—cannot accept—the things of God. The things of God are foolish to the unsaved sinner and cannot be understood by them. As explained in question 11, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 says that the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers to the point that they cannot see the light and glory of the Gospel of Christ.

## Digging Deeper

### 1. Why is the doctrine of the Trinity essential to *your* salvation?

The doctrine of the Trinity is essential to each Christian's salvation because if Christ were not God, there would be no true incarnation. If Jesus were not God, He could not have had perfect obedience to the Law and could not have suffered and overcome the terrors of sin, death, the grave and hell, and by doing so make us right before God and atone for our sins. If God were not triune, He would have no Spirit to wash us, regenerate us, dwell in us and by doing so, making us holy before God. Also note that Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 28:18-19, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 Peter 1:2 and Titus 3:3-7 would be irrational texts that speak about some "thing" called the Holy Spirit and some "mere man" called Jesus rather than our Savior and Lord. This truth is essential for our salvation. Please refer to the Athanasian Creed in Appendix 2 of this course.

### 2. Summarize how the New Testament views the Old Testament. Read the following texts and write two or three paragraphs describing how the Bible shows itself to be God's own Word:

#### Matthew 22:42-46 compared to Psalm 110:1:

Matthew 22:42-46 and Psalm 110:1 — Jesus quotes (and lives) Psalm 110:1, where David says that YAHWEH said to his (David's) Lord, "*Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.*" Jesus is telling the Pharisees that He (the Messiah) wasn't merely a son of David, but He was David's Lord and Master. David, in the Spirit, testified of Christ, his true King. In this text, Jesus in the New Testament declares that David in the Old Testament acknowledged Him as Lord.

#### Luke 4:16-21 compared to Isaiah 61:1-2:

Both texts speak of the Spirit of the Lord being upon His servant. The Spirit-filled Servant preaches good tidings to the poor, proclaims freedom to prisoners, gives sight to the blind and comforts all that mourn. Jesus took Isaiah's prophetic words upon His lips. By doing this, Jesus was saying, "I am the one about whom Isaiah spoke. I am the Anointed one of the Lord who brings freedom, sight, grace and mercy to sinners." He ended His words with, "*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*" (Luke 4:21). Jesus proclaimed that the prophets speak of Him (see Matthew 5:17, Matthew 26:54, Luke 24:26-27 & 44 and Acts 3:18).

#### John 19:24 compared to Psalm 22:18:

When Jesus' clothes were divided and lots were cast for them before His crucifixion, Psalm 22:18 was fulfilled. Even the psalms point us directly to the New Testament; more precisely, our Savior (Luke 20:42 and Luke 24:44).

#### Acts 8:30-35 compared to Isaiah 53:7-8:

In these verses, the suffering of Christ is clearly depicted. When the Ethiopian eunuch read Isaiah, he didn't understand who these verses were speaking about. So Philip, led by the Spirit, explained Isaiah to the eunuch. "*Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news of Jesus*" (Acts 8:35). Again, the New Testament shows us clearly that the Old Testament is from God and points to Christ.

Romans 9:14-15 compared to Exodus 33:19:

Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God told Moses that He would have mercy upon whom He decided to have mercy—it was His sovereign choice. Paul, in Romans, uses God's Word from Exodus to declare that God is just to elect on the basis of His sovereign choice. Paul said of this text that God said these very words to Moses. Thus, Paul saw the Book of Moses to be God's Word.

Hebrews 2:11-13 compared to Psalm 22:22 and Isaiah 8:17-18:

These verses, as the author of Hebrews declares, are the words Jesus speaks to His brothers, or believers. Note the beautiful unity between these three texts, that each is amazingly Christ-centered and viewed as divine. Surely *“the Scripture cannot be broken”* (John 10:35 KJV).

3. Respond to the following statement: “I can prove to an unbeliever that the Bible is God’s inspired Word. If I structure my argument correctly and use excellent evidence, the unbeliever will say in his heart, ‘I do believe that the Bible is God’s inspired Word.’”

See questions and answers 5, 7, 11 and 12. Note especially the Scriptures mentioned in these answers. No matter how structured an argument we give or how much evidence we provide when talking with an unbeliever about the Bible, it is not up to us to get him to say in his heart, “I do believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word.” It is completely the internal work of the Holy Spirit in that unbeliever's heart.

People who refuse to acknowledge the Bible as God's inspired and infallible Word do not have the internal working of the Holy Spirit in their lives who gives them a true knowledge of God's glory. Those who reject the Bible are not in Christ and therefore they do not know the things of God in a saving way. An unsaved sinner will never acknowledge the Bible to be God's inspired and infallible Word, because, *“the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ”* (2 Corinthians 4:4). Those who are not in Christ do not know the things of God in a saving way (see Isaiah 61:10, John 12:35 & 40, Acts 26:18 and 2 Corinthians 3:13-18).

An unbeliever will not accept the things of God just by a Christian explaining them in a good way. The Holy Spirit has to have been already working internally in their heart. It is the Holy Spirit's internal testimony (God making His light shine in our hearts), not a believer's well structured argument or evidence, to get an unbeliever to have a true knowledge of God's glory (2 Corinthians 4:5-6).

All people are dependent upon God to show us the beauty of His Word. If God sends His Spirit into our hearts, we can know the glory of the Gospel, the things of God and the beauty of His Kingdom. No Spirit, no understanding. No Spirit, only darkness and death.

**4. IN-DEPTH LESSON 2 ESSAY:** Describe three attacks on the Trinity about which you may have read or heard. How would you respond to those attacks? Write your observations.

**Students will answer this question differently.** You may hear of many cults or sects who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, or even attacks that the student has heard from one of their own family members, friends or acquaintances. Please use Scripture from this lesson as you answer this essay, and encourage the student to remain steadfast in faith.

## Challenge Questions: Read and Respond

In this lesson, we learned “Just as your words originate from yourself, the Word of God comes from God. God’s Word, the Bible, is inspired, that is, “*God-breathed*” (2 Timothy 3:16). B.B. Warfield (1851-1921), the former principal of Princeton Seminary, wrote about the Greek word for “God-breathed” used in this passage and that word has.

“The Greek word does not even mean, as the Authorized Version translates it, “given by inspiration of God,” although that rendering...has at least to say for itself that it is a somewhat clumsy, perhaps, but not misleading, paraphrase of the Greek term in the theological language of the day. The Greek term has, however, nothing to say of *inspiring* or of *inspiration*: it speaks only of a “spiring” or “spiration.” What it says of Scripture is, not that it is “breathed into by God” or is the product of the Divine “inbreathing” into its human authors, but that it is breathed out by God, “God-breathed,” the product of the creative breath of God. In a word, what is declared by this fundamental passage is simply that the Scriptures are a Divine product, without any indication of how God has operated in producing them. No term could have been chosen, however, which would have more emphatically asserted the Divine production of Scripture than that which is here employed. The “breath of God” is in Scripture just the symbol of His almighty power, the bearer of His creative word. “By the word of Jehovah,” we read in the significant parallel of Ps. xxxiii. 6, “were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” And it is particularly where the operations of God are energetic that this term...is employed to designate them—God’s breath is the irresistible outflow of His power. When Paul declares, then, that “every scripture,” or “all scripture” is the product of the Divine breath, “is God-breathed,” he asserts with as much energy as he could employ that Scripture is the product of a specifically Divine operation.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Why does Warfield called the phrase “given by inspiration of God” clumsy? According to this Warfield, what is the significance of the term “God-breathed”?

Warfield doesn’t prefer the term “inspired” because the original Greek does not connote *inspiring*, but rather that God “breathed” the words of the Scripture. The term “God-breathed” draws attention to the creative, powerful, Divine operation of God in bringing forth Scripture. Furthermore, the term “God-breathed” connotes mystery. The exact meaning of the term cannot be pinned down, diagrammed and analyzed. Neither can a theologian explain the step-by-step process by which the Scriptures were recorded. As Warfield states, “In a word, what is declared by this fundamental passage is simply that the Scriptures are a Divine product, without any indication of how God has operated in producing them.”

<sup>1</sup> B.B. Warfield, *Revelation and Inspiration* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1972), 78-79.

During the time of the Protestant Reformation, John Calvin (1509-1564) was a very influential leader in Geneva, Switzerland. He served as the pastor of a congregation there, and he wrote extensively on the biblical foundations of the Christian faith. His most famous work is his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in which he addresses all major doctrines of the Christian faith. This selection is from Calvin's *Institutes*, and it addresses the concept of the relationship of the Trinity.

*"The relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit"*

Furthermore, this distinction is so far from contravening the utterly simple unity of God as to permit us to prove from it that the Son is one God with the Father because he shares with the Father one and the same Spirit; and that the Spirit is not something other than the Father and different from the Son, because he is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. For in each hypostasis the whole divine nature is understood, with this qualification—that to each belongs his own peculiar quality. The Father is wholly in the Son, the Son wholly in the Father, even as he himself declares: "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" [John 14:10]. And ecclesiastical writers do not concede that the one is separated from the other by any difference of essence. By these appellations which set forth the distinction (says Augustine) is signified their mutual relationships and not the very substance by which they are one. In this sense the opinions of the ancients are to be harmonized, which otherwise would seem somewhat to clash. Sometimes, indeed, they teach that the Father is the beginning of the Son; sometimes they declare that the Son has both divinity and essence from himself, and thus has one beginning with the Father. Augustine well and clearly expresses the cause of this diversity in another place, when he speaks as follows: "Christ with respect to himself is called God; with respect to the Father, Son. Again, the Father with respect to himself is called God; with respect to the Son, Father. In so far as he is called Father with respect to the Son, he is not the Son; in so far as he is called the Son with respect to the Father, he is not the Father; in so far as he is called both Father with respect to himself, and Son with respect to himself, he is the same God." Therefore, when we speak simply of the Son without regard to the Father, we well and properly declare him to be of himself; and for this reason we call him the sole beginning. But when we mark the relation that he has with the Father, we rightly make the Father the beginning of the Son. The whole fifth book of Augustine *On the Trinity* is concerned with explaining this matter. Indeed, it is far safer to stop with that relation which Augustine sets forth than by too subtly penetrating into the sublime mystery to wander through many evanescent speculations.

*The triune God*

Therefore, let those who dearly love soberness, and who will be content with the measure of faith, receive in brief form what is useful to know: namely, that, when we profess to believe in one God, under the name of God is understood a single, simple essence, in which we comprehend three persons, or hypostases. Therefore, whenever the name of God is mentioned without particularization, there are designated no less the Son and the Spirit than the Father; but where the Son is joined to the Father, then the relation of the two enters in; and so we distinguish among the persons. But because the peculiar qualities in the persons carry an order within them, e.g., in the Father is the beginning and the source, so often as mention is made of the Father and the Son together, or the Spirit, the name of *God* is peculiarly applied to the Father. In this way, unity of essence is retained, and a reasoned order is kept, which yet takes nothing away from the deity of the Son and the Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

2. According to Calvin, are the persons of the Trinity distinct from each other? How does Calvin explain that the persons of the Trinity are one God?

Calvin explains that the persons of the Trinity are distinct when they are spoken of together. Calvin quotes Augustine, pointing out that when Scripture speaks of the Father and the Son together, they are distinct persons. However, when the Scripture speaks of the Father, then we are to remember that the Father is God and is in the Son and in the Spirit, and the Son and the

<sup>2</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1 ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1975), 143-144.

Spirit are in Him. Likewise, when Scripture speaks of the Spirit or of the Son, then we are to remember that the Spirit and the Son are in each other and the Father is in the Spirit and the Son while the Spirit and the Son are in the Father. In the Godhead, there is perfect love, perfect unity and perfect fellowship. The Trinity share this “inness” at all times; the members of the Trinity are one and yet distinct. At all times, the members of the Trinity are in each other and yet distinct.

## Definitions

---

Infallible: the Bible is incapable of erring.

Testimony of the Holy Spirit: God, by His Spirit, opens a person’s mind and heart to the evidence in God’s Word which points to its divine authority.

## What I Confess

---

1. God’s Word teaches me the doctrine of the Trinity. I believe that the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God. Yet, there are not three gods; there is only one God.
2. The whole Bible is inspired. This means that the Holy Spirit moved men to write the Scriptures and guided them in their work so that they wrote the Word of God without error.
3. All sixty-six books of the inspired Bible are infallible and worthy of shaping my beliefs and patterning my conduct. The whole Bible is my supreme authority and the standard for my life.
4. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is God’s powerful work in my heart which opens my eyes, ears and heart to the truth of His Word. Without this work I would still be blind to the truth of God.
5. I thank God for giving me the testimony of the Holy Spirit which enables me to accept the Bible’s claim to be the Word of God.
6. As I continue reading and reflecting on God’s Word I prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to lead me into the riches of the inspired Word.

## IN-DEPTH LESSON TWO

---

Interestingly, the word “Trinity” is not in the Bible. The word “Trinity” comes from the Latin word *trinitas*, which means “threeness.” The debate over the doctrine of the Trinity is one that has been going on for nearly 2,000 years. Although the word “Trinity” is not found in Scripture, and although the doctrine has been attacked for many years, the Bible clearly teaches that God exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the middle of the second century A.D., the first form of the Apostle’s Creed was written. The Apostle’s Creed, the shortest of our Christian creeds, speaks of the Trinity: “I believe in God the Father, almighty...I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord...I believe in the Holy Spirit...” Although the Apostle’s Creed doesn’t define the Trinity, the doctrine is clearly seen in it.

The Nicene Creed was written in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. to protect the Christian church from a heresy that taught that Jesus was not God. The heresy also taught that Jesus was of a different substance than God—meaning He wasn’t one with the Father. The Nicene Creed speaks of the second person of the Trinity (Christ) in this way: “We believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father...”

Sometime during the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., the Athanasian Creed was written. This creed was written to defend the church against the same heresy that rocked the church when the Nicene Creed was written. This creed, the longest of the three mentioned here, clearly defines the Trinity, that Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God. “...the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal...in their entirety the three persons are coeternal and coequal with each other.”

The doctrine of the Trinity is attacked today by Jehovah’s witnesses, Mormons, and other cults that claim to be Christian. But the creeds are absolutely right; more importantly, the creeds are based on God’s perfect Word. We must humbly confess with Peter that Christians are, “*chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood*” (1 Peter 1:2). We believe the doctrine of the Trinity not because we fully understand it, but because God’s Word teaches it and His Spirit witnesses in our hearts leading us to God’s truth.



# God Cares for His World

## *The Doctrine of God and His Creation*

### Biblical Facts About Beginnings

God does not need this world. God made it because He wants to display His glory (Psalm 104:31 and Galatians 1:5). The whole universe is the product of God's will. First, God made the heavens and the earth, that is, the whole universe. Then He proceeded to order, arrange and fit everything together into a meaningful whole.

This ordering is taught in the story of the six days of creation as recorded in Genesis 1. God made light. Then, He made a firmament and separated the waters above from the waters below. On the third day, God separated the waters and the dry land. Then, God made the light-bearers in the heavens serviceable for the earth. On the fifth day, God made the fish and fowl. On the sixth day, God created animals and humans. The seventh day was a day of rest.

The six-day interval of creation has been interpreted by Bible-believing scholars in different ways. Some believe that these days were literal days of twenty-four hours each. Others interpret Scripture in a way that allows for a much longer period of time. However, they all believe that Genesis 1 teaches that the universe was created by God.

At this point we must remember some very important Biblical facts, while at the same time allowing for some differences of interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2. First, creation is a specific act of God's will. In the whole process of creation nothing was left to blind chance. Second, God made our world in an orderly, systematic fashion. Third, God used some processes in the work of ordering and creat-

ing our world. Fourth, God definitely stopped His work of creation at a certain time and rested from His creation works. Fifth, humans in the image of God are definitely the pinnacle and rulers of creation.

1. Creation is a **SPECIFIC** act of God's **WILL**.

2. Humans in the image of **GOD** are definitely the **PINNACLE** and rulers of **CREATION**.

### Humanity, the Crown of Creation

God took special care in creating us. We read, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness'" (Genesis 1:26). This solemn declaration of God makes us pause. Humans are unique creatures.

We are God's image. An image of someone is a reflection, a likeness, a certain type of representation. An image is seen on a photograph or in a statue. God made us to be an earthly, creaturely reflection of Himself. God created us to be His representative on this earth. He endowed humans with certain unique qualities. These special qualities help us in our task of representing God and reflecting God on earth.

We had true knowledge of God. With this knowledge and insight we were made to act wisely and declare God's praise. Humans had perfectly sinless lives in Paradise. We were holy. We lived with God on terms of peace. We were righteous. This is the way God made us. With these special gifts we were made to serve, honor and praise God.

For this reason, God set us to work in Paradise. God gave our first parents this command: “*Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground*” (Genesis 1:28). God made humans to rule over this created universe.

As we shall learn later, we, as sinners, lost these unique qualities. Our knowledge of God is now twisted, confused, and perverted. Sinfulness took the place of holiness (see Romans 1:18-23, 28-32). God and unsaved humankind now live in terms of alienation and wrath. In another sense, we are still God’s image. We still try to live as the crown of creation. But in our sin we are doomed to failure. We need the salvation earned by Christ to regain our original dignity and destiny. Precisely because God made us so glorious in His image, He also sent His Son to save sinful humans and restore us to the image of God.

**3. God and unsaved HUMANKIND now live in terms of ALIENATION and WRATH.**

### Creation, Humanity and God’s Companionship

God not only created us; He also decided to live in terms of friendship and companionship with us and creation. God made an arrangement with His people in Paradise. This arrangement is called a covenant. In this covenant God laid down a condition of personal and perfect obedience. Adam and Eve were not to eat of a special tree in the Garden of Eden. This tree was called the “*tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” (Genesis 2:17). God threatened them with a death penalty if they disobeyed. “*For when you eat of it you will surely die*” (Genesis 2:17).

God wanted us to live as His friends and companions. The road along which God’s abiding friendship and love was to be enjoyed was the road of believing obedience. Humans were to obey God just because God is God. We were expected to take God at His word. As long as we did this, we

and the whole of creation that was subject to us would continue to enjoy the loving presence of God. As long as we continued to obey and serve God, we lived in the presence of the Tree of Life.

Because of this arrangement the first man, Adam, is called a *public* person or a *representative* person. Adam was put in the position of acting for every other human being that was to be born (see Romans 5:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:22). If he continued in the ways of obedient faith, all humankind would have continued to live in perfect harmony and friendship with God.

But we know now that Adam did not. He failed. He sinned and in him we sinned also. The first covenant in Paradise was broken. Humanity and creation were separated from God. We were cursed by God for the disobedience of our ancestors. But we must remember that everything in our world started beautifully. Humankind and the rest of creation were good. God delighted in them and called them “*very good*” (Genesis 1:31). Now God delights in us and creation because of the work of Jesus Christ our Lord. Our precious Savior restores us and the created world to abiding friendship with God. Christ Jesus is called the last Adam because He took our place and met all the stipulations of God’s arrangement with Adam in Paradise (1 Corinthians 15:45).

**4. In Paradise, God made a COVENANT with His people; the condition was OBEDIENCE and the penalty was DEATH.**

**5. Adam was put in the POSITION of ACTING for every other HUMAN BEING that was to be born.**

**6. Christ Jesus is called the LAST ADAM because He took OUR place and met all the STIPULATIONS of God’s ARRANGEMENT with ADAM in Paradise.**

## God's Providence

When God completed His work of creation He did not stop working. Every day He continues to take care of the universe which He made. This work is called divine providence. **Providence** is the everywhere-present activity of God whereby He preserves the whole order of creation and governs all things and events unto their appointed end (Genesis 50:20, Deuteronomy 10:14 & 32:8, Nehemiah 9:6 & 19, Psalm 37:23, Proverbs 16:4-9, Job 12:9-10, Matthew 1:22, Matthew 10:29-31 and Romans 11:36).

God continues to preserve His creatures. Psalm 104:27 tells us, *“These all look to you, to give them their food at the proper time.”* In Acts 27:25, we read, *“So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.”* God has placed the sand for a bound of the sea; *“‘Should you not fear me?’ declares the Lord. ‘Do you not tremble in my presence? I made the sand a bound for the sea, an everlasting barrier it cannot cross. The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail; they may roar, but they cannot cross it’”* (Jeremiah 5:22). God works in such a way that every creature continues to live and serve a purpose for the honor of His name.

In addition to preserving His creatures, God governs them. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without God's will (Matthew 10:29). The human proposes but God disposes. In Proverbs 16:9, we read, *“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.”* In the story of Joseph we read of his brothers' envy, greed, intent to kill and final act of selling their brother into slavery. Later, Joseph confessed, *“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives”* (Genesis 50:20). God governs everything from the hairs of our head to actions of our lives.

**7. PROVIDENCE** is the **EVERYWHERE-PRESENT** activity of **GOD** whereby He **PRESERVES** the whole order of

**CREATION** and **GOVERNS** all things and events unto their **APPOINTED END**.

## God's Providence and God's Plan

God's work of preserving and governing all of creation proceeds according to His plan. There is nothing haphazard about this activity of providence. God works all things after the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11). The solemn words of Isaiah 14:24 and 27 echo in our hearts: *“The Lord Almighty has sworn: ‘As I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand ... For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?’”* The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ works according to the plan that He made before the world began (Psalm 148:6, Jeremiah 5:22 and 1 Peter 1:20).

Though it is a great mystery, even evil and human sin are somehow included within this plan, yet God is perfectly good. Job, confident in his misery, exclaimed, *“Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”* (Job 2:10). When speaking of the crucifixion of the Savior, Peter declared under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *“This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to the cross”* (Acts 2:23). Even the greatest crime of all time, nailing God's only begotten Son to the cross, took place according to the plan and purpose of God.

As this fact of life dawns upon our consciousness, we begin to understand the preacher's words of Ecclesiastes 11:5, *“As you do not know how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the maker of all things.”* Christians bow in humble adoration before the wonders and the wisdom of our God.

**8. Though it is a great MYSTERY, even EVIL and human SIN are somehow INCLUDED within this PLAN, yet God is perfectly GOOD.**

## God's Plan and Predestination

The word **predestination** refers to that part of God's plan which concerns the destiny of all sinners. The Bible clearly affirms the reality of this act of God (Romans 8:29, Ephesians 1:11). However, there has been debate throughout the history of the church over what predestination exactly means. The view that we hold to be biblical is that God has been involved in the salvation of His people from before time began.

The Bible teaches that sinners are saved because God elected, or chose, them in Jesus Christ to walk the road of repentance and faith. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 we read, "*But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.*" Ephesians 1 teaches us that God "*chose us in him [Christ] before the creation of the world.*" God saved us "*and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time*" (2 Timothy 1:9). It is God's free and loving choice, unconditional and uninfluenced by any human work, which determines our salvation. Salvation is a gift of God, not of works, that no one should glorify themselves (Ephesians 2:1-10).

God is under no obligation to save everyone. In abusing their freedom, many choose to work themselves deeper and deeper into their predicament of sin. Though there is an eternal background for all events, these sinners are condemned to their own just desserts according to His righteous judgment. "*Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden*" (Romans 9:18). Peter tells us that some stumble at God's Word: "*A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for*" (1 Peter 2:8). We can be assured, however, that every last one of God's own will be saved.

"*For the Lord Almighty has purposed it, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?*" (Isaiah 14:27).

If this is your first encounter with the doctrine of God's sovereign will in salvation, you may find it troubling. However, our election is a great comfort as we know that God chose us first! As we wrestle with these doctrines, we pray for understanding and acceptance of God's plan and sovereign will. In the words of the apostle: "*Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*" (Romans 11:33-36).

**9. PREDESTINATION** refers to that part of **GOD'S PLAN** which concerns the destiny of all **SINNERS**.

**10.** It is **GOD'S** free and loving **CHOICE**, **UNCONDITIONAL** and uninfluenced by any **HUMAN WORK**, that determines our **SALVATION**.

**11.** "*Therefore GOD has MERCY on whom he wants to have MERCY, and he HARDENS whom he wants to HARDEN*" (Romans 9:18).

## Answering Objections

These positions on divine providence and God's all-inclusive and sovereign plan have been objected to in various ways. Here are a few objections and their answers:

If God planned everything and controls everything, then God must be the author of sin. The Bible replies to this objection with emphasis: "*So listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong*" (Job 34:10). We are honest to admit that

we cannot solve this problem of how God's actions are related to man's sinful actions. We do know that God is not the author of sin. God gives energy to His free creatures. He determines their actions in His own uniquely divine and mysterious manner. But it is we ourselves who give our actions their specific sinful quality. Fallen humans bear the sole responsibility for the sinful quality of our deeds. Experience confirms this. All sinners know in their hearts that they were never forced to sin. Whenever they think about sin, they face their own guilt.

Here is another objection: If God determines everything, then our actions are not meaningful. This objection is met by considering that God determines not only the end results of life but also all the means which led to that final result. Think of Paul on the rudderless ship, about to crash on the reefs of the island of Melita (Acts 27). God determined that Paul and his shipmates were to come through alive. But Paul had to use the means. Paul told his fellow travelers not to abandon ship. He advised them to cling to floating boards or to swim. The means of swimming and clinging to the boards was part of the whole picture. All was controlled by God. God made humans responsible beings. God urges, and even commands us to use the means at hand. Therefore, we use the means and leave everything safely in the hands of God. God determines the actions of His creatures in a way which underscores the full responsibility of the creature.

Let us consider one more objection: If God determines each person's destiny, then God does not and cannot freely offer salvation to all sinners and does not really promise salvation to all who come to Christ. However, Scripture is clear on this point: "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*" (Matthew 11:28). "*Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters*" (Isaiah 55:1). "*Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth!*" (Isaiah 45:22). God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. God wants His servants to declare this Gospel to the whole world. Christ Himself said, "*Whoever*

*comes to me I will never drive away*" (John 6:37). Even though we cannot fully harmonize God's sovereign plan with these texts which speak of God's full and free offer of salvation, we as humble believers accept this teaching of God's Word.

These are just a few objections have been raised against the teaching of predestination. Although this doctrine can be difficult to comprehend we still must seek to understand how God's sovereign will is manifest in the lives of His people. Further, we cannot cease striving to accept the *whole* teaching of the *whole* Bible even when we cannot fit everything together and figure it out with our minds. We worship a God who is greater than our minds, whose ways are beyond our comprehension. We confess: "*Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea*" (Job 11:7-9).

12. God is **NOT** the author of **SIN** .

13. We cannot cease **STRIVING** to accept the **WHOLE TEACHING** of the **WHOLE BIBLE**, even when we **CANNOT** fit everything **TOGETHER** and figure it out with our **MINDS**.

## Short Answer Essays

1. Read Genesis 1-2 and briefly describe God as the Creator.

**Students will answer differently**, although certain truths from the texts must be mentioned. Creation was a specific act of God's will—everything happened according to God's plan and will—nothing happened by blind chance. God the Creator is orderly, or systematic, in the way He created His creatures and His world. God as Creator also used some processes in the work of ordering and creating our world. God as Creator stopped at a certain time from His work and rested. Lastly, God as Creator created humans in His image as the pinnacle and rulers of creation. Be sure your student's answer does not reflect "chance" or "accident" in this answer. For more information, please reference the following texts: Psalm 33:6-9, Psalm 95:5, Psalm 104:30, Psalm 148:5, Isaiah 40:26, Jeremiah 10:11-13, Amos 9:6, John 1:1-3, Acts 17:24, Romans 11:36, Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:16-17, Hebrews 1:2 & 10 and Revelation 4:11.

2. What did God make on each day of creation?

Day One: light (day) and darkness (night)

Day Two: the water under the expanse (water) and the water above it (sky)

Day Three: land and sea, vegetation

Day Four: sun, moon and stars

Day Five: birds and fish

Day Six: all other living creatures

3. How are humans unique from the rest of creation?

Humans are unique from the rest of creation because humans are created in God's image. God took special care when creating humans and created them to be God's representatives and reflection on this earth. Humans were the crown of God's creation and were given the responsibility of caring for and ruling over the created universe. Humans were also different from the rest of creation because they could have a true knowledge of, and relationship with, their Creator God.

4. Describe the nature of Adam and Eve's relationship with God prior to the fall.

Before the fall, Adam and Eve had a true knowledge of God. With this knowledge and insight they were made to act wisely and declare God's praise. Adam and Eve had a perfectly sinless life in Paradise. They were holy. Adam and Eve and God lived on terms of peace. They were righteous. This is the way God made them. With these special gifts they were made to serve, honor and praise God.

In the garden, God wanted Adam and Eve to live as His friends and companions. So God made an arrangement with them. This arrangement was called a covenant. In this covenant God laid down a condition of personal and perfect obedience. They were not to eat from the forbidden tree. The road to enjoying God's abiding friendship and love was believing obedience. They were to obey God just because God is God. As long as Adam and Eve continued to obey and serve God, they lived in the presence of the Tree of Life.

5. Explain what “public person” or “representative person” means (Romans 5:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:22).

Adam is called a “public” or “representative” person. This means that Adam was put in the position of acting for every other human being that was to be born (see Romans 5:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:22). If he continued in the ways of obedient faith, all mankind would have continued to live in perfect harmony and friendship with God. As we know from the Bible, however, Adam failed, and humanity was forced to suffer the ravages of a world of sin and the subsequent disconnect with our Creator until the prophecy of the conquest of Satan was fulfilled.

6. In what way is Jesus Christ the Last Adam (Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:45)?

Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:45 clearly speak of Christ as the Last Adam. Paul says that through the first Adam sin and death entered into the world, and through the Last Adam God’s grace came to many. By the sin of the first Adam, death reigned, but through the righteousness of the Last Adam, grace rules. Condemnation came through the first Adam, justification came through the Last Adam. Adam was the representative for all people, Jesus was the representative for “*many*,” or all kinds of people (Romans 5:15). Through the obedience of the Last Adam many will be made righteous.

Adam failed to obey God when put to the test of the Serpent’s temptation, Jesus prevailed when put to the test of the Serpent’s temptation (Matthew 4:1-11).

7. What is providence?

Providence is the everywhere-present activity of God whereby He preserves the whole order of creation and governs all things and events unto their appointed end.

**EXTRA:** The Westminster shorter confession says in Question 11, “God’s works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.”

8. How does Scripture explain providence?

Scripture explains providence in Deuteronomy 10:14 by saying that everything belongs to God. Nehemiah 9:19 says that God did not abandon His people. Psalm 37:23 says that God makes a man’s steps firm. Proverbs 16:4-9 says that the Lord works out everything for His own purposes and ends. Scripture testifies that the Lord even determines the very steps of man. Job 12:9-10 explains how the hand of the Lord is the very life of every creature. Matthew 10:29-31 explains how God cares for us so much that even the hairs of our heads are numbered. Nothing happens apart from the will of the Father. Romans 11:36 concludes with, “*For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.*”

9. Explain the basics of predestination as presented in the lesson.

On the most basic level, predestination teaches that sinners are saved because God elected or chose them in Jesus Christ to walk the road of repentance and faith. This leads us to an understanding of our own deadness to God in sin, and our utter inability to save ourselves. God's sovereign choice alone can rescue us from the deep grave of sin and bring us into the light of God's love. Understand that this doctrine can be challenging for some students when they first encounter it, so be sensitive to your student if you find them wrestling with these truths.

**EXTRA:** The London Confession of Baptist Faith says in Chapter 5: "Those whom God hath predestined unto life, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh: renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit; he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead."

10. What is Christ's role in *your* election? See Ephesians 1:3-9.

It is our hope that in this answer the student gives a brief commentary on this text. The student should be personal, using "I" and "my" in this essay. Ephesians 1:3-9 clearly explains that God chose His people in Christ before the foundations of the world. He did not look down the corridors of time and see who would have faith and give those people salvation. He rather, before anything was created, chose in Christ those whom He would give faith and therefore salvation. It is comforting to the Christian knowing that salvation belongs to the Lord, that our eternal destiny does not depend upon anything that we could do or have done, but in the pure mercy and goodness of God shown in the cross of Jesus Christ. "*He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace*" (Ephesians 1:5-6a). If Christ didn't have anything to do with our election, and rather we did, Jesus' work would be incomplete and in vain. Pastor John MacArthur says it nicely: "When we're saved, who do we thank? God. And when men go to hell, who do we blame? Them. You say, 'I don't understand that.' That's right. And neither do I. The implications are this: if I've been saved, I praise God, I rejoice, I thank Him; and when I go to an unbeliever, I don't say, 'Are you elect?'—like Spurgeon said, pull up their shirt-tail and see if they have an 'E' stamped on their back. I go to them and I say, 'You'll be damned by your unbelief' and I plead with them to 'believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.' And I leave the resolution to God."

11. Some find the doctrine of predestination difficult to accept because they think it implies that people can't be held responsible for their actions. Read the following verses, and explain how you would respond to this hesitation: Luke 13:24, Romans 2:5, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Philippians 2:12-13, 2 Thessalonians 1:8, Hebrews 3:12, Hebrews 4:11 and 1 Peter 4:17.

These texts deal with human responsibility. The student may, and should, have difficulty reconciling the fact that God is completely sovereign yet man is a responsible being. It is not God's fault that many do not believe the Gospel, yet it is His work to give faith to those who are His chosen. As believers, we cannot simply sit in a corner waiting for God to somehow move our hands to help others, yet we cannot take credit for a single good work that we do, as Paul clearly mentions in 1 Corinthians 12:6, Philippians 2:13, and 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

Jesus said that many will try to enter the narrow door and not be able to (Luke 13:24). Paul explains that the unbeliever is storing up wrath against himself because of his stubbornness and unrepentant heart (Romans 2:5). In 1 Corinthians 15:58, the Apostle tells Christians to stand firm and work hard for the Lord, because our *"labor in the Lord is not in vain."* *"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling,"* is Paul's exhortation to the Christian, but he also reminds us that it is God who is working in us to will good things and act according to His good purpose (Philippians 2:12-13). Paul reminds us that God will punish those who do not know Him, those who do not believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ—it is their fault, not God's (1 Thessalonians 1:8). Hebrews 3:12 is an admonishment or exhortation for the Christian to not turn *"away from the living God."* Again, the author of Hebrews exhorts Christians to *"make every effort to enter that rest,"* so that we will not be like the unbelievers within the nation of Israel (Hebrews 4:11). Peter explains that judgment begins with the family of God—if judgment begins in God's house, how much worse will it be for those who are not in His household (1 Peter 4:17)?

## Digging Deeper

1. Using the following verses, explain the creation in your own words: Genesis 1:1-2:3, Exodus 20:11, Nehemiah 9:6, Psalm 33:6-9, Psalm 102:25-26, Isaiah 42:5, Jeremiah 32:17, Acts 4:24, Colossians 1:15-17, Hebrews 11:3 and Revelation 4:11.

These verses tell us that God created all things, at a definite beginning of time, out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). God's powerful Word—Jesus Christ—was spoken and all things were created (John 1:3).

Genesis 1:1-2:3 is clearly the beginning of time, the beginning of all creation. Exodus 20:11 tells us that God created all things in six days. The Levites, in Nehemiah 9:6, declare that God made the heavens, even the highest heavens, along with the stars and the earth and seas on it. The Psalmist says, *"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth,"* and also proclaims that when God spoke, creation came to exist (Psalm 33:6-9). *"In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands"* (Psalm 102:25). Isaiah tells us that God created the heavens and the earth and gives breath and life to humans (Isaiah 42:5). The prophet Jeremiah proclaims that YAHWEH, the LORD, is the powerful Creator of heaven and earth (Jeremiah 32:17). The early church also confessed God as the sovereign Creator (Acts 4:24). Paul confesses that Jesus is the great Creator of heaven and earth—they were *"created by him and for him"* (Colossians 1:15-17). *"By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible"* (Hebrews 11:3). In Revelation 4:11, John writes the song of the

elders, that God is worthy to receive all glory and honor because He created all things, and now all things were created and exist by His will.

**EXTRA:** Matthew Henry comments, “The Bible gives the most true and exact account of the origin of all things, and we are to believe it, and not to wrest the Scripture account of the creation, because it does not suit with the differing fancies of men. All that we see of the works of creation, were brought into being by the command of God” (Commentary on Hebrews 11:3).

2. How do Hezekiah’s prayer (2 Kings 20:1-6), Daniel’s prayer (Daniel 9:4-19) and Nehemiah’s prayer (Nehemiah 1) fit in with the doctrine of God’s providence and plan?

Answers may vary slightly, but there are some common themes concerning providence that we must note. First, these men all prayed for God’s help or deliverance. They were mourning, sorrowful and repentant. Second, these men were all covenant children of God, so He heard their prayers.

Hezekiah’s prayer seemed to “change” God’s mind. Isaiah had told Hezekiah that the LORD said he would die (2 Kings 20:1). After Hezekiah wept bitterly and prayed to God, He heard Hezekiah’s prayer and declared that He would heal him so he would not die (2 Kings 20:5). We must remember that God does not change (Malachi 3:6). Also, Nehemiah “reminds” God of His obligations in his prayer, despite the fact that God clearly does not need reminding.

3. Using John 17, Ephesians 1:3-12, Romans 8:29-30 and 1 Peter 1:2 as well as the appropriate section from this lesson, explain the Biblical doctrine of election.

The student will hopefully begin to appreciate, or appreciate more, the biblical doctrine of election. Remind the student that election is not based on any quality or ability which humans possess, but rather solely in God’s good and sovereign pleasure. Also remember that faith and good works are the result, not the cause, of election (Mark 13:20, John 15:16, Acts 13:48, Acts 18:27, Romans 9:11-13 and 16, Romans 10:20, 1 Corinthians 1:27-29, Ephesians 1:4, 1:12 & 2:10, Philippians 1:29 & 2:12-13, 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, 2 Timothy 1:9 and Revelation 13:8 & 17:8).

John 17 is Jesus’ high priestly prayer, in which He clearly prays for His people, the ones that God has given Him. Note the language: “...that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him...I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours...I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours...Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name...None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction...they are not of the world any more than I am not of the world...I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message...Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am...” Undoubtedly Jesus understands that His work was for the ones that the Father had given Him, the elect, and the elect alone.

Ephesians 1:3-12 also speaks of election. William Hendriksen writes, “The foundation of the church, of its entire salvation from start to finish, hence surely also of its election, is Christ. Paul says, “He...elect-ed us in Him”...In other words, in time the Father blessed us in Christ, just as from all eternity He elect-

ed us in Him...Christ is not only the foundation of the church but its eternal foundation.” Paul, in Romans 8:29-30, is clear, “*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...and those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*”

4. Write down any questions or comments you may have concerning predestination. Carefully study Romans 9:11-29 and interact with your own questions or comments. Write down your thoughts below.

**Each student will react differently to this question.** Some might have serious and sincere difficulties with the doctrine of predestination. Be patient and loving in your instruction.

**EXTRA:** The Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown Commentary: Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible states, “In what sense are we to take the word ‘foreknow’ here? ‘Those whom He foreknew would repent and believe,’ say Pelagians of every age and every hue. But this is to thrust into the text what is contrary to the whole spirit, and even letter, of the apostle’s teaching (see Romans 9:11; 2 Timothy 1:9). In Romans 11:2 and Psalm 1:6, God’s ‘knowledge’ of His people cannot be restricted to a mere foresight of future events, or acquaintance with what is passing here below. Does ‘whom He did foreknow,’ then, mean ‘whom He foreordained?’ Scarcely, because both ‘foreknowledge’ and ‘foreordination’ are here mentioned, and the one as the cause of the other. It is difficult indeed for our limited minds to distinguish them as states of the Divine Mind towards men; especially since in Acts 2:23 ‘the counsel’ is put before ‘the foreknowledge of God,’ while in 1 Peter 1:2 ‘election’ is said to be ‘according to the foreknowledge of God.’ But probably God’s foreknowledge of His own people means His ‘peculiar, gracious, complacency in them,’ while His ‘predestinating’ or ‘foreordaining’ them signifies His fixed purpose, flowing from this, to ‘save them and call them with an holy calling’ (2 Timothy 1:9).”

Peter describes election as “*chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood*” (1 Peter 1:2). In beautiful trinitarian language, Peter simply echoes Paul’s definition of election (Romans 8:29-30 and Romans 9). All three persons of the Godhead are intimately involved with the salvation of the elect.

5. In your own words, defend the doctrine of predestination. Write as if you are explaining and defending it to someone who doesn't believe the doctrine. Use any Scripture references that come to mind.

Using the lesson and Short Essay questions 10, 11 and 12, as well as Digging Deeper questions 3 and 4, respond as necessary.

**EXTRA:** For more information, see R.C. Sproul, Chosen By God, Knowing God by J.I. Packer, Putting Amazing Back into Grace by Michael Horton, or The Potter's Freedom by James R. White.

**6. IN-DEPTH LESSON 3 ESSAY:** Write an essay, song or poem based on Romans 9:10-25 and the Scriptural theme that God is the Potter and we are the clay.

**Students are encouraged to be creative on this essay. If your student writes an exceptional essay, song or poem, please share it with CBI. We share in your joy of a student's God-given gifts.**

## Challenge Questions: Read and Respond

In this lesson, we learned about the providential work of God in creation. The Lesson defined Providence as “the everywhere-present activity of God whereby He preserves the whole order of creation and governs all things and events unto their appointed end.” In the following quote by Herman Bavinck, you will learn more about Providence. Here the term “concurrence” has the same meaning as “everywhere-present.”

“God’s work of preserving needs to be distinguished from that of creation, though they are inseparable. Preservation is a great and glorious divine work no less than creating new things out of nothing. Creation brings forth existence; preservation is persistence in existence. Providence in some form is known to all people, though not as the gracious care of a loving heavenly Father. Providence is not merely foreknowledge but involves God’s active will ruling all things and includes preservation, concurrence, and government. The notion of concurrence was developed to ward off pantheism on the one side and Deism on the other. In the former providence coincides with the course of nature as blind necessity; in the latter providence is replaced by pure chance, and God is removed from the world. In this manner an attempt was made to exalt human autonomy; for humanity to have freedom God must be absent or powerless. God’s sovereignty is viewed as a threat to humanity. Though the doctrine of God’s providence logically covers the entire scope of all God’s decrees, extending to all topics covered in dogmatics, it is preferable to restrict the discussion to God’s relation to his creation and creatures. Providence includes God’s care through the secondary causality of the created order of law as he maintains it. A miracle is thus not a violation of natural law since God is no less involved with maintaining the ordinary order of the natural created world. It is the high respect Christianity has for the natural order of creation that encouraged science and made it possible. The Christian posture toward creation’s order is never fatalism; astrology is appalling superstition. The providence of God does not cancel out secondary causes or human responsibility. Governance points to the final goal of providence: the perfection of God’s kingly rule. While it is correct on occasion to speak of divine “permission,” this must not be construed in such a way as to deny God’s active sovereignty over sin and judgment. While riddles remain for human understanding of providence, this doctrine affords the believer with consolation and hope. God is Almighty Father: able and desirous of turning everything to our good.”<sup>1</sup>

1. A. What is the difference between creation and preservation? Is God’s preservation of creation (or Providence) merely foreknowledge? Explain your answer.

Creation “brings forth existence” while preservation “is persistence in existence.” In other words, creation is the act of God whereby He calls the world into existence, while preservation is the continuous act of God whereby He sustains, governs and rules over His creation. God’s preservation is more than foreknowledge; God does not merely know what will come to pass. He actively governs over and decrees what will come to pass. A God who merely knows what will come to pass is not omnipotent and thus not truly God. Whereas, a God who knows and governs over what will come to pass is both omniscient and omnipotent, in a word, He is sovereign.

<sup>1</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Prolegomena*, vol. 1, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 591.

B. How are miracles not a violation of God's law?

Based upon His character and sovereignty, God makes the laws that rule the world. Then He rules over, preserves and sustains the world by His love and power. Miracles are nothing but acts of God's power, just as Providence is God's sustaining the world by His power. All things that come to pass occur by the hand of God. Therefore, all things that come to pass, are "supernatural."

C. How does Bavinck explain the ultimate goal or purpose of Providence? Does this mean that humans are not responsible for their actions? Why or why not?

Bavinck explains Providence as the final perfection of God's kingly rule. God rules the world as a perfect king, one who is sovereign over all that comes to pass. Men still maintain their responsibility for transgressing the law of God and walking in rebellion to Him. God is not the author of evil, yet as Bavinck states, He is sovereign over sin and judgment.

Calvin believed that the Providence of God is a great comfort to believers, especially in times of great trial. Read the following quote from his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*:

"If anything adverse happens, straightway he will raise up his heart here also unto God, whose hand can best impress patience and peaceful moderation of mind upon us. If Joseph had stopped to dwell upon his brothers' treachery, he would never have been able to show a brotherly attitude toward them. But since he turned his thoughts to the Lord, forgetting the injustice, he inclined to gentleness and kindness, even to the point of comforting his brothers and saying: "It is not you who sold me into Egypt, but I was sent before you by God will, that I might save your life" [Gen. 45:5, 7-8p.]. "Indeed you intended evil against me, but the Lord turned it into good." [Gen. 50:20, cf. Vg.] If Job had turned his attention to the Chaldeans, by whom he was troubled, he would immediately have been aroused to revenge; but because he at once recognized it as the Lord's work, he comforts himself with this most beautiful thought: "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" [Job 1:21]. Thus David, assailed with threats and stones by Shimei, if he had fixed his eyes upon the man, would have encouraged his men to repay the injury; but because he knows that Shimei does not act without the Lord's prompting, he rather appeases them: "Let him alone," he says, "because the Lord has ordered him to curse" [II Sam. 16:11]. By this same bridle he elsewhere curbs his inordinate sorrow: "I have kept silence and remained mute," says he, "because thou hast done it, O

Jehovah” [Ps. 39:9 p.]. If there is no more effective remedy for anger and impatience, he has surely benefited greatly who has so learned to meditate upon God’s providence that he can always recall his mind to this point: the Lord has willed it; therefore it must be borne, not only because one may not contend against it, but also because he wills nothing but what is just and expedient. To sum this up: when we are unjustly wounded by men, let us overlook their wickedness (which would but worsen our pain and sharpen our minds to revenge), remember to mount up to God, and learn to believe for certain that whatever our enemy has wickedly committed against us was permitted and sent by God’s just dispensation.”<sup>2</sup>

2. A. Why does Calvin say that God’s providence is a comfort to Christians in times of trial?

When we know that all things—even the difficult and terrible things in life—come from the loving hands of our heavenly Father, we are comforted, for all these things are working for our good. What greater comfort is there than knowing that no matter what happens, our good is accomplished?

B. How does knowledge of God’s providence keep us from bitterness?

We do not deny that men sin against us, injustice is all over the world, and sometimes we are greatly wronged. However, when we grasp that God is in control of all things, sovereignly working them for our good, then we do not hold grudges or harbor bitterness toward “enemies” because God’s will is still being accomplished. This is how David could recognize that he was wronged by a man, but the man was prompted by God. Similarly Joseph was treated unjustly by his brothers, but he saw that God meant it for good. Calvin also mentions Job who was stripped of all that he loved or owned, but he still blessed the name of the Lord. Job knew that ultimately the Lord took those things away from him. Nothing happens outside of God’s control, and nothing happens that does not work for the good of those who love Him. Christians are prevented from bitterness knowing that they cannot be bitter against the hand that is working them into the image of His Son.

<sup>2</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1 ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1975), 220-221.

## Definitions

---

Providence: The everywhere-present activity of God whereby He preserves the whole order of creation and governs all things and events unto their appointed end.

Predestination: The part of God's plan which concerns the destiny of all sinners.

## What I Confess

---

1. There are many questions about the origin of the world which the Bible does not answer. I do not know just how God made everything, nor do I know just when God created the world. But I know that the record of Genesis 1 and 2 is historically correct. It is a record of what God actually did at the beginning of this world.
2. The facts discovered by scientists of various kinds do not contradict the truths contained in the Bible. This does not mean that I know all about science or the Bible. But I do know this: God's revelation in the Bible and God's revelation in nature and history never contradict each other. My God and Father is a God of truth whenever and wherever He speaks.
3. As a creature I was made in God's image and likeness. I was made to reflect God on a creaturely level. I was blessed with a perfect nature. In my sin, however, I lost these unique gifts. I can now only be the true image of God through Jesus Christ my Lord.
4. In the Garden of Eden, God made with my first parents an arrangement called a covenant. God willed man to enjoy a life of blessed fellowship with Him in the way of obedient faith. I confess that I fell in Adam and can only be received back into God's loving friendship in Jesus Christ.
5. I believe that God works to take care of His whole creation. This activity of God is called His providence. It includes the act of preserving the world and the act of governing all things unto the praise of the glory of His grace.
6. God never works by chance. He fashioned a plan from before the foundations of the world. In sovereignty, wisdom, love and righteousness, God works everything out according to the counsels of His will.
7. God's plan for sinful man includes the election unto salvation of some sinners in Jesus Christ. These sinners are no better than any others by whom God passes. God chose them just because He loved them in Christ. I believe I am one of those whom God has elected in Christ. God and His free grace are the determining fact in my life as a saved sinner.
8. Even though I cannot figure out God's ways with His world, I shall humbly follow the teachings of His Word. As a saved sinner, I shall declare the glorious Gospel of salvation so that others may come to know this wonderful God and His salvation. Rather than arguing with God when I cannot understand His ways, I will continue to pray for grace that I may adore and serve Him all the days of my life.
9. In trying to answer the objections raised to the Christian faith, I shall try to discover answers contained in the Bible. In my intellectual struggles, I will work and pray so that every thought may be brought into the captivity of Jesus Christ my Savior and Lord.

## IN-DEPTH LESSON THREE

---

R. C. Sproul explains predestination as follows: “In the case of the elect, God intervenes to positively and actively work grace in their souls [regeneration] and bring them to saving faith. He unilaterally regenerates the elect and insures their salvation.”

Romans 9 is a weighty chapter in Scripture that explains God’s sovereign choice. Paul writes, “*Yet, before the twins [Jacob and Esau] were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls—she was told, ‘the older will serve the younger.’ Just as it is written: ‘Jacob have I loved, but Esau I hated.’<sup>1</sup> What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’ It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy*” (Romans 9:11-16).

We do well to remember how God elected, or chose, Israel, rather than the other strong and prosperous nations (Deuteronomy 7:6ff, 9:4-5). Election designates the sovereign, merciful and gracious character of God’s calling of Israel, rather than His being motivated by the object of election. That is to say, God’s sovereign choice of election is never motivated by the person He is electing, but by His sovereign and perfect will through Christ. The same can be said for God’s sovereign electing of Jacob rather than Esau, as well as His people today. We cannot argue with God’s plan of predestination, as Paul writes, “*O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, ‘Why hast thou made me thus?’ Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?*” (Romans 9:20-21 KJV).<sup>2</sup> Verses 22-23 even go on to say that God was patient with the objects of His wrath who were “*prepared for destruction*” (the reprobate) so that His fury and power might be known. To make the riches of His glory known, His patience was seen by “*the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory*” (the elect). Truly God is sovereign in His choice; let us bow before our Maker.



# Enter the Enemy

## *The Doctrine of Humanity*

There is an enemy of God. He sees the beauty of God's creation and hates it. Because he hates God, this enemy sets out to destroy God's work. At all costs, he wants to drive a wedge between God and humanity.

### The Enemy Identified

The enemy is Satan. His name means “*adversary*” (1 Peter 5:8). He is also called the devil. This name means “*accuser*” (Revelation 12:10). There are many other titles given to him in the Bible. He is called the Dragon, the Evil One, the Prince of this World, the Angel of the Bottomless Pit, Belial, Beelzebub, the Prince of the Powers of the Air, the God of this Age and Apollyon (Revelation 20:2, 1 John 3:12, John 12:31, Revelation 9:11, 2 Corinthians 6:15, Matthew 10:25, Ephesians 2:2 and 2 Corinthians 4:4).

Satan is a fallen angel. We know very little about him before his fall into sin. Jude, verse 6, speaks of angels that have abandoned their proper sphere of activity. Rebellion against God appears to be the core of Satan's sin. The rebellious enemy continues to work evil with us and our world. This enemy possesses rare talents, power and knowledge (Matthew 8:29; Mark 1:24). Christ Jesus called him a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies (John 8:44). Satan fired hatred toward Jesus and put treason into the heart of Judas (John 13:27). He is the chief of an army of evil spirits.

1. The name **SATAN** means **ADVERSARY**. He is also called the **DEVIL**, which means **ACCUSER**.

### The Enemy's Strategy

The story of the devil's first invasion into our world is found in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve listened to the lies of Satan. In Paradise, the devil established his foothold and ever since continues his clever work of destruction.

Satan twisted God's word. In this way, he worked Eve and Adam into a position where they no longer believed God's word and obeyed it. It went like this:

God had given Adam a special command: “*You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die*” (Genesis 2:16-17). God wanted to test His creatures. God wanted us to obey His word without question, in freedom and joy. God gave this command for our own good. As long as we walked the road of obedience, we would live in happy companionship with God.

“*‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil’*” (Genesis 3:4-5). In this way the father of lies schemed to make Eve doubt God's Word. Once this seed of doubt was sown in her mind, the rest of the road to sin was easy. Eve then saw the tree, desired to eat its fruit because it appealed to her, and finally ate the fruit.

The enemy established his foothold. Sin, disobedience to God's will, made its entry. Eve lured Adam into sin. Both of them then began to run away from God. They were ashamed of their

nakedness. The beauty of their lives was changed to ugliness. The love in their lives was turned to shame. Their joy was lost and terror took its place.

Unbelief, refusing to take God at His word, lies at the root of all sin. Once Satan works sinners into a position where they let go of God's Word, he gains a big victory. This is the enemy's strategy. He still twists God's Word and makes it sound unjust and unreasonable. We must listen anew and afresh to God's Word. Only as we obediently accept God's Word can we escape the devil's wicked plans.

2. **UNBELIEF**, refusing to take **GOD** at **HIS WORD**, lies at the root of all **SIN**.

## God Is Not Mocked

*"Do not be deceived,"* said Paul, *"God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows"* (Galatians 6:7). Adam and Eve sowed sin; they reaped God's righteous judgment. Moses knew this too. *"God is not man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?"* (Numbers 23:19). In holy anger and righteous judgment the good and loving Creator keeps His word. He said, *"For when you eat of it you will surely die"* (Genesis 2:17). And they died!

Humanity was cut off from God's loving companionship. This is *spiritual* death. Filled with fear, Adam and Eve hid from God. The first sinners hid among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:8). Modern sons and daughters of Adam and Eve hide themselves in different ways. *"Dead in...transgressions and sins,"* they fearfully hide themselves and are unable to respond to God's loving search for them (Ephesians 2:1).

Humankind was cursed with *physical* death. *"For dust you are and to dust you will return"* (Genesis 3:19). Every funeral procession seen on our streets is a grim testimony to the truth and righteousness of God. *"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin,*

*and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned"* (Romans 5:12).

The worst kind of death is *eternal* death. This is the final, unchangeable separation from God in the punishment of hell. This place of final punishment is described in the Bible by many symbols. Hell is the place of *"unquenchable fire," "blackest darkness," "fiery furnace," "lake of burning sulfur,"* where *"their worm will not die"* and *"the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matthew 3:12, Jude 1:13, Matthew 13:50, Revelation 20:10, Isaiah 66:24 and Matthew 25:41). It is the place of unspeakable misery and sorrow. It is the end of the road for all who do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Death in this threefold sense is the wages of sin. It is this kind of death, justly deserved by sinners like ourselves, that Jesus died for sinners. *"For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:17). God does not leave sin unpunished. He punishes it in the life of each sinner or in the life of the sin-bearer, Jesus Christ.

3. The punishment for **SIN** is three-fold death:

1. **SPIRITUAL** death cuts us off from God's friendship.
2. **PHYSICAL** death returns us to the dust.
3. **ETERNAL** death is final separation from God in hell.

## Adam, Eve and You

**W**hat happened in Paradise concerns you; Adam and Eve were our first parents. From them we inherit our sinful natures; like begets like. As a parent you pass on certain physical traits to your children. Think of your child's eye color. To us, their children, Adam and Eve passed on a sinful,

selfish way of life. This is what we call inheriting the pollution or corruption of sin.

For this reason our children are born with a “me-first” attitude toward life. Just watch them fight over their toys. In the light of this inheritance from our first parents, we can understand the “give-me-the-biggest-piece” attitude of so many in our world. A bad tree brings forth bad fruit. Jesus had this in mind when He said to Nicodemus, “*Flesh gives birth to flesh*” (John 3:6). David, sadly thinking about his own sin, said, “*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me*” (Psalm 51:5).

But there is more. Adam was a public person; he represented us. God made an arrangement called a covenant with Adam. In his action of eating or not eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam was acting in our place, for us, for every human being. Just like our duly-elected senators represent us in the Senate chamber, so God chose Adam to represent us in Paradise.

Because Adam was our representative, his guilt is reckoned to be our guilt. Adam’s worthiness to be punished comes to us. Since he acted in our place, we are held chargeable with his sin. This truth is plainly taught in Romans 5 and in 1 Corinthians 15. In these chapters we read of a special comparison between Adam and Christ. Just as Adam acted for us, so Christ acted for sinners. It is this representation in Adam which brings sin into our lives. It is this representation in Christ which gives salvation in the way of faith. What happened in Paradise is important. It explains much about our sinful lives.

**4. From ADAM and EVE, we inherit our SINFUL natures.**

**5. Since Adam was our REPRESENTATIVE in paradise, his GUILT is reckoned to be OUR guilt.**

## Our Present Predicament

**W**e sinners are in a bad way. We are much worse off than we often imagine. Too many people fool themselves by thinking they are better in God’s sight than they really are. The Bible speaks in clear language:

In Genesis 6:5 and 8:21, we read that the thoughts of human hearts are continuously evil, from youth up. Jeremiah 17:9 tells us, “*the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.*” Paul speaks clearly in Romans 8:8, “*Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.*” The mind of the unsaved sinner “*does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so*” (Romans 8:7). There is no mistaking the language of Romans 3:12, “*All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.*” And all this describes you as you are in this world without the work of Jesus Christ.

This means that all people are totally depraved. Every part of our lives is sinful. Our thoughts, our feelings, and our wills are perverted. Of course, we are not as bad as we could be. The Bible teaches us that some sinners do relatively good things. But this good is not pleasing to God. **Total depravity** means that there is not an area in our lives where we do a single work that is thoroughly pleasing to God. Without Christ we are dead in trespasses and sins, completely unable and unwilling to please God.

Such a fact must be faced. At this point we cannot argue with God or present our excuses. Sinners must stop fooling themselves, acting as if life is not as bad as the Bible says it is. We must learn to pray as the publican prayed in the temple. He hardly dared to lift his eyes heavenward. Brokenhearted, he prayed, “*God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*” Of this man who admitted his guilt, Jesus said, he “*went home justified before God...he who humbles himself will be exalted*” (Luke 18:14).

6. **TOTAL DEPRAVITY** means that there is **NOT** an area in our **LIVES** where we do a **SINGLE WORK** that is thoroughly pleasing to **GOD**.

## The First Gospel

As we know, God didn't leave humans in their guilt and misery. Adam and Eve sinned, and although the wages of sin is death, God graciously proclaimed redemption even in the middle of judgment. In Genesis 3:15, we read of a blessing in the midst of God's curse on the serpent: "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*" This promise is what we often call the *proto-evangelium*, or first Gospel. The curse of the serpent's head being crushed would itself later be an act of blessing, because through the crushing of Satan and his power the woman's descendants (God's elect) would be rescued from the clutches of Satan and his dominion by the Offspring (Jesus Christ). This redemptive act is also a deliverance from sin and its penalty. God told Adam and Eve that there was hope—He promised that these things would certainly happen.

Adam and Eve had broken the covenant relationship between themselves and God, but God graciously restored it. Man had sinned and merited death, but God acted graciously and promised life through Eve's offspring, or Seed. Adam and Eve deserved to be condemned to hell as covenant breakers, but God, even though they had just sinned, promised them a Deliverer who would cancel the work and power of the serpent. This is how we define **grace**: God's favor when we deserve the opposite. Grace is not simply unmerited favor, it is *demerited* favor. It would be like you giving a large sum of money to your enemy who hates you and tries to kill you. Christ died for the ungodly; He died for His people even though they hated Him (Romans 5:6 and Ephesians 2:1-6). This is the glorious Gospel of sweet grace; even though we were full of sin and hatred towards God, He saved us through the work of His Son.

7. The **FIRST GOSPEL** is: "*I will put **ENMITY** between **YOU** and the **WOMAN**, and between your **OFFSPRING** and hers; he will crush your **HEAD**, and you will strike his **HEEL***" (Genesis 3:15).

8. Grace is **GOD'S** favor when we deserve the **OPPOSITE**.

## The Covenant of Grace

The promise of Genesis 3:15 is the beginning of God's covenant of grace. This covenant is one in which God graciously gives Himself and all His blessings to His elect. The **covenant of grace** may be defined as the partnership God establishes with His people to carry out His kind, gracious purposes. The promise in this covenant is, "*I will be their God, and they will be my people...they will all know me...I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more...*" (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

To be sure, we don't learn very much about God's promise in Genesis 3:15. All Adam and Eve knew is that there would be a Seed of the woman who would conquer Satan while being bruised by him. Note also Adam's response to God's promise: "*Adam named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all the living*" (Genesis 3:20). Here Adam displays his faith in the promise of God. God told Adam that he would die if he disobeyed. Adam disobeyed and God then promised a Deliverer who would rescue humans from sin and death. Adam believed God's promise and showed his faith by naming his wife Eve, which means life, or mother of the living.

9. God's promise in the **COVENANT** of grace is, "*I **WILL BE** their **GOD**, and **THEY** will be **MY** people.*"

Notice also how God covered Adam and Eve with garments of skin (Genesis 3:21). God graciously covered their shameful nakedness, showing them that He intended to provide a remedy for their sin-

ful condition. It was a sign that confirmed God's purpose: He would do what was necessary to cover humanity's shameful condition and bring them back into fellowship with Him. This text shows us that salvation comes from the Lord. This skin-covering points us forward to the robe of righteousness that Jesus obtains through His death to cover the sins of His people. Isaiah proclaims this in chapter 61:10, "*I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness...*"

As we progress through Bible history, we learn a little more about this covenant of grace. In Genesis 15-17 we learn of Abraham's story. God says to him, "*this is my covenant with you: you will be the father of many nations...I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you*" (17:5-7). As redemptive history moves forward, God reveals His covenant to Moses (Exodus 19:5), David (2 Samuel 7:14), and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:33). At the communion-supper which Jesus celebrated with the disciples before His death, Jesus said while offering wine, "*this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins*" (Matthew 26:28). Although this covenant differs in form, it is one covenant, in unity, from Adam until today, and until Jesus returns. Adam was saved by faith in God's promise, Abraham was saved by faith in God's promise and we are saved by faith in God's promise—Jesus Christ.

10. The **COVENANT** of grace, although it differs in **FORM**, is **ONE** covenant, in **UNITY**, from Adam until **TODAY** and until **JESUS** returns.

Because Adam failed, all humans are by nature covenant-breakers. But God didn't leave Adam and Eve in their sin, in their covenant-breaking state. He graciously promised a Deliverer. We

know this Deliverer is the Last Adam, Jesus Christ. Jesus perfectly obeyed God and His covenant demands where Adam failed.

When Satan tempted the first Adam, he gave in. When Satan tempted the Last Adam, He prevailed (Matthew 4:1-11). Jesus is the only perfect covenant-keeper. And not only did Jesus obey the Father, He also paid for the sin of God's children. He obeyed and paid. Jesus' perfect obedience brings believers into the covenant of grace. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you are in a gracious and loving covenant relationship with God, and nothing can ever change that, because Jesus is the perfect Savior. This covenant, the covenant of grace, is unbreakable (Psalm 89:34). In the covenant of grace, only Jesus' obedience merits anything with God and only His death can pay for sins. It is all about Jesus and His perfect obedience!

11. **ADAM** failed to keep God's covenant, **JESUS** prevailed.

12. Jesus' **PERFECT OBEDIENCE** brings **BELIEVERS** into the **COVENANT** of grace.

## Short Answer Essays

1. How is Satan described in 1 Peter 5:8 and 2 Corinthians 11:14?

Satan is described as our enemy who prowls around looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). He also is described as masquerading as an angel of light.

2. How did Satan tempt our first parents in the Garden of Eden? Does he still tempt people that way? Explain and provide two or three examples.

Satan tempted our first parents in the Garden of Eden by twisting God's words around, lying and making God seem unjust and unreasonable. He worked Adam and Eve into a position where they no longer believed and obeyed God's word. The devil surely still tempts this way. Students' examples will vary. Be sensitive to their answers.

3. What special punishments did God assign to man and woman in Genesis 3:16-19?

Eve's punishments were that she would have pain in childbearing and that she would desire her husband who ruled over her. Adam's punishments were that with sweat and toil he would work the thorny and thistly ground for food.

4. List and explain the two ways Adam and Eve died when they sinned.

Adam and Eve died spiritually when they were cut off from God's loving companionship. Adam and Eve also died physically, because now death was inevitable—they surely would someday die and return to the dust.

5. Explain Psalm 51:5 as it relates to the Fall.

Because of the Fall, all humans are now born sinful. Psalm 51:5 says that we are sinful from time our mother conceived us. (This is called original sin.)

**EXTRA:** Augsburg Confession: “Also they [Scriptures] teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost. They [Scriptures] condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ’s merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.”

6. What does total depravity mean? What Bible verses is this doctrine founded upon?

Total depravity means that there is not an area in our lives where we do a single work that is thoroughly pleasing to God. Without Christ we are dead in trespasses and sins, completely unable and unwilling to please God.

The following verses speak of total depravity:

Genesis 6:5—*“The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.”*

Genesis 8:21—*“The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.”*

Jeremiah 17:9—*“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”*

Romans 3:12—*“All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”*

Romans 8:7-8—*“the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup>Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”*

7. Can someone who is not saved do “good” things that please God? Read Romans 8:5-8 and explain.

Someone who is not saved cannot do “good” things that please God. An unsaved person can do good things, but they are not pleasing to God. Romans 8:5-8 says that the sinful man has his mind set on what the sinful nature desires, not on what God desires. The mind of a sinful man is hostile to God, it is death. Verse 8 makes it very clear: *“Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”* Hebrews 11:6 says that *“without faith it is impossible to please God.”*

8. What is the *proto-evangelium*?

Proto-evangelium means, “first Gospel.” The first Gospel was given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15. In this verse we read of a blessing in the midst of God’s curse on the serpent: *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*

The curse of the serpent’s head being crushed would itself later be an act of blessing, because through the crushing of Satan and his power, the woman’s descendants (God’s elect) would be rescued from the clutches of Satan and his dominion by the Offspring (Jesus Christ). This redemptive act is also a deliverance from sin and its penalty. God told Adam and Eve that there was hope—He promised that these things would certainly happen.

9. Did Adam believe God’s promise of a deliverer? How do you know?

Yes, Adam did believe God’s promise of a deliverer. Adam’s response to God’s promise is proof of his faith, *“Adam named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all the living”* (Genesis 3:20). Here Adam displays his faith in the promise of God. God told Adam that he would die if he disobeyed. Adam disobeyed and God then promised a Deliverer who would rescue humans from sin and death. Adam believed God’s promise and showed his faith by naming his wife Eve, which means life, or mother of the living.

10. Compare the temptation of Adam (Genesis 3:1-13) to the temptation of Christ (Matthew 4:1-11).

A. How are they the same?

The two temptations are the same in that the devil used the same tactics to tempt both Adam and Jesus—He twisted God’s Word around and lied, while trying to get right at the core of the human desire.

B. How are they different?

The major, and hopefully obvious, difference is that Adam fell into Satan’s temptations and Jesus resisted the devil. Jesus could because He was God and God cannot sin. Adam failed, but Christ did not fail.

11. Explain the covenant of grace according to Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:8-13.

The covenant of grace is the partnership God establishes with His people to carry out His kind, gracious purposes. As we progress through Bible history, we learn more and more about this covenant of grace. God reveals more of His covenant to men like Abraham, Moses, David and Jeremiah. According to Jeremiah 31:31-34, this covenant would one day be written upon hearts rather than on tablets of stone. Although this covenant differs in form throughout the Old Testament, it is one covenant, in unity, from Adam until today and until Jesus returns.

According to Hebrews 8:8-13, in the New Covenant, just as in the Old Covenant, there is a law; however, the law was external (tablets) in the Old Covenant. In the New Covenant, it is written upon the believer's heart. The Old Covenant was weak because it was breakable, the New Covenant is everlasting because it is not breakable. The New Covenant includes forgiveness of sins and holds a promise that God will be the God of His people (Hebrews 8:10).

## Digging Deeper

1. Write an essay using Scripture to refute the following false doctrine: Humans aren't born sinners, they merely sin by imitating their parents and because their environment forces them to sin.

The Bible clearly teaches that we are sinners from the moment of conception (Job 14:4, Psalm 51:5 & 58:3, Romans 5:12 and Ephesians 2:3). We may perhaps pick up sinful habits from our parents, friends or surroundings, but they are not to blame for our sin. This is key: We sin because we are sinners; we aren't sinners because we sin.

**EXTRA:** The Westminster confession summarizes it pointedly: "They [Adam and Eve] being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation" (Chapter VI.III).

2. Explain how Adam's sin affects you. Include in your answer the doctrine of total depravity. Also be sure to use as many Bible verses as you can think of.

The student should show a firm understanding of how Adam's sin affects them. Adam was our representative, meaning that Adam was put in the position of acting for every other human being that was to be born (see Romans 5:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:22). So when he sinned, it affected all of humankind for all of history. Because of Adam's sin, all humans are now born sinful. Hopefully your student will be familiar with the term original sin as well as the term total depravity as discussed in the lesson and will be incorporating them into this essay.

This question is designed to help our students move away from the concept that people are basically good. If you find that they are struggling with that idea, guide them to Paul's quote of Psalm 14:1-3 in Romans 3:10-18, "*There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God...there is no one who does good, not even one...there is no fear of God before their eyes.*"

**EXTRA:** Note Louis Berkhof's words on total depravity, "This does not mean that every man is as bad as he can be...but simply that the inherent corruption extends to every part of man's nature, and that there is in him no spiritual good, that is good in relation to God, at all, but only moral perversion (John 5:42, Romans 7:18 & 23, Romans 8:7, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 4:18, 2 Timothy 3:2-4, Titus 1:15, and Hebrews 3:12)."

3. In your own words, illustrate how the skin-coverings of Genesis 3:21 point forward to the work of Jesus Christ. Use the following verses to guide your answer: Leviticus 17:11, Psalm 132:9 & 16, Isaiah 61:10, Romans 13:14, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 1:14 and Hebrews 9:22.

The skin-coverings of Genesis 3:21 point forward to the blood sacrifices which would take place in the temple as an offering for sin (see Leviticus 17:11 which speaks about blood-sacrifice as an offering for sin). Ultimately, they point forward to Christ's blood sacrifice on the cross which brought us forgiveness and redemption (see Colossians 1:14, which references Leviticus 17:11). Hebrews 9:22 clearly states that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

The garments in Genesis 3:21 also point forward to what Psalm 132:9 & 16 declares about the clothing of God's people—spiritual clothing of righteousness and salvation that God provides. Isaiah 61:10 also speaks of the divinely provided garments of salvation. Again, the Lord God is the giver of these wonderful clothes. Then, in the New Testament, Paul tells the believers in Romans 13:14 to put on the Lord Jesus Christ as spiritual clothing. And in Galatians 3:27, Paul declares that if we have been baptized into Christ, we have "*put on Christ.*"

The theme that clearly comes through in these texts is two-fold. On the one-hand, note the imagery of clothing—in the Garden after the Fall, God physically provided Adam and Eve with skin-clothes. As we move forward in redemptive history, we are pointed back to the skins and forward to Christ when the psalms and the prophets tell us about salvation and righteousness being a garment. Bringing the concept into the New Testament, Paul tells us to put on Christ. On the other hand, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Although Genesis 3 never explicitly states that blood was shed, animal skins were provided as clothing. Leviticus declares that animal blood brings forgiveness, albeit temporarily (7:11). The New Testament clearly states that Jesus' blood brings us eternal salvation and forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14).

So we can learn from the above texts that the skin-coverings point us forward to two things: clothing of righteousness and forgiveness of sins through shed blood. And faith in Christ gives us both, by the grace of God.

4. Using the following verses, describe the covenant of grace ( In your answer, be sure to clarify what the covenant of grace means *for you*). Genesis 17:7, Jeremiah 32:38-40, Ezekiel 34: 30-31, Romans 11:27, 2 Corinthians 6:16 and Galatians 3:16-29.

The covenant of grace is the partnership God establishes with His people to carry out His kind, gracious purposes, revealed throughout the story of Scripture, culminating in Christ's ultimate act of redemption. Although this covenant differs in form, it is one covenant, in unity, from Adam until today and until Jesus returns.

Genesis 17:7 is God's declaration to Abram that He would establish His everlasting covenant to Abraham's children and their children after them. Jeremiah 32:38-40 is the covenant promise of God, where He states that He will be the God of His people. They will always fear Him along with their children after them. God's covenant with His people is everlasting, and includes His eternal goodness and love to them, for He says, "*I will rejoice in doing them good.*" Ezekiel 34:30-31 is YAHWEH, the covenant God, declaring that His people are the sheep of His pasture and He is their God. Romans 11:27 shows us that the covenant includes forgiveness (removal) of sins. 2 Corinthians 6:16 explains the promise of the covenant, "*I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.*" Galatians 3:16-29 ties the seed of Abraham to the New Testament believers. Specifically, Paul says, Abraham's Seed is Christ. But if we have faith in Jesus Christ, we, too, are Abraham's seed (3:29). Therefore, in Christ, when we read "*Abraham's seed,*" we must not think of merely physical descendants, but spiritual descendants: those from all nations who believe in Jesus Christ. In turn, believers are Eve's offspring as well.

**EXTRA:** Note that this everlasting covenant isn't a covenant that favors a certain people group or nation, but, in Christ, people from all nations are included in God's gracious covenant. The student should rejoice in the fact that the covenant promise is that God is our God and we are His people.

**5. IN-DEPTH LESSON 4 ESSAY:** Explain the biblical concept of the bondage of the will (total inability).

The student should explain the biblical fact that all humans apart from Christ are slaves to sin (John 8:34). Everyone who is not a Christian serves nothing but sin, as Paul says to Titus, *“At one time we too were foolish...enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures...”*

**EXTRA:** Martin Luther writes in his excellent work, Bondage of the Will: “I frankly confess that, for myself, even if it could be, I should not want free-will to be given to me, nor anything to be left in my own hands to enable me to endeavor after salvation; not merely because in face of so many dangers, and adversities, and assaults of devils, I could not stand my ground and hold fast my free-will (for one devil is stronger than all men, and on these terms no man could be saved); but because, even were there no dangers, adversities, or devils, I should still be forced to labor with no guarantee of success, and to beat my fists at the air. If I lived and worked to all eternity, my conscience would never reach comfortable certainty as to how much it must do to satisfy God. Whatever work I had done, there would still be a nagging doubt as to whether it pleases God, or whether He required something more. The experience of all who seek righteousness by works proves that; and I learned it well enough myself over a period of many years, to my own great hurt. But now that God has taken my salvation out of the control of my own will, and put it under the control of His, and promised to save me, not according to my working or running, but according to His own grace and mercy, I have the comfortable certainty that He is faithful and will not lie to me, and that He is also great and powerful, so that no devils or opposition can break Him or pluck me from Him. No one, He says, shall pluck them out of my hand, because my father which gave them me is greater than all [John 10:28-29]. Thus it is that, if not all, yet some, indeed many, are saved; whereas, by the power of free-will none at all could be saved, but every one of us would perish. Furthermore, I have the comfortable certainty that I please God, not by reason of the merit of my works, but by reason of His merciful favor promised to me; so that, if I work too little, or badly, He does not impute it to me, but with fatherly compassion pardons me and makes me better. This is the glorying of all the saints in their God.”

## Challenge Questions: Read and Respond

Read the following quote concerning the role of Christ as the mediator in the covenant of grace from Bavinck's *Dogmatics*, and respond to the questions that follow.

The covenant of grace also differs from the covenant of works in that it has a mediator who not only unites God and humanity but prior to this reconciles the two, so restoring the broken fellowship between them. Also with respect to this doctrine of a mediatorship, Holy Scripture does not stand alone but is supported and confirmed on all sides by ideas concerning such a mediatorship in the religions of all peoples. Generally speaking, the words and deeds of great men, as such, already have extraordinary significance for the life and development of the nations. Granted, among historians there is vast disagreement over the role to be attributed to these great men. Whereas some view them merely as conduits for ideas or exponents of the people's soul, others ascribe to them great creative power and all-controlling influence. The truth undoubtedly is that there is interactivity here: on the one hand, heroic figures in history are the products of their own time, and on the other, they transcend their own time and change its direction...

Particularly in religion the person of the founder and mediator plays a large role. Mediators between humanity and the deity, messengers of God who convey his blessings and revelations to humans and, conversely, lay their prayers and gifts before his throne, occur in all religions. Sometimes it is subordinate deities or lower spirits, at other times people who—dedicated to God and animated by his spirit—are favored with special revelations and endowed with supernatural powers. But between humanity and the deity there is always another who effects and maintains fellowship between the two. Belief in mediators is universal.

In the religions of the races who have strayed the farthest, such as, for example, the aborigines of Australia, the American Indians, and others, medicine men perform this service. In the religions of more highly developed peoples, soothsayers, priests, and kings take their place. Soothsayers made the will of the deity known by interpreting external signs (the constellation of the stars, the flight of birds, sacrifices, and so on), or, like the Pythian oracles in ancient Greece, by internal inspiration (Deut. 18:10-14). Priests, who frequently form a very distinct class or caste of their own, delivered the people's sacrifices and prayers and distributed God's blessing to them. Kings were often regarded as the sons or emissaries of the gods, who in turn were themselves represented as kings, the bearers of their wisdom and power, the founders and protectors of righteousness. History does not tell us how all these sacred persons acquired their rank and status; but their universal presence serves to show that we are here dealing with a phenomenon that is not accidental but rooted in the characteristic essence of religion itself and corresponds to a profound need in human nature.<sup>1</sup>

1. A. According to this quote, what is the difference between the covenant of grace and the covenant of works? How is Jesus Christ a unique mediator between God and people (hint: the book of Hebrews may help your answer)?

Bavinck makes a distinction between the “covenant of grace” and the “covenant of works,” pointing out that in the covenant of grace, Christ is not only the mediator, but He also unites God and humanity, restoring the broken relationship between them. When Christ restores this relationship, it is permanent, once and for all. Unlike the priests who served as mediators in the Old Testament continually sacrificing on behalf of the people, New Testament saints under the new covenant rely on the sacrifice of Christ which needs not be repeated (Hebrews 10:10; 1 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 9:26). Also, Christ's mediating can be contrasted with the “mediators” of other religions. These men repeat chants, sacrifices, prayers, etc. in an effort to gain the favor of their gods. However, their works aren't even effectual because

<sup>1</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ* vol. 2, John Bolt, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 238-239.

their gods are dead stone. Christ is the *living* mediator, He is both God and man. He is a mediator who is also Deity—no other religion can claim the same.

It is also important to remind students that, though some refer to the old covenant or Old Testament covenant as the “covenant of works,” Old Testament saints were also saved by grace, not by works. It is true that during the Old Testament, there were many “works:” laws and regulations, that God’s people were required to keep in order to serve as reminders and pictures of that which was to come. Christ fulfilled many of these laws and regulations. However, God’s covenant of grace is everlasting—bestowed upon His people in both the Old and New Testaments.

B. Explain how the concept of a mediator is universal, and give examples of how this concept shows up in other religions/cultures.

Bavink points out that all religions have some concept of a mediator—one who goes between worshipers and the deity they worship. In tribal religions (aborigines, American Indians, and others) the “mediator” figure is usually a witchdoctor or spiritist who channels messages from a god through external signs or internal revelations. In more complex religions, a priest or a king may serve as a sort of mediator between the divine and humanity. Bavink draws attention to the fact that it seems as if all people recognize the need for a “go-between” when they approach a divine figure. Perhaps all people will not admit their personal sinfulness, but they do seem to inherently recognize their inability to communicate with a god without a mediator. Bavink calls this a “profound need in human nature.”

While Herman Hoeksema (1886-1965), served as a pastor and theologian in the American Midwest, he extensively studied the Bible's doctrine of the covenant. He taught that all the covenants of Scripture are united as part of God's everlasting covenant of grace. Read and respond to his position on the covenant of grace.

All of the views of the doctrine of the Covenant, in fact, all views possible in this connection can be comprehended under two main heads: (a). those which consider the Covenant as a means to an end, and, (b). those which consider it an end in itself.

According to the first conception (a). it is termed a "way to salvation", an "agreement", a "promise", or, perhaps, an "alliance", (of A. Kuyper, *Dictaten Dogmatiek*).

According to the second conception (b), the Covenant is essential and an end therefore in itself. It is that living relationship of most intimate fellowship of friendship, which is a reflection of His own Triune life, according to which He makes Himself known to and blesses His people, and they know Him and find their delight in His fellowship and service. This idea of the Covenant is founded upon Scripture. Allow us to point out the following:

1. The Covenant with Adam, which certainly was not any agreement at all, nor an alliance between God and Adam, an agreement made after his creation, but was rather a relationship which was given with Adam's creation after the image of God. God reveals Himself to Adam and speaks to Him, while Adam knows God as he speaks to Him in the garden "in the cool of the day".
  2. We find support what we read of the covenant-people in their relation to God: "they walked with God", Gen. 5:22, 6:8—and to walk with someone is an act of friendship and fellowship. We read that they talk with Him, and God reveals thereby His Counsel to them and hides nothing from them, Gen. 6:13, 9:9, 18:17 ff. Moses knew and saw God face to face, Deut. 30:10, and Abraham is called the "friend of God", Isaiah 41:8, James 2:23.
  3. It is the idea of friendship and fellowship which is symbolized in the tabernacle and temple.
  4. This idea is literally expressed in many texts: Psalm 25:11, Isaiah 55:3, 61:8, Jeremiah 32:40 (the "everlasting Covenant" cannot be means to an end), Ezekiel 37:26, John 17:23 (intimate communion of life), II Corinthians 6:16, (the tabernacle and God's dwelling with us), Revelation 21:3 (the final realization—the tabernacle is with men).<sup>2</sup>
2. Why does Hoeksema call the covenant of grace "an end in itself"? What is the difference between calling the covenant a contract or agreement between God and men and calling the covenant friendship between God and men?

Hoeksema makes two main distinctions in understanding the covenant of grace: the covenant is either a means to end, a necessary agreement in order to obtain a relationship with God, or the covenant of grace is an end in itself: covenant fellowship is the relationship between God and His children. To sum up his position in one word, Hoeksema believed the covenant of grace could be defined as friendship—the precious friendship Christians share with the Lord. Just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in friendship with each other, so God allows His children to live in friendship with Him. This is only possible through the grace of God, which is why God's covenant of grace is everlasting, running as a thread through all of Scripture and as a living reality for many today. Rather than emphasizing the terms and conditions of the covenant as an agreement or pact between people and God, Hoeksema points out that God unilaterally established His covenant with His children. While it is true

<sup>2</sup> Herman Hoeksema, "The Covenant Concept" position paper (dictated in Grand Rapids, MI, March, 1943), 1.

that God's children are commanded to follow His laws, there is grace and forgiveness when they fail. And though God's people are responsible to obey, the covenant is all God's work—the establishing of the covenant, the maintaining of the friendship, the forgiveness and grace extended when His children fail, the sacrifice necessary to pay for their sins. Thus, when Christians live in a relationship of covenant love and friendship with God, they are not fulfilling a cold legal arrangement or a bilateral pact of terms and conditions. They are living in fellowship and love with the Creator of the universe who holds them and loves them despite their failings and weaknesses.

## Definitions

Total depravity: Humans are so corrupted by sin that it affects every part of our nature and has rendered us unable and unwilling to do any spiritual good.

Grace: God's favor when we deserve the opposite.

Covenant of Grace: The partnership God establishes with His people to carry out His kind, gracious purposes.

## What I Confess

1. God's enemy, the devil, is also my enemy. I realize that he wants to destroy my life by leading me away from the truth and love of God.
2. The sin of Adam and Eve in Paradise was rebellion against God. They should have obeyed God's Word just because it was God's Word. I do not, however, want to excuse myself from their sin. I am also guilty in the sight of God and justly deserve His anger.
3. The punishment of God against sin is terrible. It involves three kinds of death: spiritual, physical and eternal. Without Jesus as my Savior I would have to endure this death. I rejoice in the free gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ, my Lord.
4. There are two facts involved in my sin. First, there is my own corrupt nature. This sinful nature involves me in all kinds of separate sinful actions such as greed, pride, unbelief and many others. Second, there is my guilt. This means that I am worthy of the just punishments of God. The more I understand about my sin, the more I hate it.
5. I was born as a person totally depraved. This means that by nature I was unable to do anything thoroughly pleasing to my God. It also means that I did not want to honor and please my God. Only Jesus Christ can give me a new nature by sending the Holy Spirit into my life. As a saved sinner I can say, "Once I was dead but now I live."
6. By faith in Jesus Christ, I am in the gracious covenant of God. He is my representative, the Last Adam. By God's grace, I will cling to Him as long as I live.

## IN-DEPTH LESSON FOUR

---

Another Biblical doctrine that goes hand-in-hand with total depravity is total inability. Total depravity says that humans are so corrupted by sin that it affects every part of our nature and has rendered us unable and unwilling to do any spiritual good. Notice the word “unable” in our definition. Since we are sinners, by nature we are unable to do any spiritual good. Since we are sinful “to the core,” we are also unable to come to God on our own or do anything pleasing in His sight if His Spirit is not in us. A Christian confession from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the Canons of Dort, put it this way: “All people are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin; without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature, or even to dispose themselves to such reform.”

Jesus said this clearly when He spoke to the hypocritical Pharisees, “*and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life*” (John 5:40 KJV). Elsewhere, Scripture expands on the unwillingness and inability for humans to come to God. “*The LORD looks down from heaven...to see if there are...any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one*” (Psalm 14:2-3). Paul echoes this in Romans, “*there is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one...who seeks God*” (3:10-11). Jeremiah asks the question, “*Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil*” (Jeremiah 13:23). Christ said, “*...everyone who sins is a slave to sin...so if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed*” (John 8:34-36). The Bible clearly teaches that people who are not Christians are in bondage to sin and totally unable to break free from that bondage—Jesus alone can set men free. Martin Luther, the 16<sup>th</sup> Century reformer, wrote a hymn that describes the bondage of the will:

Fast bound in Satan’s chains I lay,  
Death brooded darkly o’er me;  
Sin was my torment night and day,  
Therein my mother bore me,  
Deeper and deeper still I fell,  
Life was becoming a living hell,  
So firmly sin possessed me.

My good works could avail me naught,  
For they with sin were stained;  
Free-will against God’s judgment fought,  
And dead to good remained.  
Grief drove me to despair, and I  
Had nothing left me but to die,  
To hell I fast was sinking.

God saw, in His eternal grace,  
My sorrow out of measure;  
He thought upon His tenderness—  
To save was His good pleasure.  
He turned to me a Father’s heart—  
Not small the cost—to heal my smart  
He gave His best and dearest.

He spake to His beloved Son:  
‘Tis time to take compassion;

Then go, bright jewel of My crown,  
And bring to man salvation;  
From sin and sorrow set him free,  
Slay bitter death for him, that he,  
May live with Thee forever.

# The Great Substitution

## *The Doctrine of Christ (I)*

Adam failed, but God did not abandon the sinner to the power of sin. God declared war against the enemy, providing a way out. This good news was first declared in Genesis 3:15, *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”* This *“offspring,”* or *“seed,”* is Jesus Christ our Lord (Genesis 3:15, Matthew 1:23-25 and Luke 1:31-35). He is the Christian’s substitute. He came to do what we were unable and unwilling to do.

### Just as We Are

God’s substitute for sinners is a man. Jesus was and is today as human as we are. He was born of the Virgin Mary. He took His flesh and blood from His blessed mother. He lived a normal childhood. *“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men”* (Luke 2:52). After a hard day’s work He was tired and hungry (see Matthew 4:20, Mark 6:31, and John 4:6-7). When His friend Lazarus died, Jesus wept (John 11:34-35). In the presence of sin Jesus became angry (Luke 3:7). He *“has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin”* (Hebrews 4:15).

This full manhood of the Master is an important fact. We humans are sinful, *“... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23). Each person must pay for their own sins. *“Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism”* (Colossians 3:25). *“The soul who sins is the one who will die”* (Ezekiel 18:4). Our holy and just God demands this. Now, in perfect agreement with His own holiness and justice, God sent a substitute who is completely human. God’s work of salvation in

Jesus is marvelous in our eyes. He sent a Savior suited to our needs, and perfectly fitted to take our place.

1. **JESUS CHRIST** is the sinner’s substitute.
2. **GOD** sent a substitute who is completely **HUMAN**.

### The Son of God

Jesus is more than human. He is the eternal God manifest in the flesh. Our substitute testified under oath that He was the Son of God. In court Jesus was asked, *“Are you then the Son of God?”* Calmly He said to them, *“You are right in saying that I am”* (Luke 22:70). Jesus left no doubt in the minds of His listeners when He said, *“I and the Father are one”* (John 10:30). God Himself testified that Jesus was His Son. It happened on the Mount of Transfiguration: *“And a voice came from the cloud, saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him’”* (Luke 9:35). Paul also states it plainly, *“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form”* (Colossians 2:9).

In giving sinners a *divine* substitute, God displays His love and wisdom. Only God Himself can work salvation for us (Jonah 2:9). The debt of death we must pay is eternal. A mere mortal would take forever to complete this payment. If we were left to earn our own salvation, we would never finish our work. An eternal debt requires an eternity to pay. Knowing our pitiful situation God sent His only begotten Son as our substitute. Jesus Christ is the God-man, perfectly suited to take our place. Truly, a wonderful Savior is Jesus our Lord.

3. Jesus is eternal **GOD** manifest in the **FLESH**.

4. God sent His only **BEGOTTEN SON** into the world as our **SUBSTITUTE**, who is perfectly suited to take our **PLACE**.

## The Work of Our Substitute

To understand the work of Christ Jesus we must understand who we are. We are *creatures*; that is first. We are *sinful* creatures; that is second. Both of these facts tell us the mystery of Jesus' work.

As *creatures* we are completely dependent upon God and subject to His law. To be a creature means to be subject to law. God's law is for the creature what oxygen is for our lungs and what water is for a fish. God's law is the atmosphere of our lives. We live grateful lives only as we willingly obey God's law.

As *sinful* creatures we are exposed to the penalties of God's law. Everyone who breaks the law will be broken by the law. In the last lesson we learned what the Bible teaches about the punishments of God. As sinners we must bear these punishments.

Jesus came into this situation. "*God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law ... that we might receive the full rights of sons*" (Galatians 4:4-5). Jesus Christ did what we as sinful creatures were supposed to do. He obeyed God's law in all things for us. The Lord Himself said, "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but to do the will of him who sent me...*" (John 6:38). Paul puts the matter plainly, "*For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous*" (Romans 5:19). Our substitute obeyed for us in two ways:

**PASSIVE OBEDIENCE:** Jesus paid the penalty for sin by His suffering and death. On the cross, our Savior paid the penalties which we sinners deserved. Sinners deserve sorrow. "*Surely he took up our infirmities and carried*

*our sorrows*" (Isaiah 53:4). "*And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all*" (Isaiah 53:6). "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Sinners are worthy of God's curse. "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us*" (Galatians 3:13). We deserve death, "*but God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:15). Jesus, the Lamb of God, our great High Priest, paid our penalty. Every punishment we sinners deserve was carried away by the Sin-bearer.

**ACTIVE OBEDIENCE:** Jesus perfectly obeyed the demands of God's Law. Where Adam failed, Jesus prevailed. He obeyed every commandment for us (John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38 and Hebrews 10:7). He discharged every duty for us. The Bible says we are "*saved through his life*" (Romans 5:10). Our righteousness can only come through Jesus' obedience: "*through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous*" (Romans 5:19). God's Son "*learned obedience from what he suffered, and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him*" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Every step of His life Jesus took obediently. As a child, He went down to Nazareth with His parents "*and was obedient to them*" (Luke 2:51). He obeyed the details of God's law in the ceremony of baptism: "*Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness*" (Matthew 3:15). When He healed a leper He instructed the leper to the law, saying, "*But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them*" (Mark 1:44). Humbling Himself as our substitute, He was "*obedient to death—even death on a cross*" (Philippians 2:8). He practiced what He preached: "*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come*

to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17).

In this way of obedience to every detail of God’s law, Jesus earned perfect salvation for us. Jesus now freely gives us a title to eternal life. Sinners who put the full weight of their lives on this Savior become, with Jesus, “*heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ*” (Romans 8:17).

5. Everyone who breaks the **LAW** will be **BROKEN** by the **LAW** .

6. **JESUS** paid the penalty for sin; this is called His **PASSIVE** obedience.

7. Jesus also **OBEYED** God perfectly; this is called His **ACTIVE** obedience.

### A Definite Substitution

The work of our substitute was carried out according to God’s plan. It is a definite work, planned from all eternity, that certainly accomplishes the salvation of every last one of His people. Everyone for whom Christ substituted Himself shall be saved.

Some people think that Jesus worked only to make salvation a possibility for all people. They reason: Jesus did His part in the work of salvation for every sinner on earth. Now it is up to the sinner. Each sinner must either accept or reject the work of Christ. In other words, salvation is now dependent on the sinner. As a substitute Jesus did all there was to do. Now He must wait for the sinner to make up his/her mind. However, this does not appear to be the Biblical presentation.

The Biblical presentation states that Jesus did not make salvation *possible* (i.e., a choice for sinners to make). His death *actually* atoned for the sins of

---

<sup>1</sup>Some people who deny definite atonement use verses like John 3:16 and 1 John 4:14 to say that God loved the entire world (all humans) and gave His Son for the world (all humans). But in Scripture, the word “world” doesn’t always mean “every single person on earth.” Note the different uses of “world” in the following passages: Matthew 18:7, Luke 2:1, John 1:9-10, John 3:16-19 and John 14:17-19.

all those whom the Father had given Him (John 17:11).<sup>1</sup> Jesus Himself said, “*The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep*” (John 10:11). He loved the church and gave Himself up for it (Ephesians 5:25). Jesus substituted Himself for all those who were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). Theologically, we call this the **definite atonement**: Christ suffered and died for the purpose of saving the *elect*, and that purpose is actually accomplished and already applied to them.<sup>2</sup>

8. **DEFINITE** atonement means that Jesus **SUFFERED** and **DIED** for the purpose of saving the **ELECT**.

If this were not true, Jesus’ work as a substitute would have been a failure. Think of this: there are sinners who do not believe in Him as Savior, and there are sinners who do believe. If Jesus obeyed and worked as a substitute for those who reject Him, then He must have failed because then there would be people in hell for whom He died.

Think of it this way: If Jesus worked as a substitute for those who reject Him, then God would be unjust in sending sinners into eternal condemnation. Obviously, some are going to hell. The Bible is clear on this point (Matthew 25:41). But if Jesus as their substitute paid the penalty and earned salvation for them, then God would not send them to hell. God is supremely just. He would never allow Jesus to pay the price for a person’s sin and yet condemn him/her still.

Christ Jesus earned perfect salvation, complete in every detail. Every last one of His people will be saved. You can be sure He worked for you only as you believe and trust Him for your salvation. He opened your heart and filled you with the longing to know Him better and love Him more. Believe on the Substitute and you will be saved. As you

---

<sup>2</sup>For further study on definite atonement (particular redemption), see Matthew 1:21, John 6:35-40, 10:11 & 14-18, 17:1-11, 20, 24 & 26, Acts 20:28, Romans 5:8-9 & 8:32-34, Galatians 1:3-4 & 3:13, Ephesians 1:3-12 & 5:25-27, Titus 2:14, Hebrews 2:17, 3:1, 9:12, & 9:15 and 1 Peter 3:18.

believe, you know that He worked as *your* substitute.

This is a warm and comforting teaching. It means Jesus Christ worked effectively for me while on earth. Right now He is continuing to carry out His program unto perfection. He does not merely make it *possible* for me to be saved. He gives something much different, something much more definite and wonderful. Christ saves all the way. He redeems to the uttermost. He fully and completely secures the final salvation of believers. The sheep for whom He substituted Himself shall certainly be saved.

### 9. Jesus fully and **COMPLETELY** secures the **FINAL SALVATION** of **BELIEVERS**.

Our Great Shepherd said, “*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand*” (John 10:27-28). Just imagine the haunting fear and uncertainty which would plague our lives if Jesus had said, “I give my sheep a chance for eternal life; and maybe they will never perish if they continue to do their part in the work of salvation.” Thank God that Jesus never said anything like that. Our part in the work of salvation would never be enough.

Thus, Christ does it all. And the works we must perform are achieved only because Christ constantly gives His energizing grace unto His sheep. So, we rejoice in the comforting truth that Jesus worked effectively for all those sheep whom the Father in heaven had given unto Him. Our Lord invites all people everywhere to share in His accomplished work in the way of repentance and faith.

10. Jesus said, “*My **SHEEP** listen to my **VOICE**; I **KNOW** them, and they **FOLLOW** me. I give them **ETERNAL** life, and they shall never **PERISH**; no one can **SNATCH** them out of **MY HAND**” (John 10:27-28).*

## Short Answer Essays

### 1. What does Genesis 3:15 have to do with Jesus Christ?

We hope your student is beginning to understand that Jesus is the promised offspring of Eve mentioned in the curse to the serpent in Genesis 3:15. In this passage, God was declaring war against the enemy and providing a way out of the power of sin—that way out is through Jesus Christ. This was the first declaration of the Gospel, that Jesus would be our way out. He is the Christian's substitute. He came to do what we were unable and unwilling to do.

### 2. Why is the doctrine of the humanity of Jesus Christ important?

Your student should answer that the doctrine of the humanity of Jesus Christ is important because Jesus was suited to our needs and perfectly fitted to take our place. Humans must pay for their sins. We are responsible for our own sin. Yet no one human could provide a way—only God could. Therefore, Jesus had to be fully man—serving as our substitute—and fully God.

**EXTRA:** The Savoy Declaration of Faith (1658) states: “This office [Mediator and Surety] the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us, enduring most grievous torments immediately from God in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body, was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered, with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession; and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.”

### 3. Using Scripture prove that Jesus Christ is fully God.

Your student should quote some of the following verses:

Exodus 3—I AM and John 8—I AM: Jesus takes the name of Yahweh upon His lips, and says, as it were, “I AM YAHWEH!” Also notice how Hebrews 1 quotes the Old Testament, particularly the Psalms. The author to the book of Hebrews quotes God speaking in the Old Testament, and attributes these words to Christ. For example, Hebrews 1:8 says, “...*about the Son he [God] says, ‘Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever’*” quoting from Psalm 45:6. Also notice the connection between Hebrews 1:10-12 and Psalm 102:25.

In Paul's letter to Titus, consider how Paul calls God our Savior and Christ our Savior (1:3, 1:4b, 2:13, 3:4 and 3:6). More verses which prove the divinity of Jesus Christ are: Luke 9:35, Luke 22:70, John 10:30 and Colossians 2:9.

4. Some cults and groups declare that Jesus is a god, but not the living God, YAHWEH. How would you respond to the statement, “Jesus is a god”?

The student should argue from Scripture that Jesus is equal to the Father and the Spirit, yet They are not three gods, but one God. Also refer your student to the creeds provided in the appendix of this course, they were written mainly to refute the teaching that Jesus was a god, but not the living God. You can refer your student to the verses given in the previous answer.

5. Using the verses provided, explain how Jesus is our substitute: Romans 3:25-26, Titus 2:14, Hebrews 9:28, 1 Peter 2:24 and 3:18.

Jesus is our substitute because He paid the penalty for the sin we deserved by His suffering and death. On the cross our Savior and substitute paid the penalties which we sinners deserved. Jesus also is our substitute because He perfectly obeyed the demands of God's Law. Where Adam failed, Jesus prevailed. He obeyed every commandment for us. We are saved through Him and our righteousness can only come through His obedience.

In the listed verses note that in Romans 3:25-26, Jesus is called a “*sacrifice of atonement*” (NIV) or a “*propitiation*” (ESV and KJV). These words focus our attention on the Old Testament sacrificial system, where an animal's blood temporarily atoned for the sins of the people (see Leviticus 16:15). Titus 2:13b-14 says, “*Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us...*” Paul here clearly states that Jesus' work was “*for us*” which means “on our behalf,” “instead of us,” “for the sake of us” or “on the part of us.” Hebrews 9:28 – “*Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people...*” Jesus was sacrificed in the place of His people to take away their sins. 1 Peter 2:24 declares, “*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree...by his wounds you have been healed.*” Peter uses Isaiah's idea of Christ's substitutionary work (see Isaiah 53:3). Since Jesus bore the sins of His people, we have been healed. We didn't have to bear our own sins—Jesus did in our place, as our substitute or vicar. 1 Peter 3:18 – “*...Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous.*” Again, we see that Christ, “*the righteous,*” died for, or in the place of, His people, “*the unrighteous.*” Note also Isaiah 53:4-5, 6, 10 & 11-12; Matthew 20:28; Romans 5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 9:26 and Hebrews 10:10.

6. Why is the doctrine of Jesus as our substitute important?

This doctrine is very important because Jesus, the Lamb of God, our great High Priest, paid our penalty and died a bloody death on the cross. The Sin-bearer carried away every punishment we sinners deserve. In this way of obedience to every detail of God's law, Jesus earned perfect salvation for us. Jesus now freely gives us a title to eternal life. Because of this, we have been made right with God and belong to Him as His children.

**EXTRA:** The Cambridge Declaration (1996 by the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals) puts it nicely: "There is no Gospel except that of Christ's substitution in our place whereby God imputed to him our sin and imputed to us his righteousness. Because he bore our judgment, we now walk in his grace as those who are forever pardoned, accepted and adopted as God's children. There is no basis for our acceptance before God except in Christ's saving work, not in our patriotism, churchly devotion or moral decency. The Gospel declares what God has done for us in Christ. It is not about what we can do to reach him."

7. Using Ephesians 1:1-14, write a short essay that defines the Biblical doctrine of **definite atonement**.

**Each student will answer differently**, but they should clearly point out that Jesus died for the elect, those chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1 clearly speaks about God's people and His plan for His chosen people. Paul's letter here presupposes the fact that redemption through Christ's blood was intended for those whom God had predestined in love to be His sons and daughters. Encourage your student to study the text if they are struggling with it.

8. In the light of this lesson, explain the significance of "*born under the law*" in Galatians 4:4-5.

The student should also tie in the fact that Jesus was born under the law in order to redeem those who were under the law (Galatians 4:5). The law had been broken, Paul stresses the fact that all are guilty and punishable because of this violation (Romans 3:19-20 and Galatians 3:10-13). In order to free someone from the curse of the law, the curse must be dealt with, it must be removed. Jesus did this by voluntarily being born with full obligation to keep the law and thus remove the curse of the law from His people.

**EXTRA:** William Hendriksen comments on this phrase: "*born under the law*...this in the sense not only of being under personal obligation to keep that law, but also of being duty-bound (with a duty to which He voluntarily bound Himself!) vicariously to bear the law's penalty and to satisfy its demand of perfect obedience." John Piper states it like this: "Consider first Galatians 4:4-5, 'But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, *born under [the] Law*, (5) so that He might redeem *those who were under [the] Law*, that we might receive the adoption as sons.' The word 'the' is not there in the original. The phrase is identical to what we have here in Romans 6:14. Christ was born 'under law' to redeem those 'under law.' Here's what we learn from this use: 1) Somebody is in deep trouble for being under law, because Paul says Christ needs to redeem them; 2) Christ was born under law, and so being under the law was not danger or sin for Christ, as it seemed to be for the rest. In other words, being 'under law' is something that we sinful creatures want to avoid at all costs if we can, but that Christ embraced to rescue us from it. What then might it be? I would suggest this. Being under law means that lawkeeping is the way we will provide a righteousness that lets us stand before God. If we

treat the law in such a way that lawkeeping provides the righteousness that justifies us, then we are under law. And this is true whether you are trusting God to enable you to keep the law or trusting yourself. It doesn't make any difference when the issue is: What provides the righteousness that justifies me? If it is lawkeeping, I am 'under law.'"

9. What is the passive obedience of Jesus? Give several Scriptural references to support your answer.

Your student should pull from the lessons that the passive obedience of Christ is His passion, oblation (or suffering), and death. This obedience called "passive" doesn't mean the opposite of active, that He was inactive on the cross. Theologians use this term to capture the passion of Christ, where He was faced with the suffering of His soul as He faced the torments of hell and the wrath of God. Be sure the student understands that Jesus didn't simply suffer in body, but that He suffered in body and soul. Many verses could be referenced (for example, see Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Matthew 16:21, Mark 8:31, Luke 22:15, Luke 24:26, Acts 1:3, Acts 3:18, Hebrews 5:8 & 13:8 and 1 Peter 2:21).

10. What is the active obedience of Jesus? Give several Scriptural references to support your answer.

Your student should begin to understand that Jesus' active obedience is the fact that He perfectly obeyed the law of God. Romans 5 is a beautiful passage that declares the importance of Christ's obedience. Paul says that we are "*saved through His life,*" and declares that "*the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.*" Romans 5:19 states, "*through the obedience of the one man the many will be made [appointed or designated] righteous.*"

The first Adam failed to obey God's covenant. The Last Adam—Jesus Christ—did not fail; He kept the covenant commands and earned the covenant blessings for all His people. Jesus earned heaven for His people, He merited our salvation.

11. Some people suggest that Jesus' obedience earns salvation for believers, but we have to remain faithful to keep that salvation. What is your reaction to this suggestion?

Your student should react that this type of logic is terribly harmful to biblical doctrine. Certainly we are called in Scripture to work out our salvation and to abound in the work of the Lord (Philippians 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:58). We must remember that our salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone—we cannot add to or take away from His work. Christ has secured salvation for His people, and to attempt to stay in God's favor by our work is to reduce Christ's work.

Salvation depends upon Jesus, not us! Salvation depends upon God's faithfulness, not our unwavering faith. Our salvation is found in Jesus Christ, whose work is perfect, unshakable, unchanging and complete. Our good works are simply the result of our salvation, as we offer our lives as living sacrifices of thanksgiving to God—not meritorious sacrifices of work (Romans 12:1).

## Digging Deeper

1. Why was Jesus' active obedience necessary for our salvation? In other words, why is Jesus' passive obedience, His suffering and death, not enough by itself to save us?

Salvation would not be possible if Jesus had only died for His people. If Jesus had only died for us, we would lack the obedient righteousness that is required to stand before God. After all, the only one who can truly dwell with God is the one whose *"walk is blameless and who does what is righteous"* (Psalm 15:1-2). Jesus Christ is the blameless One who did what is righteous—obeyed God perfectly. Now, by faith in Him, His obedience is credited to our account and our sins are credited to His account.

Both the active and passive obedience of Jesus are necessary for our salvation. Jesus lived for His people and died for them, to give them righteousness and forgiveness of sins. In Christ, we can dwell in the LORD's sanctuary and live on His holy hill (Psalm 15:1).

2. How does the doctrine of definite atonement comfort *you*?

Your student should comment on how this doctrine of definite atonement fully and completely secures the final salvation of believers. Because Christ saves all the way and redeems to the uttermost, the sheep for whom Jesus substituted Himself shall certainly be saved. This comforts us because we know that if we believe, we are saved and can be assured of our salvation.

**3. IN-DEPTH LESSON 5 ESSAY:** Why is our salvation completely dependent upon the fact that Jesus is fully man and fully God?

Your student should be able to explain how humans are totally and completely tainted by sin in every way. There is nothing we can do on our own to save ourselves—we cannot pay the debt of our sin. In fact, there is no mere creature who can pay this debt for us; there is no one who can bear the weight of God's eternal anger against sin and release others from it. Therefore, our Deliverer needs to be both man and God. He must be human because God's justice demands that humans must pay for their sins. But He must be God because only He would be able to bear the weight of God's wrath and could perfectly obey God's Law. Our Deliverer, therefore, is our Lord Jesus Christ—both God and man—who set us free and made us right with God.

See the IN-DEPTH section, noting the words of the Heidelberg Catechism concerning the importance of Jesus' person—fully man and fully God.

## Challenge Questions: Read and Respond

Charles Hodge (1797-1878) served as the principal of Princeton Theological Seminary where he taught and defended the historic Christian faith. Read and respond to the following quote concerning the person of Christ.

The facts which the Bible teaches concerning the person of Christ are, first, that He was truly man, *i.e.*, He had a perfect or complete human nature. Hence everything that can be predicated of man (that is, of man as man, and not of man as fallen) can be predicated of Christ. Secondly, He was truly God, or had a perfect divine nature. Hence everything that can be predicated of God can be predicated of Christ. Thirdly, He was one person. The same person, self, or Ego, who said, "I thirst," said, "Before Abraham was, I am." This is the whole doctrine of the incarnation as it lies in the Scriptures and in the faith of the Church.

The current language of Scripture concerning Christ proves that He was at once divine and human. In the Old Testament, He is set forth as the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah and the family of David; as to be born of a virgin in the town of Bethlehem; as a man of sorrows; as meek and lowly; as bearing the chastisement of our sins, and pouring out his soul unto death. He is everywhere represented as a man. At the same time He is everywhere represented as God; He is called the Son of God, Immanuel, the Mighty God, Jehovah our righteousness; and He is spoken of as from everlasting; as enthroned in heaven and receiving the adoration of angels.

In the New Testament, the same mode of representation is continued. Our Lord, in speaking of Himself, and the Apostles when speaking of Him, uniformly speak of Him as a man. The New Testament gives his genealogy to prove that He was of the house and lineage of David. It records his birth, life, and death. It calls Him the Son of Man, the man Christ Jesus. But with like uniformity our Lord assumes, and the Apostles attribute to Him a divine nature. He declares Himself to be the Son of God, existing from eternity, having all power in heaven and in earth, entitled to all the reverence, love, and obedience due to God. The Apostles worship Him; they call Him the great God and Saviour; they acknowledge their dependence upon Him and responsibility to Him; and they look to Him for pardon, sanctification, and eternal life. These conflicting representations, this constant setting forth the same person as man, and also as God, admits of no solution but in the doctrine of the incarnation. This is the key to the whole Bible. If this doctrine be denied all is confusion and contradiction. If it be admitted all is light, harmony, and power. Christ is both God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever. This is the great mystery of Godliness. God manifest in the flesh is the distinguishing doctrine of the religion of the Bible, without which it is a cold and lifeless corpse.<sup>1</sup>

1. A. How does the Old Testament portray Jesus as God and man? How does the New Testament do the same?

In the Old Testament, the name "Jesus Christ" is not explicitly mentioned. However, Christ is the centrality of all Scripture, and He is in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. His humanity and deity come through in prophecies and pictures throughout the Old Testament. As a human, Jesus is "the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah and the family of David; as to be born of a virgin in the town of Bethlehem; as a man of sorrows; as meek and lowly; as bearing the chastisement of our sins, and pouring out his soul unto death." Only a human can have a lineage; only a human can be born, etc. Likewise, Christ's deity is in the Old Testament "He is called the Son of God, Immanuel, the Mighty God, Jehovah our righteousness; and He is spoken of as from everlasting; as enthroned in heaven and receiving the adoration of angels." Though Christ is shown as a man in the Old Testament, these

<sup>1</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 380, 383-384.

references prove that he is also God; He is “Son of God,” He is “Mighty God;” He is in heaven worshipped by the angels, existing from everlasting.

The New Testament explicitly speaks of Jesus Christ, following His life, death and resurrection. Here as well Christ’s humanity comes through. The New Testament Gospels recall the physical, human life of Christ, beginning with His family genealogy. He is called a man and even the “Son of Man.” Furthermore, His deity is clearly depicted in the New Testament. The apostles regarded Him as their Lord and Savior, worshipping Him. He is called the “Son of God.” Christ Himself claimed to be one with the Father.

B. Why do you think Hodge says that the religion of the Bible would be “a cold and lifeless corpse” without the doctrine of the humanity and divinity of Christ? Use at least one Scripture passage in your answer.

If Jesus Christ were not both God and man, He would be just another prophet, just another man making great claims. Every religion in the world claims to hold the truth, and many religions were founded by men who claimed to be divine. However, no religion has God becoming man, taking on human flesh and proving His divinity and victory over death and the grave by rising again. If Christ were not both God and man, Christianity would be just like every other religion—a set of rules and ways of living to please a cold and distant God. Instead, Christianity is a living, hopeful faith in which God Himself deigned to become a man in order pay the penalty for our sins so that we can approach God unashamed. Scripture passages may vary.

Faithful minister of the Gospel Wilhelmus a' Brakel (1635-1711) wrote concerning the sacrifice of Christ in his four-volume work *The Christian's Reasonable Service*. Think upon this great truth and respond to the following question.

We maintain that Christ is not only a Savior because He revealed the truth and the way of salvation, confirmed this by His miracles and His death, was an example for us in His holy life, etc. and thus suffered and died to the benefit of man. Instead, we maintain that Christ as Surety has taken the place of His elect, taking upon Himself all their sins; that is, original as well as actual sins committed both prior to baptism and conversion and to the very last moment of their lives. On their behalf He Himself has borne the punishments which they deserved, and thus has completely, essentially, and truly satisfied the justice of God without overlooking any sin or by accepting a part as being equivalent to the whole. On the basis of this satisfaction and His merits, He delivers them from all punishment, temporal and eternal. This is the cardinal point and distinctive of Christianity. He who errs here and denies this truth cannot be saved.<sup>2</sup>

2. Explain what it means to you personally that Christ died for your sins “original and actual... committed prior to baptism and conversion and the very last moment of (your life).”

Student answers will vary as each student testifies of God's amazing grace in his/her life. If your student is depressed or discouraged, use this question as an opportunity to lift his/her spirits with the truth that no sin is too great to be forgiven. Christ knew all our transgressions past, present and future and still died for His sinning children.

---

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelmus Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, vol. 1 (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1992), 586.

## Definitions

---

Passive obedience: Jesus paid the penalty for sin by His suffering and death.

Active obedience: Jesus perfectly obeyed the demands of God's law.

Definite atonement: Christ suffered and died for the purpose of saving the elect, and that purpose is actually accomplished and applied to them.

## What I Confess

---

1. Jesus Christ is my Savior. He served as a substitute for me. I believe in Him as a perfect Savior, perfectly suited to meet the needs of my sinfulness.
2. I rejoice in a *human* Savior. As a human being, I have sinned. Jesus was completely human. He knows my special needs and has answered these needs in every way.
3. My Savior is the Son of God. If Jesus were not God, I could never be saved. Only God Himself can take away the eternal punishment that I justly deserve.
4. Jesus did two important things as my substitute. First, He paid the penalty of death for me. Second, He obeyed God's law perfectly for me and gave me a title to eternal life. Jesus' work as substitute fits in perfectly with God's demands and the sinner's need.
5. Jesus Christ didn't simply make my salvation a possibility, He made it a reality. Those for whom He died will never perish because He saved them completely. I rejoice that my salvation is eternally secure in Jesus.

## IN-DEPTH LESSON FIVE

---

The Heidelberg Catechism, a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation teaching aide, speaks of our salvation as completely dependent upon the fact that Jesus is fully man and fully God. The catechism says, “God requires that His justice be satisfied. Therefore, the claims of His justice must be paid in full, either by ourselves or another.” The catechism goes on:

*Can we pay this debt ourselves?* Certainly not. Actually, we increase our guilt every day.

*Can another creature—any at all—pay this debt for us?* No. To begin with, God will not punish another creature for what a human is guilty of. Besides, no mere creature can bear the weight of God’s eternal anger against sin and release others from it.

*So what kind of mediator and deliverer should we look for then?* One who is truly human and truly righteous, yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is also true God.

*Why must He be truly human and truly righteous?* God’s justice demands that human nature, which has sinned, must pay for its sin; but a sinner could never pay for others.

*Why must He also be true God?* So that, by the power of His divinity, He might bear the weight of God’s anger in His humanity and earn for us and restore to us righteousness and life.

*And who is this Mediator—true God and at the same time truly human and truly righteous?* Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was given [to] us to set us completely free and to make us right with God”

(For further study, see the following verses: Genesis 3:15, 22:18 and 49:10; Isaiah 53; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Micah 7:18-20; Matthew 1:21-23; Luke 2:11; Romans 5:12, 15 & 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30 & 15:21; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 4:4-5; Colossians 2:17; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:1-2, 2:14-16 & 7:26-27 and 1 Peter 3:18).



# The VICTORIOUS Lord

## *The Doctrine of Christ (II)*

Jesus of Nazareth is now the victorious Lord. The One born in Bethlehem's manger, the One who walked the dusty roads of Palestine, the One who died as a criminal on Calvary, is the reigning Lord of Glory. God rewarded our obedient substitute: "Therefore God has exalted him to the highest place and given him the name that is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).

### Victory Over Death

Jesus stayed in His grave three days. On Easter Sunday morning, God raised Him from the dead. Death could not keep Him. Christ tore the bars away. Because our Savior obeyed fully and completely God rewarded Him. God raised Him up, "freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him" (Acts 2:24). The power of death was broken. You can read the accounts of this miracle in the four Gospels (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 and John 20).

The historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is essential to our salvation, to the Christian faith. Paul states it clearly, "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). If there were no resurrection, there would be no justification (Romans 4:25). Because of Christ's resurrection, no one can condemn the Christian (Romans 8:34). Because of Jesus' resurrection, our spiritual resurrection is a profound reality: the Spirit of God who raised Christ from the dead also gives us new life. In Jesus' resurrection, Christians are raised by the same Spirit and are given resurrection life, heavenly life. "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your

mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you" (Romans 8:11). God's Word also says, "Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4). Jesus Himself said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies" (John 11:25).

The Holy Spirit unites the Christian to Christ so much that we died when He died, and were raised in His resurrection (see Romans 6:9-11, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 2:12-13 and Ephesians 2:5-6). The Spirit of God has raised the Christian up from spiritual death into life—eternal life—the life of the Spirit. "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God...for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3). The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is our death to sin and resurrection to new life, to the life of heaven, life in the Spirit (Romans 8:9-11).

1. The **HISTORICAL** fact of the **RESURRECTION** of Jesus Christ is essential to our **SALVATION**, to the **CHRISTIAN** faith.

2. In Jesus' **RESURRECTION**, Christians are **RAISED** by the same **SPIRIT** and are given resurrection **LIFE**, heavenly life.

Christ defeated death: this is the Christian's comfort. Our substitute went into the grave to remove its terrors. The great enemy—death—need not frighten the Christian. To be sure, Christians die. But their souls go to be with Jesus in the glories of heaven (Philippians 1:23 and Luke 23:43). Their

bodies, gently laid to rest in the grave, are seeds in the earth. In the day of the resurrection these seeds shall be raised unto power and glory (1 Corinthians 15:35-49). The believing Christian sorrows, but does not sorrow without hope. The words of Revelation 14:13 strengthen the sorrowing: “*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.*” In this present evil age the Christian can look death in the face without fear, declaring, “*Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?*” (1 Corinthians 15:55).

3. Since **CHRIST** defeated **DEATH**, the Christian need no longer be **AFRAID** of dying.

### The Ruling King

Forty days after Jesus broke the bars of death He went into heaven. God gave Him the right to enter into glory. While He blessed His faithful disciples Jesus ascended before their very eyes. He was seen by them until a cloud received Him from their sight (Luke 24:50-51 and Acts 1:6-11).

Jesus was given the highest honor of heaven: “*The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’*” (Psalm 110:1). The phrase, “the right hand of God” is not to be taken literally. God is a Spirit. He has no body, no right hand. The phrase means that Jesus Christ is now enjoying the highest honor. Saved saints in heaven and holy angels worship Him, saying, “*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power*” (Revelation 4:11).

This victorious Lord now works for God’s glory and our salvation. This fact of faith gives new strength for life, new purpose and new meaning for every experience of every day. The ruling King concerns Himself with our lives.

4. The **RIGHT** hand of **GOD** means that **JESUS CHRIST** is now enjoying the highest **HONOR**.

Christ continues to teach us God’s will as our *Chief Prophet*. In this capacity, He sends the Holy Spirit to lead the church into all truth (John 16:13). From His throne in glory, Christ sends to His people apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers (Ephesians 4:11). Jesus continues to light up the road of life with the knowledge of the will of God. In this age of confusion our great Teacher continues to direct our footsteps homeward to our eternal rest.

Jesus continues to pray for us as our only *High Priest*. “*For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence*” (Hebrews 9:24). He sees each tear we shed. He knows each temptation we face. He understands each fear within the soul. “*Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is interceding for us.*” (Romans 8:34). As we look to Jesus we experience the peace of God which “*passes all understanding*” (Philippians 4:7). He makes our daily cares His concern. With infinite tenderness He watches over those who belong to Him. He makes His sacrifice for the sins effective in our lives.

Finally, our substitute works for us as the *Eternal King*. Everything, from the lines on our faces to the leaders of the world, is under the control of Christ. Our King makes everything serve the saved. God “*placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church*” (Ephesians 1:22). “*For the church*” means for the sake of the believing sinner. Our dark world holds frightening possibilities for evil. With Christ as our King we know that not a missile can be launched or a bomb dropped without His will. As our lives focus on Christ’s Kingship we live as more than conquerors (Romans 8:37).

The Eternal King also controls all our enemies. Just before He went to heaven He said, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*” (Matthew 28:18). The Christian’s enemies attack and counterattack, but they cannot win the

battle for our souls. Our enemies are many: They are our own sinful tendencies to selfishness. There is the Christ-less world organized to do evil. There is Satan, the enemy supreme (1 Peter 5:8-11). These enemies cannot harm us. “*For he [Christ] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet*” (1 Corinthians 15:25). It is the saved sinner, trusting fully in his substitute, who can live in poise and peace in our troubled world. Even the evils of life are under the perfect control of our reigning Savior. As the hymn paraphrases Zechariah 9:9a, we can rejoice because Christ is King:

*Rejoice, the Lord is King;  
Your Lord and King adore;  
Rejoice give thanks and sing,  
And triumph evermore.  
Lift up your heart lift up your voice  
Rejoice! Again I say, Rejoice!  
J. Goss, 1874*

5. After Christ’s **ASCENSION** into heaven, He continued to work for us in a three-fold way:

1. As **CHIEF PROPHET**, He teaches us God’s will.
2. As **HIGH PRIEST**, He intercedes for us.
3. As our **ETERNAL KING**, He controls every aspect of our lives.

## The Lord’s Return

Christ always keeps His word. He promised to return. He will come again to finish the work He began while He lived in Palestine and which He carries on today. His coming again is the climax of His victory. “*At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory*” (Matthew 24:30).

We do not know the exact time of His return. “*No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the*

*Father*” (Mark 13:32). God does not want His children to pry curiously into the exact time. Christians, however, must read the signs which Christ gives. Daily events reported in newspapers and on television should be seen in the light of our Lord’s return. Though there are many different ideas about how the end times will unfold, Jesus Himself mentioned various signs which herald His return:

1. The preaching of the Gospel to all nations (Matthew 24:14).
2. The return of the Jews to Christ (Romans 11:25-26).
3. The appearance of many false teachers who shall work miracles, deceiving many (Mark 13:22).
4. Signs in the world of nature and nations. Wars and rumors of wars; famine; earthquakes and signs (Luke 21:25-27).
5. The coming of the Anti-Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:3 and 1 John 2:18).

Many of these signs are seen today. They are taking place with greater power and on a bigger scale than ever before. Our earth, shrunken by mass communication, has become a feasible matrix for the coming of the Anti-Christ. As the Christian sees these things and thinks about them, he hears the footsteps of the coming Savior. When Christ will come we do not know. But when He comes it will be wonderful for the Christian.

After these events take place, Jesus will return. In theology, we call this the **parousia**—a Greek word, in this case signifying Jesus’ arrival, or return. There are several points of the parousia that the Bible emphasizes. First, Jesus’ return will be a personal coming (Acts 1:11). Second, His return will be a physical coming (Acts 1:11, 3:20-21 and Hebrews 9:28). Third, the parousia will be a visible coming (Matthew 24:30, Colossians 3:4, Titus 2:13 and Revelation 1:7). Fourth, Jesus’ second coming will be sudden (Hebrews 9:28 and Revelation 1:7). Finally, Jesus’ return will be a glorious and triumphant coming (Matthew 24:30,

1 Thessalonians 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, Hebrews 9:28 and Revelation 19:11-16).

6. Jesus' return will be **PERSONAL, PHYSICAL, VISIBLE, SUDDEN**, glorious and **TRIUMPHANT**.

When our victorious Lord returns, a number of big events shall take place in our lives. These big happenings are all clustered around the final return of Jesus. Though Christians are not all in agreement as to the order of these great events, we believe that at His coming in power and great glory the following events will take place:

There will be the *resurrection of the dead*. “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned” (John 5:28-29). This is comforting for the Christian and terrifying for those who do not know Jesus as Savior and Lord.

There will be the *rapture*. This means that when Jesus comes again He will bring with Himself the souls of the saved in heaven. These souls will be reunited quickly, in the twinkling of an eye, with their resurrection bodies. When their souls are joined with their bodies they go forth to meet Christ in the air. The rapture is a coming of Christ with His saints (souls) and for the saints (souls joined with their new bodies). Then shall dawn the thrill of full salvation, a joy unspeakable and full of glory. “And so we will be with the Lord forever” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). What a joy to anticipate!

There will be the *final judgment* (Revelation 20:11-15). All shall appear before the great throne. Then Christ shall make a final, public, everlasting separation between the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46). Believers shall be given glory and unbelievers shall be cast into the pit of everlasting condemnation. It will be the time of eternal joy for the saved and a time of eternal sorrow for the unsaved.

Finally, there will be a *new heaven and a new earth*. This present universe shall be refined, purified with fire (2 Peter 3:7-12). Out of the ashes of the old will arise a new world. “But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13). Something of rare beauty and glory of this new world is described in Revelation 21 and 22.

7. Final **JUDGMENT** is when **CHRIST** makes a final, public, **EVERLASTING** separation between the **SHEEP** and the **GOATS**.

Christ is working toward that final day right now. The happenings of world history are alive with the unseen but real movements of the Spirit of Christ Jesus. Our Savior is going to save the world. The time is coming when God shall be perfectly honored and praised in a perfect world by a perfect people. Christ shall accomplish this. Then—O, the mystery of divine salvation—God Himself shall be all and in all (1 Corinthians 15:28). We Christians shall understand perfectly: “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” (Romans 11:36).

This final day is one for which the Christian longs. It will be the day of full salvation for the sinner and the day of full praise to God. It will be the day of the full realization of God's covenant promise, “you will be my people and I will be your God” (Jeremiah 30:22; see also Jeremiah 24:7, Song of Solomon 2:16, Ezekiel 11:20 & 36:28, Hosea 2:23, Zechariah 13:9 and Revelation 21:3). Even as the psalmist looked forward to the bliss of God's presence, “my soul thirsts for you” (Psalm 63:1), so we too can long for the day when we will say, “Surely this is our God; we trusted in him and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation” (Isaiah 25:9). We will know the magnificent words of Revelation 21:3-4, “...he [God] will live with them. They will be his people and God Himself will be with them and be their God...”

In the New Jerusalem and the new heaven and earth, there will be no more sin.

[IN-DEPTH] Looking back, we remember that Adam was created with the ability to sin or not to sin—he could do either. After the Fall, humans by nature are only able to sin. Once God changes a wicked heart, the believing sinner is able to do some things pleasing to God, even if only a small amount. In heaven, the believer will not be able to sin. Every bit of the stain of sin will be removed. We will never even think impure thoughts or be distracted from our Savior, Jesus Christ (Isaiah 25:8, 30:19, 35:10, 60:20, 65:18-19, Jeremiah 31:13, Hebrews 11:16 and Revelation 22:3-5). All this is because of the glorious and complete work of salvation that Christ accomplished *for us* and applies *to us*.

8. The day when **CHRIST** returns will be the day of the **FULL** realization of God's **COVENANT** promise, "*you will be **MY** people and I will be **YOUR** God*" (Jeremiah 30:22).

9. In heaven, the **BELIEVER** will not be able to **SIN**.

So why does Christ's second coming matter for *me* today? Why should I care that Christ will come again some day? What if He doesn't come until I've passed away? Looking forward to the consummation of our salvation and looking above to heaven, where Christ is, directly affects the way we live today. We're citizens of some earthly country, to be sure. But even more sure, eternally sure, we're citizens of heaven. "*God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms*" (Ephesians 2:6).

Christ's resurrection and His parousia put together are what our life should be about. "*Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who*

*is your life, appears, then you will appear with him in glory*" (Colossians 3:1-4). Jesus' resurrection and second coming should weigh heavily on the way we think, speak and act—even now, even today.

Christ's resurrection and second coming matters when you're faced with "*the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does*" (1 John 2:16). The fact that you're a citizen of heaven matters when you're here on earth, struggling to obey God and faced with all sorts of trials and temptations. Since believers have been raised with Christ into new life, their actions should reflect the fact that they have a new life. As a follower of Christ, you should live your life here reflecting the fact that you are a citizen of heaven. In the next lesson, Lord willing, we'll see how the Spirit of God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, works in us to prepare us for heaven to live with Him there. The fact that we're citizens of heaven even now has an important bearing of how we live our lives here and now.

10. The Christian's life "*is **NOW** hidden with **CHRIST** in God*" (Colossians 3:3-4).

## Short Answer Essays

1. Using Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 or John 20, paraphrase the great event of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

The student will paraphrase this story in his/her own words. He/She should include these details:

The women went to the tomb to look for Jesus' body.

When they reached the tomb they saw that the stone was rolled away.

As they got closer they saw a man near the tomb dressed in a white robe.

The women were very alarmed; Mary Magdalene was upset that someone had taken the body of her Lord.

The young man, or angel, told them the news that Jesus was not there and that "He has risen."

The women were terrified and trembling. They ran off to tell the disciples the good news.

2. What significance does Jesus' resurrection have for believers?

A. Spiritually?

The resurrection's spiritual significance is that the Holy Spirit unites the Christian to Christ so much so that we died when He died, and were raised in His resurrection (see Romans 6:9-11, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 2:12-13 and Ephesians 2:5-6). The Spirit of God has raised the Christian up from spiritual death into life—the eternal life of the Spirit. *"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God...for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God"* (Colossians 3:1-3). The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is our death to sin and resurrection to new life, to the life of heaven, life in the Spirit (Romans 8:9-11).

B. Physically?

The physical significance of the resurrection is that Christ's resurrection is a sure pledge of our own bodily resurrection (see 1 Corinthians 15:12 & 20-21 and Romans 8:11). When Jesus returns to take us to heaven, our bodies will be raised from the grave and gloriously reunited to our souls.

3. What does "the right hand of God" mean?

Your student should respond that the phrase, "the right hand of God," is not to be taken literally. God is a Spirit. He has no body, no right hand. The phrase means that Jesus Christ is now enjoying the highest honor. Saved saints in heaven and holy angels worship Him, saying, *"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power"* (Revelation 4:11).

4. How does understanding that Christ is the King comfort you?

**Each student will respond differently.** Most will find comfort in Christ as King because it means that Jesus controls and rules over all things, meaning nothing happens apart from His will. Christ controls our lives, our world and even our enemies. Your student may suggest that they can live poised and peaceful in this troubled world because our perfect and eternal King is reigning on the throne. Please be sensitive and encouraging in your responses to your student.

**EXTRA:** The Heidelberg Catechism answers this question (Q&A 51): “First, that by His Holy Spirit He pours out heavenly gifts upon us, His members; then, that by His power He defends and preserves us against all enemies” (Psalm 2:9, John 10:28-30, Acts 2:33, 1 Corinthians 15:25-26 and Ephesians 4:10-12).

5. List and explain four events that will most certainly happen before Jesus returns.

Your student should respond with four of the following five events:

The preaching of the Gospel to all nations (Matthew 24:14).

The return of the Jews to Christ (Romans 11:25-26).

The appearance of many false teachers who shall work miracles, deceiving many (Mark 13:22).

Signs in the world of nature and nations. Wars and rumors of wars, famine, earthquakes and signs in the sky (Luke 21:25-27).

The coming of the Anti-Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:3 and 1 John 2:18).

6. What are five points that the Bible makes clear concerning the parousia?

The term parousia means “Jesus’ arrival,” or “return.” There are several points of the parousia that the Bible emphasizes.

First, Jesus’ return will be personal (Acts 1:11).

Second, His return will be physical (Acts 1:11, 3:20-21 and Hebrews 9:28).

Third, the parousia will be visible (Matthew 24:30, Colossians 3:4, Titus 2:13 and Revelation 1:7).

Fourth, Jesus’ second coming will be sudden (Hebrews 9:28 and Revelation 1:7).

Finally, Jesus’ return will be glorious and triumphant (Matthew 24:30, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, Hebrews 9:28 and Revelation 19:11-16).

7. Choose and explain **two** great events that will happen when Jesus returns.

Your student should choose **two** of the following to explain: Resurrection, Rapture, Final Judgment and Final State of all people.

There will be the *resurrection of the dead*. (John 5:28-29). This is comforting for the Christian and terrifying for those who do not know Jesus as Savior and Lord.

There will be the *rapture*. This means that when Jesus comes again He will bring with Himself the souls of the saved in heaven. These souls will be reunited quickly, in the twinkling of an eye, with their resurrection bodies. When their souls are joined with their bodies they go forth to meet Christ in the air. The rapture is a coming of Christ with His saints (souls) and for the saints (souls joined with their new bodies). Then shall dawn the thrill of full salvation, a joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). What a joy to anticipate!

There will be the *final judgment* (Revelation 20:11-15). All shall appear before the great throne. Then Christ shall make a final, public and everlasting separation between the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46). Believers shall be given glory and unbelievers shall be cast into the pit of everlasting condemnation. It will be the time of eternal joy for the saved and a time of eternal sorrow for the unsaved.

There will be a *new heaven and a new earth*. This present universe shall be refined, purified with fire (2 Peter 3:7-12). Out of the ashes of the old will arise a new world (2 Peter 3:13). Something of rare beauty and glory of this new world is described in Revelation 21 and 22.

8. Find several verses that explain the final state of the believer and comment on them.

**Each student will respond differently here**, but they should include some of the following thoughts and verses: while we don't know the specific appearance of the new creation, we know that there will be no sea, no death, mourning or crying; there will be no temple, sun or moon; there will be no night and no darkness; there will be nothing impure or unholy in it; we will not remember or want to think of the "*former things*" and there will be no marriage (see Isaiah 65:17-19, Matthew 22:30 and Revelation 21). Our bodies will be reunited with our souls and we shall be like the resurrected and ascended Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). We know that at the end of time, we shall see God and dwell with Him for ever and ever (Luke 20:38 and 1 John 3:2).

9. Read Isaiah 25:8-9 and write a poem, song, or paragraph in which you paraphrase these verses.

**Each student will respond differently here as we are asking the students to write a creative piece paraphrasing this passage. If your student writes an exceptional piece, feel free to share a copy with CBI.**

Isaiah 25:8-9: *“he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. <sup>9</sup>In that day they will say, ‘Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.’”*

10. Explain the phrase, “we’re citizens of earth, but also citizens of heaven.”

Your student should explain that this phrase shows us that we’re citizens of some earthly country, to be sure—for your student this could be the United States, Nigeria, Mexico, Canada, England or hundreds more—but even more sure, eternally sure, we’re citizens of heaven. In light of this we must live looking forward to the consummation of our salvation and looking above to heaven, where Christ is. Living in this way directly affects the way we live today (See Hebrews 11:16).

## Digging Deeper

1. Give several reasons, supported by Scripture, why Jesus' resurrection is essential to your salvation.

We pray your student will respond that Jesus' resurrection is essential to their salvation. Make sure your student includes some of the following reasons in their explanation, plus any additional ones they think of:

Paul clearly states the importance of Jesus' bodily resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:12-32. He says, *"If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about our God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still dead in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost...if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."*

Consider also the words of our Savior, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die"* (John 11:25-26). Without Jesus' physical resurrection we would have no *"new birth into a living hope,"* nor would we have *"an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade"* (1 Peter 1:3-5).

By His resurrection, Jesus was declared to be the Son of God (Romans 1:4). Jesus' resurrection is God's stamp of approval on His work. Jesus' bodily resurrection is a truth which the Bible clearly depicts (see Psalm 16:10 & 49:16, Matthew 22:30-31, John 11, Acts 1:22, 2:22-36, 4:2, 4:33, 17:18 & 32, 23:6, Romans 6:5, 1 Corinthians 15 and Philippians 3:10-12).

2. The Heidelberg Catechism asks the question: "How does Christ's return to judge the living and the dead comfort *you*?" It then provides the answer: "In all my distress and persecution, I turn my eyes to the heavens and confidently await as judge the very One who has already stood trial in my place before God and so has removed the whole curse from me. All His enemies and mine He will condemn to everlasting punishment: but me and all His chosen ones He will take along with Him into the joy and the glory of heaven."

Comment on this question and answer; state whether you agree or disagree and add any further analysis you might have (see also Luke 21:28, Romans 8:22-25, Philippians 3:20-21, Titus 2:13-14, Matthew 25:31-46 and 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10).

**Each student will respond differently to this question.** We pray that your student will agree with this question and answer of the catechism. Be encouraging and instructive in your response to them.

3. One modern teacher, Clark Pinnock, has said, “How can Christians possibly project a deity of such cruelty and vindictiveness as to inflict everlasting torture upon His creatures, however sinful they may have been? A God who would do such a thing is more nearly like Satan than like God.” Respond to this comment, using Scripture to support your answer (see Deuteronomy 32:22-24, Psalm 73:12-19, Isaiah 66:24, Matthew 7:13-14, 22:14, 25:10, 41, Mark 9:46, Luke 16:23, 26, Acts 1:25, Jude 6, Revelation 14:10-11 and Revelation 20:10).

**Each student will respond differently** using different passages to back up their response. Your student should respond against Clark Pinnock’s comment.

**EXTRA:** R.C. Sproul, closing a sermon called *God in the Hands of Angry Sinners*, said, “Is the very notion of hell an insult to us? If so, it is clear that the God we worship is not a holy God: Indeed He is not a God at all. If we despise the justice of God, we are not Christians. We stand in a position which is every bit as precarious as the one which [Jonathan] Edwards so graphically described. If we hate the wrath of God, it is because we hate God Himself. We may protest vehemently against these charges but our vehemence only confirms our hostility toward God. We may say emphatically, ‘No, it is not God I hate; it is Edwards that I hate. God is altogether sweet to me. My God is a God of love.’ But a God of love who has no wrath is no God. He is an idol of our own making as much as if we carved Him out of stone.”

**EXTRA:** John Piper said, “I urge you to follow a process of thought about the Bible that is the reverse of the one common today. Instead of coming to the Bible and saying, ‘I feel that endless suffering cannot be just, and so the Bible cannot be teaching it,’ rather say, ‘Since the Bible teaches it, it must be just and therefore, O how infinitely dreadful sin must be! How infinitely blameworthy it must be to treat the glory of God with contempt! How infinite must be the insult to God when we do not trust his promises! What infinite beauty and glory and purity and holiness God must have, that endless suffering is a just and fitting punishment for disobeying his word!’ Annihilationism [the teaching that hell is not eternal] reduces sin from high treason to a misdemeanor. Hell is meant to fill us with awe at the glory we have scorned. And it is to fill us with wonder that the death of one man—the God-man, Jesus Christ—could bear the infinite penalty as a substitute for everyone who repents and trusts in him. Hell is an echo of the glory of God. It reveals the greatness of the glory that has been rejected and the greatness of Jesus’ suffering because he bore that hell for all who believe.”

**4. IN-DEPTH LESSON 6 ESSAY:** What are some wrong ideas you have heard people say about heaven? What does the Bible say about heaven?

**Each student will respond differently here** as they each have their own experience talking with people about heaven. However, they should be sure of one thing: what the Bible says about heaven. Make sure your student includes some of the following answers:

The only way to heaven is through faith in Jesus Christ.

The primary focus of heaven is the triune God.

In heaven, we will forever worship God for who He is and what He has done.

Heaven will be an entirely new place of our existence, though we don't know the specific appearance of the new creation.

In heaven, we will see God and dwell with Him forever.

## Challenge Questions: Read and Respond

Systematic theologian Louis Berkhof (1873-1957) wrote in his book of systematic theology about the importance of the resurrection of Christ. This was an important at the time of his writing because some his contemporary colleagues had entirely rejected the importance of the resurrection of Christ while others such as Karl Barth and Emil Brunner rejected the spiritual importance of the resurrection.

The question arises, Does it make any difference, whether we believe in the physical resurrection of Christ, or merely in an ideal resurrection? For modern liberal theology the resurrection of Jesus, except in the sense of a spiritual survival, has no real importance for Christian faith. Belief in the bodily resurrection is not essential, but can very well be dropped without affecting the Christian religion. Barth and Brunner are of a different opinion. They do believe in the historical fact of the resurrection, but maintain that as such it is merely a matter of history, with which the historian may deal to the best of his ability, and not as a matter of faith. The important element is that in the resurrection the divine breaks into the course of history, that in it the *incognito* of Jesus is removed and God reveals Himself. The historian cannot describe it, but the believer accepts it by faith.

Belief in the resurrection certainly has doctrinal bearings. We cannot deny the physical resurrection of Christ without impugning the veracity of the writers of Scripture, since they certainly represent it as a fact. This means that it affects our belief in the trustworthiness of Scripture. Moreover the resurrection of Christ is represented as having evidential value. It was the culminating proof that Christ was a teacher sent from God (the sign of Jonah), and that He was the very Son of God, Rom. 1:4. It was also the supreme attestation of the fact of immortality. What is still more important, the resurrection enters as a constitutive element into the very essence of the work of redemption, and therefore of the gospel. It is one of the great foundation stones of the Church of God. The atoning work of Christ, if it was to be effective at all, had to terminate, not in death, but in life. Furthermore, it was the Father's seal on the completed work of Christ, the public declaration of its acceptance. In it Christ passed from under the law. Finally, it was His entrance on a new life as the risen and *exalted Head of the Church and the universal Lord*. This enabled Him to apply the fruits of His redemptive work.<sup>1</sup>

1. A. How does denying the resurrection affect the veracity (truthfulness) of the rest of the Bible?

Without the resurrection, all of Christ's claims—that He is God, that He can forgive sins, that He is one with the Father, that He fulfills all Scripture—are false. For, if Christ had not risen again, He would have been conquered by sin and the grave. He would have been just as any other man who returns to dust. By the resurrection, Christ defeated Satan, proved His divinity and set His children free from the bondage of sin. Without the resurrection, one cannot even call Jesus a good teacher, a moral man or an excellent example, for He would be nothing more than a lunatic or a liar who claimed to be God and yet was no different than you or I. Furthermore, without the resurrection, other writers of Scripture are likewise liars or mislead men because they also believe in the resurrection and built all their teachings on the truthfulness of the resurrection.

<sup>1</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1914), 349.

- B. Using this quote, the material you learned in this lesson and your knowledge of Scripture, explain how the resurrection enables Christ “to apply the fruits of His redemptive work.”

Student answers will vary. Berkhof points out that in the resurrection, Christ proves Himself the “exalted Head of the Church” and the “universal Lord.” Only the Lord and Head of the Church could redeem men from their sins. When Christ rose from the grave, He conquered the curse of sin: physical and spiritual death. He proved that He is new life for the soul and the body and that He is able to give this new life to His children. Without the resurrection, He would have no power to redeem us from our sins, but as the risen Lord, He is able to redeem us from the curse of sin and the grip of Satan. Without the resurrection Christ would have no “fruits of redemptive work” to apply.

Francis Turretin (1623-1687) was a pastor and a professor of theology in Geneva, Switzerland just after the Reformation. In his three-volume work entitled *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, he wrote about the person and state of Christ now reigning in heaven. Read the following selection from his work and respond to the questions that follow.

“The sitting at God’s right hand can be understood not properly and literally (since God has neither a right nor a left hand), but figuratively and metaphorically to denote the supreme dignity and sway of Christ. The metaphor is taken from the custom of kings and chiefs, who are accustomed to place on their right hand those to whom they concede the nearest degree to them, both of honor and of power in governing. This phrase is understood of the nearest degree of honor in I Kings 2:19, where Solomon, about to show his mother special honor, places her on his right hand. And in Ps. 45:9, the wife of the king (i.e., the church) is said to stand upon the right hand of the Messiah (i.e., in the next degree of dignity to him). It is used of dominion or the administration of a kingdom (Mt. 20:21) where the mother of the sons of Zebedee seeks that they might sit on the right and left hand of Christ in his kingdom (i.e., obtain the chief offices). Hence the nature of Christ’s sitting at the right hand of the Father may be easily discerned. For two things are specially designated here: (1) the supreme majesty and glory by which he was most highly exalted by God and received a name above every name (Phil. 2:9, 10; Heb. 1:3); (2) the supreme dominion which he powerfully exerts over all creatures and which he shows especially in the government and defense of the church. The latter is explained by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:25 where he explains the sitting at the right hand of Ps. 110:1 by “reigning” (basileuein): “he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” Thus that sitting is set forth by the subjection of all things under his feet (Eph. 1:22); and “who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (1 Pet. 3:22).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing), 369.

Hence we can readily respond to the question moved here concerning the time of Christ's sitting—When did he begin to sit? From eternity?...First, Scripture expressly places the sitting of Christ after his resurrection and ascension (Eph. 1:20; Mk. 16:19; Heb. 10:12; 1 Pet. 3:21, 22). Second, it is the fruit of his humiliation and death (Heb. 1:3; 12:2). Third, he could not administer the mediatorial kingdom gloriously, unless his enemies had been conquered on the cross and in the ascension. Christ indeed as Logos was from eternity with the Father, but he cannot on that account be said to have sat down at the right hand of God (in the sense in which that sitting is ascribed to him after the resurrection according to his glorious state as Mediator). He reigned as Son over the kingdom of nature, but not as God-man over the economic kingdom. Christ as Mediator can be said in a certain sense to have sat down at the right hand of God as without flesh even before the incarnation; thus from the beginning of the world because he always was the head and King of the church who governed and defended it (Ps. 2:6; Heb. 13:8). But “with flesh,” he sits only after his passion and resurrection (Lk. 24:26). He had indeed the right of the kingdom from the hypostatical union, but he did not obtain the actual possession until after his ascension (Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:34-36).”<sup>3</sup>

2. A. In this lesson we established that Christ does not literally sit at the right hand of the Father as if God the Father had right and left hands. In the quote above, Turretin explains the historical meaning of sitting at the right hand of a leader. In your own words, explain this meaning. Then explain the two metaphorical meanings of Christ's sitting at the right hand of the Father.

Kings and chiefs used to invite those nearest them in power and honor to sit at their right hand. There was literally a seat next to a king or chief reserved for the next in line to the glory and power of throne. Thus, when Scripture speaks of Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father, this connotes that Christ is worthy of the honor and power of the Father. Christ, the majestic risen Lord is worthy of the worship and adoration of all the earth. At the same time, Christ rules over all things as the King of creation.

- B. As the Son of God, Christ was always with the Father ruling in heaven. However, Turretin points out that, as the God-man, Christ was seated at the right hand of the Father only after His resurrection and ascension. Why is this distinction important?

First, Scripture only refers to Christ sitting at the right of the Father after His resurrection and ascension. Second, the honor of this place was given to Christ only after His passion and sacrifice. As God, Christ was always with the Father, but as man, He first lived an obedient and sinless life and then was given a place at the Father's right hand. Third, at the right hand of the Father, Christ works as our mediator. Before He could be called our mediator, Christ had to conquer death and Satan in His death on the cross and resurrection from the grave.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 371..

## Definitions

---

Parousia: Christ's return, or arrival.

## What I Confess

---

1. I believe that Jesus arose from the dead on the third day. This fact is precious in my life. Now I need never fear the power of death and the grave since I shall live forever with my living Lord.
2. I believe that Jesus of Nazareth is now ruling in heaven for the sake of the saved. He is my Teacher and Prophet who continues to lead me into the ways of truth. He is my High Priest who prays for me in the presence of God. He is my King who controls everything for the welfare of the saved and for the final glory of my God.
3. I believe that Jesus Christ is on His way back to our world. There are many signs which point to His return. I keep watching and waiting for His return. This return of Jesus is the climax of His glory and the climax of my salvation.
4. When Jesus returns, my body shall be raised from the dead to be joined with my soul. Then I shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Because Jesus is my Savior, I do not fear Him as my Judge.
5. I am looking forward to the new universe which shall arise when Christ returns. In that new world, God shall be perfectly praised and I shall be able to honor Him forever in glory. In company of all the saved, I shall adore my God forever.

## IN-DEPTH LESSON SIX

---

You've probably heard the phrase, "I think I'm in heaven." Many people who do not have heaven in their future think they can find paradise on earth. There are many false views about heaven and how to "get to heaven." We know from this course, and more importantly, from Scripture, that the only way to receive peace with God and eternal life is through faith in Jesus Christ (John 14:6, Acts 4:12). This truth we must, if necessary, die defending. But there are some who truly believe in Jesus that have flawed views about heaven and the life hereafter. What does the Bible say about the eternal dwelling place of those who truly believe in Jesus Christ?

First of all, we must understand that the primary focus of heaven is the triune God—Father, Son and Spirit. In heaven, we will forever worship God for who He is and what He has done (Revelation 5:12, 7:12 and 19:1-4). Eternity will not exhaust the praise and honor due to the name of God. With exuberant rejoicing and acclamation we will honor and intimately commune with our God, for He will be our eternal dwelling place. He Himself will be our full joy, and we will never selfishly think of ourselves or others above Him.

Secondly, there will be an entirely new place of our existence. John speaks of it as "*a new heaven and a new earth*" (Revelation 21:1; see also Hebrews 11:13-16, 12:22-29, 13:14 and 2 Peter 3:11-13). The old order shall pass away, and the place that Jesus has been preparing will come down as a "*Holy City, the new Jerusalem...prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband*" (Revelation 21:2 & 4; see also John 14:2-3). While we don't know the specific appearance of the new creation, we know that there will be no sea, no death, mourning or crying; there will be no temple, sun or moon; there will be no night and no darkness; there will be nothing impure or unholy in it; we will not remember or want to think of

the “*former things*” and there will not be marriages (see Isaiah 65:17-19, Matthew 22:30 and Revelation 21). Our bodies will be reunited with our souls and we shall be like the resurrected and ascended Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). We know that, at the end of time, we shall see God and dwell with Him for ever and ever (Luke 20:38 and 1 John 3:2). In heaven, we shall fully know the beautiful words of Numbers 6:24-26. Remember this: If you have an idea of heaven other than what the Bible says about it, it is probably not true. “*No mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him*” (1 Corinthians 2:9b). Our finite minds are still plagued with sin, and we cannot, apart from what God has shown us in His Word, even begin to imagine the blessedness of heaven (Isaiah 64:4, 1 Corinthians 2:9). May we thus say in our hearts, “*Amen. Come, Lord Jesus,*” without trying to picture heaven as some extension of this earth (Revelation 22:20).



# The LIFE GIVING Christ

## *The Doctrine of Salvation*

Every sinner needs living contact with Jesus Christ the Substitute. The Savior is in heaven. The sinner is on earth. When these two come into personal companionship there is personal salvation. God the Holy Spirit, in His chief work, brings these two together. This work of the life-giving Spirit displays the wonder of God's grace in the work of salvation. Every need of the sinner is fully met by the provisions of God—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### The Spirit Poured Out

Ten days after Jesus went into heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit. It happened on Pentecost day, when about 120 believers were praying and waiting for their Master to send the other Comforter. He had promised not to leave them as orphans in the world (John 14:18). Suddenly, God the Holy Spirit came. A new, strange, wonderful power took hold, and “*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 2:4). Immediately, the waiting, praying disciples went into action. They declared the mighty works of God, and as they preached, thousands of sinners were given new life. God the Holy Spirit gave them a new birth, a birth from above. About three thousand people were saved that day (Acts 2:41).

Peter explained this miracle for his hearers. He pointed the people to Jesus: “*God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear*” (Acts 2:32-33). The victorious Lord Jesus sent forth the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who connects the sinner with Jesus the Savior.

1. **JESUS** promised that He would not leave His people as **ORPHANS** in the **WORLD** (John 14:18).

Even today, God continues to give His people the Holy Spirit. “*He [God] will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you*” (John 14:16-17; see also Matthew 28:20). Paul asks the Corinthian Christians, and us, “*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?*” (1 Corinthians 6:19). **[IN-DEPTH]** So we, too, if we are God's people, have the Holy Spirit at work within us. Christ is with us by His Spirit; He has not left us alone on earth. The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is now working powerfully within us (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12 and 3:1-4).

Many people have different ideas concerning the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. He is as fully God as are the Father and Son, and is the third person of the Trinity, not only a power or influence. As such, it is possible to lie to and grieve the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4 and Ephesians 4:30). It is not possible to lie to or grieve a mere power; this can only be done to a person. We also read that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to sinners (1 Corinthians 12:11). It is a fact; the Holy Spirit is a divine person. When He comes into the life of a sinner to save them, this means that God Himself comes into that life (Ephesians 3:14-19).

Remember, the Spirit of God always testifies of Christ (John 15:26 and 16:15). Even in Acts 1 and 2, the Holy Spirit is not the central figure—Jesus is. The Spirit always directs us to Christ and brings us into a life-giving union with Him.

2. The **HOLY SPIRIT** is God, the third divine **PERSON**; not only a **POWER** or **INFLUENCE**.

3. The **HOLY SPIRIT** always directs us to **CHRIST** and brings us into a life-giving **UNION** with **HIM**.

## The Spirit and the Message

As soon as Jesus Christ sent forth the Holy Spirit, the disciples began to preach. They proclaimed fearlessly the work of Christ to all people. Obeying the instructions of Jesus, they began at Jerusalem in the temple. From this center, they spread out until they reached the boundaries of the Roman Empire. The exciting story of the growing church is told by Luke in the Book of Acts. This church was a “witnessing church.”

As the disciples told the message, Jesus continued to save sinners (Acts 2:47). Peter and John preached in the temple, and “*more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number*” (Acts 5:14). Philip, the Evangelist, preached in the country of Samaria: “*When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said*” (Acts 8:6). Paul traveled all over the known world. Women like Lydia (Acts 16:14), philosophers like Dionysius (Acts 17:34), and even members of Caesar’s palace (Romans 16) were saved. The Gospel was true then, it is true today. “*For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe*” (1 Corinthians 1:21).

One fact must be remembered: Christ Jesus sends the Holy Spirit in connection with the Gospel

message and establishes living contact with the sinner. This is the first step on the road of personal salvation. Preachers explain many truths about God and humanity, sin and salvation. Jesus Christ and His wonderful work on behalf of sinners must be at the heart of their message. As God’s work in Christ is declared, the sinner is summoned to turn from sin and to trust in Jesus. “*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household*” (Acts 16:31).

4. Christ Jesus sends the **HOLY SPIRIT** in connection with the **GOSPEL MESSAGE** and establishes living **CONTACT** with the **SINNER**.

Paul explained his work to King Agrippa as follows: “*So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds*” (Acts 26:19-20). In the name of Christ Jesus, on authority of Christ Jesus, preachers urged sinners to repent and believe. This Gospel call is the first step on the road to personal salvation.

## Born Again

The Holy Spirit works through the message to give new life. The Christian has been “*born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For ‘All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flower of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.’ And this is the word that was preached to you*” (1 Peter 1:23-25). Every time the Word of God is preached and witnessed to by Christians, we pray that God may work the miracle of new life in the lives of those sinners still dead in sin. By the powerful working of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel preached is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

The act of God by which He makes the spiritually dead sinner alive is called **regeneration**

("rebirth" in Titus 3:5). God reaches down to the lowest depths of the sinner's need. A miracle takes place. A new life is given, which is called a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). This gift of regeneration is as marvelous, astonishing and indescribable as the creation of the world out of nothing. "For God who said, 'Let the light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

**5. REGENERATION** is the act of **GOD** by which **HE** makes the **SPIRITUALLY DEAD SINNER** alive.

This renewal—new creation, resurrection from the dead, making alive—takes place without our help. We were "born not of natural descent, nor of human decision...but born of God" (John 1:13; see also 3:3-8). The sinner does not cooperate with God in this work, does not reach out to Christ of his/her own volition. For instance, when we were born from our earthly parents we did not cooperate with our parents, we were completely passive. So, too, sinners are passive when God makes them alive. God and His grace receive the honor and the praise alone.

The saved sinner becomes a new creature: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). A born-again sinner thinks differently—they begin to think God's thoughts (Deuteronomy 30:6, Psalm 51:10 and Jeremiah 32:39). Regenerated sinners *feel* differently. Their likes and dislikes change so that they love the things of the Spirit; they desire to repent of their sin and look to Christ in faith. Their will works differently. They decide to break with sin, believe on the Lord and follow the Master. The dead sinner made alive listens to God's Word and the Gospel message, and begins to pattern his/her life according to the truth of God.

**6. The SINNER** does not cooperate with **GOD** in regeneration; **SINNERS** are passive when

**GOD** makes them alive.

**7. The SAVED SINNER** becomes a new **CREATURE**: "Therefore, if anyone is in **CHRIST**, he is a **NEW CREATION**; the old has **GONE**, the new has **COME**" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

## Repentance

John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming of Christ. His message, "Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15), mimicked that of Jesus Himself: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 4:17). Paul followed the example of his Master. At Athens, he said, "In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed..." (Acts 17:30-31). Repentance is an imperative, a command made to all. Obedience to His command flows from our new life.

In repentance, we admit our sin. The Christian compares their life with the great commandment, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind'. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37-39). Christians learn to see their attitudes and actions as insufficient compared to this law of love. They admit their sin as they swallow their pride. They confess their sins and stop making excuses for themselves. With David, they say, "I know my transgressions" (Psalm 51:3). With the publican in the temple, the repentant sinner cries out, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

In repentance, we experience sorrow for our sins. This is the godly sorrow that "brings repentance that leads to salvation" (2 Corinthians 7:10). This is not a mere regret because one must accept punishment. Judas, the betrayer, had his regrets, but no godly sorrow. True sorrow for sin is born out of love for God. The truly repentant sinner cries

out to God: “*against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight*” (Psalm 51:4). The new-born sinner has experienced God’s love in Jesus Christ. Christians are sorry for each time they have wounded the love of God, so they turn away from sinful actions.

**8. The truly repentant sinner prays, “*against YOU, you only, have I SINNED and done what is EVIL in your SIGHT*” (Psalm 51:4).**

## Faith

When people turn *from* something, they must turn *to* something. The sinner does exactly that. By God’s grace, sinners turn from sin to holiness, from self to the Savior. Repentance is the *turning from* and faith is the *turning to*. Repentance and faith are two sides of one coin.

To believe in someone involves knowing the person in whom you have faith. One part of faith is “not only a knowledge and conviction that everything God reveals in his Word is true” (Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 21); the truth in the Bible about God, ourselves, sin and the Savior must become convictions in our lives. The knowledge of faith knows with conviction the truths of Scripture.

To believe in someone also involves trust, another part of faith. Faith is “a deep-rooted assurance, created in me by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, that, out of sheer grace earned for us by Christ, not only others, but I too, have had my sins forgiven, have been made right with God, and have been granted salvation” (Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 21). This means self-surrender to Jesus Christ and His Word. Faith means no longer relying on self, but completely relying and resting on the Savior Jesus Christ.

Both knowledge and confidence must penetrate each other. Our knowledge of Christ must be colored by full trust, and our full trust must be supported by knowledge. This faith is the empty hand which longs to be filled by God. To believe is to

abandon ourselves completely to God and Jesus Christ.

**9. FAITH means completely RELYING and RESTING on the SAVIOR.**

## Justification

The most important question of religion is, “Am I right with God?” Christians know they are sinners. They also know God is perfectly holy. The question then becomes urgent: Am I, the unholy sinner, right with God, the Holy One?

This question is answered for the genuine believer. In the act of believing, the sinner rejoices in the good news of peace with God. They know what Paul means in Romans 5:1, “*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” This is the heartbeat of the Gospel. Guilty sinners are declared by the Holy God to be free from guilt. Instead of undergoing the condemnation they deserve, believing sinners are justified. **Justification** is a judicial act of God in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the Law are satisfied with respect to the sinner. The sinner rejoices in the act of faith, saying, “*Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns?*” (Romans 8:33-34). The sinner lives on terms of peace with God because of the work of our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

In justification, the holy and righteous God declares the guilty sinner completely free from sin. The godless sinner is declared godly. When God justifies a person, He doesn’t make the person righteous—the sinner is constituted righteous on the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross. God the Judge does this in a way which fits in with His perfect holiness and righteousness. In Christ’s work of salvation, God shows Himself “*to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus*” (Romans 3:26). God takes the perfect work of Jesus Christ and reckons it to the believing sinner’s life. God takes the whole work

of our Substitute and applies it to the believer's account. The Judge declares the work of the Savior to be the work of the believer.

10. In **JUSTIFICATION**, the holy and **RIGHTEOUS GOD** declares the guilty **SINNER** completely free from **SIN**.

### The Great Exchange

Think of this miracle of free grace as something like this: You owe your neighbor one thousand dollars. You are paralyzed, completely unable to make money in order to pay your debt. In spite of your paralysis you must pay. Your neighbor has a rightful claim to the one thousand dollars, and he brings you to court. Appearing before the judge you are ready to be sentenced. Then a friend comes and gives your neighbor one thousand dollars. The friend explains that this one thousand dollars is to be reckoned as your payment. Seeing your friend's action the judge declares you free from the debt. The judge reckons the money of your friend to be your money. You leave the courtroom in terms of peace with your neighbor.

God is the Judge. You are the sinner loaded with debt to the Law. Christ Jesus is your friend. His life and His work are freely given to you. God, the Judge, reckons Christ's work to be yours. He declares you free from all debt; this is the picture of justification. You are "*justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus*" (Romans 3:24). You are right with God, and you can live together with Him on terms of peace and love.

We sinners get right with God by faith. We cannot work our way into God's love. Nothing we do can make us right with God. Not even our best actions such as worship, prayer, Bible reading or love to God and our fellow neighbors can help us get right with God. All our actions, even the best we can bring, are still imperfect and stained with sin: "*all our righteous acts are like filthy rags*" (Isaiah 64:6). We are justified by faith alone. Our works play no part in justification. "*For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the*

*law*" (Romans 3:28).

*"We...know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified"* (Galatians 2:16).

11. "... a man is **JUSTIFIED** by **FAITH** apart from **OBSERVING** the **LAW**" (Romans 3:28).

The work of Christ also brings believers into the family of God. Theologically, we call this adoption. **Adoption** is a legal act in which God brings a believer into the position of His child and gives the believer all the legal rights of a family member. "*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God*" (John 1:12-13). Paul also puts it clearly in Galatians 4:4-7, where he declares that Christ redeemed those under the law so that they might receive the full rights of children. We are no longer slaves, Paul says, and since we are His children, we are heirs of God in Christ.

12. Adoption is a **LEGAL ACT** in which God **BRINGS** a **BELIEVER** into the **POSITION** of **HIS CHILD** and gives the **BELIEVER** all the **LEGAL RIGHTS** of a **FAMILY MEMBER**.

### The Consecrated Life

**P**ace with God means service for God. Sinners freed from their debts use their freedom to honor the God who made them free. The sinner is saved to serve. "*You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body*" (1 Corinthians 6:20). Your life surrendered to Jesus for salvation is also surrendered for service.

The consecrated life is God-centered. The whole purpose of the Christian life is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Everything the Christian does

must center on God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit: “*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31). Christ gives Christians a new place in this world. “*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into marvelous light*” (1 Peter 2:9).

13. The sinner is saved to **SERVE**.

14. The **PURPOSE** of the Christian life is to **GLORIFY** God and **ENJOY** Him forever.

**Sanctification** is the daily process of the Spirit working in us to purify us from the pollution of sin, renew us into the image of God and enable us to do works that are pleasing to Him. Paul uses these terms: “*I pray...he [God] may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being*” (Ephesians 3:16), “*inwardly we are being renewed day by day*” (2 Corinthians 4:16) and “*may God himself...sanctify you through and through*” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Although justification and sanctification go hand in hand, they are distinct: justification is a *one-time* legal declaration that we are righteous, sanctification is an *on-going* process that gradually makes us more holy as we live the consecrated life.

Our life here on earth is directly affected by Jesus’ resurrection. His resurrection is our resurrection; His Spirit is powerfully at work within us, renewing us. As citizens of heaven, we live here on earth the life looking toward heaven. Paradise motivates our actions; as we long for our heavenly home, our morals and actions are patterned after this, our true dwelling place. The age to come is realized in principle by us—even here, even now in this dark and passing-away age. Just like a peninsula protrudes into the ocean, so the Spirit brings some of this coming age into our hearts. Since we “*have been raised with Christ,*” we set our minds on “*things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God,*” and our lives are now “*hidden with Christ in God*” (Colossians 3:1-3).

Our conduct on earth must exemplify the fact that we are raised with Christ and are now seated with Him in heaven. If we are Christ’s, people will know we are being sanctified by Him. Our conduct on earth must show others that we are citizens of heaven, where Christ, our life, dwells. “*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him*” (Colossians 3:15-17).

15. Sanctification is the **DAILY PROCESS** of the **SPIRIT WORKING** in **US** to **PURIFY** us from the **POLLUTION** of **SIN**, renew **US** **INTO** the **IMAGE** of **GOD** and **ENABLE** **US** to do **WORKS** that are **PLEASING** to **HIM**.

## Short Answer Essays

1. Explain this phrase: “In order for us to enjoy and experience the saving work of Jesus Christ, we need His redemption applied to us.”

Your student should agree with this statement and respond with an answer such as the following: Without being united to Christ by His Spirit, we could not enjoy the benefits that Christ merited for His people. In order to receive salvation, the sinner must be joined with Christ who is in heaven. The Holy Spirit, given by Christ, unites a sinner to his Savior (see John 4:23-24, 6:63, Romans 8:2-17, 1 Corinthians 15:45, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Ephesians 2:1-8, 1 Peter 3:18 and 1 John 4:13).

2. When and why did Jesus send His Holy Spirit? Use Scripture to explain your answer.

Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to His people ten days after His ascension into heaven. This event is known as the Pentecost. One reason Jesus sent His Spirit was so that His people could witness to others, or preach the Gospel (Acts 1:8). Jesus also sent His Spirit so that His people could enjoy fellowship, or communion, with one another (Philippians 2:1). The Holy Spirit also sanctifies the Christians, making them more like Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 1 Peter 1:2, 22). Jesus' Spirit gives us power and boldness in His name (2 Timothy 1:6-7). Finally, the Holy Spirit also regenerates our hearts and makes us able to believe and repent (1 Peter 3:18 and 1 John 4:2). The student may focus on Jesus' own words concerning the giving of His Spirit (Matthew 10:20, John 14:15-27 and John 16:5-16). They may also point to Jesus' continuing work on earth through His Spirit. Consider the fact that the Spirit of Truth speaks to the 7-fold church, the church that exists between Jesus' ascension and return (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13 and 22). Additional verses for further reference: John 4:23-24, John 6:63, Romans 8:2-17, 1 Corinthians 15:45, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Ephesians 2:1-8, 1 Peter 3:18 and 1 John 4:13.

3. Explain what is meant by the phrase, the “Gospel call.”

The Gospel call is the message which preachers use, in the name of Christ Jesus, and on His authority, to urge sinners to repent and believe. This Gospel call is the first step on the road to personal salvation. Christ Jesus sends the Holy Spirit in connection with the Gospel message and establishes living contact with the sinner. Preachers explain many truths about God and man, sin and salvation. Jesus Christ and His wonderful work on behalf of sinners must be at the heart of their message. As God's work in Christ is declared, the sinner is summoned to turn from sin and to trust in Jesus. Every time the Word of God is preached and witnessed to by Christians, we pray that God may work the miracle of new life in the lives of those sinners still dead in sin. By the powerful working of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel preached is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). The following passages explain the Gospel call : Acts 2:47, 5:14, 8:6, 16:31, 26:19-20; Romans 16 and 1 Corinthians 1:21.

#### 4. Explain regeneration.

Regeneration is the act of God by which He makes the spiritually dead sinner alive (“*rebirth*” in Titus 3:5). God reaches down to the lowest depths of the sinner’s need. A miracle takes place. A new life is given which is called a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). This gift of regeneration is as marvelous, as astonishing and as indescribable as the creation of the world out of nothing.

#### 5. What is repentance?

Repentance is an imperative. It is a command made to all, and obedience to this command flows from our new life. In repentance, we admit our sin. The Christian learns to see their attitudes and actions as insufficient compared to the law of love. We admit our sin as we swallow our pride. We confess our sin and stop making excuses for ourselves.

6. Martin Luther, a leader of the Reformation in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, once said, “The forgiveness of sins is declared only in God’s Word, and there we must seek it; for it is grounded on God’s promises. God forgives thee thy sins, not because thou feelest them and art sorry, for this sin itself produces, without deserving, but He forgives thy sins because He is merciful, and because He has promised to forgive for Christ’s sake.” Comment on this remark.

**Each student will comment and respond differently to this statement.** Be sensitive to their response to God’s forgiveness. Be sure your student does not think that God’s forgiveness is dependent upon their attitude of repentance and feeling sorry. God forgives simply because He is merciful and He promised to forgive in Christ.

**EXTRA:** Luther also said, “Sin and conscience torment us, but Christ has overcome these fiends now and forever. Only Christians possess this victorious knowledge given from above. These two terms, grace and peace, constitute Christianity. Grace involves the remission of sins, peace, and a happy conscience. Sin is not canceled by lawful living, for no person is able to live up to the Law. The Law reveals guilt, fills the conscience with terror, and drives men to despair. Much less is sin taken away by man-invented endeavors. The fact is, the more a person seeks credit for himself by his own efforts, the deeper he goes into debt. Nothing can take away sin except the grace of God. In actual living, however, it is not so easy to persuade oneself that by grace alone, in opposition to every other means, we obtain the forgiveness of our sins and peace with God.”

7. Is faith a “leap in the dark?” Explain your answer using Scripture (Ephesians 2:8-10, Philippians 3:9, 1 Timothy 6:11-12, Hebrews 10:22, Hebrews 11, 1 Peter 1:7-9, 21 and 1 John 5:4).

We pray your student will fully understand that faith is *not* a leap in the dark. Faith does require a leap, but it is not a leap into the unknown darkness. Rather, the light of Christ illuminates the place to which we jump when we accept Him as a savior, and His strong hands suspend us as we trust him to guide us from spiritual darkness into a saving knowledge of Him. Faith is the knowledge and firm conviction that God’s Word is true and that Jesus is the perfect Savior. But faith is not just that—faith also involves trust. Faith is “a deep-rooted assurance, created in me by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, that, out of sheer grace earned for us by Christ, not only others, but I too, have had my sins forgiven, have been made right with God, and have been granted salvation” (Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 21). This means self-surrender to Jesus Christ and His Word. Faith means no longer relying on self, but completely relying and resting on the Savior.

8. In your own words, define justification.

Your student should explain that justification is a judicial act of God in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the sinner. Your student’s answer should include some of the following:

Justification:

1. Is a legal declaration of God’s grace whereby He forgives sins and accepts a sinner as righteous.
2. Is an external, once-for-all pronouncement of “not guilty”.
3. Removes the guilt of sin.
4. Restores the sinner to God’s favor.
5. Takes place outside a sinner, in God’s tribunal.
6. Is based on the work of Christ, His active and passive obedience.

9. Are we justified by faith alone or by faith and works?

We pray your student now has the understanding that we are justified by faith alone. Simply by believing the Gospel, we are declared righteous in God’s courtroom. Works play no part in our standing with God—the only “works” that can avail for the sinner are Christ’s.

## 10. What is sanctification?

Another definition your student should have learned in this lesson is that sanctification is the daily process of the Spirit working in us to purify us from the pollution of sin, renewing us into the image of God and enabling us to do works that are pleasing to God. Your student's answer should include some of the following:

Sanctification:

Removes the pollution of sin.

Renews the sinner to begin to obey God.

Takes place inside the sinner.

Is an ongoing process.

## 11. How is our life here on earth directly affected by the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Your student should express that his/her life is directly affected by Jesus' resurrection because it is *their* resurrection, and that His Spirit is powerfully at work within them, renewing them. As citizens of heaven, we live the life looking toward heaven here on earth. This motivates our actions; we long for our heavenly home and our morals and actions are patterned after our true dwelling place. The age to come is realized in principle by us—even here, even now in this dark and passing age. Just as a peninsula protrudes into the ocean, so the Spirit brings some of the coming age into our hearts. Since we *"have been raised with Christ,"* we set our minds on *"things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God,"* and our lives are now *"hidden with Christ in God"* (Colossians 3:1-3). Your student should also express that their conduct on earth must exemplify the fact that they have been raised with Christ, and are now seated with Him in heaven. If we are Christ's, people will know we are being sanctified by Him. Our conduct on earth must show others that we are citizens of heaven, where Christ, our life, dwells (Colossians 3:15-17).

## Digging Deeper

1. Using this lesson and Scripture, what is the chief work of the Holy Spirit? Write a structured essay explaining the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Your student should explain that the chief work of the Holy Spirit is connecting the sinner, who is on earth, to the Savior, who is in heaven. Once brought together into a personal companionship, there is personal salvation. This work of the life-giving Spirit displays the wonder of God's grace in the work of salvation. Every need of the sinner is fully met by the provisions of God—the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Your student should include some of the following answers as well:

God gives His Spirit to His people and is powerfully at work in the world.

The Holy Spirit works in connection with the Gospel message of Christ to establish living contact with the sinner.

The Holy Spirit works through the message to give new life.

The Spirit creates in believers the attitude of repentance and the assurance of faith.

The Spirit works daily in the believer's life to purify them from the pollution of sin, renewing them unto the image of God and enabling them to do works that are pleasing to God.

2. What is regeneration, and what does it have to do with faith and repentance?

Your student should recall from the lesson that regeneration is the act of God by which He makes the spiritually dead sinner alive. Your student should comment that regeneration has much to do with faith and repentance, because an unregenerated person cannot repent of their sins and accept Jesus by faith. They are unable to do this because they are spiritually dead! Only a regenerated sinner, who now loves the things of the Spirit, desires to repent of his/her sin and look to Christ in faith. Regeneration is the first step to repentance and faith, though this all takes place without our help, for it is of God and by His grace. After regeneration, repentance and faith flow from our new life.

**EXTRA:** “Regeneration is that act of God by which the principle of the new life is implanted in man, and the governing disposition of the soul is made holy” (L. Berkhof).

3. What is the difference between justification and sanctification?

Your student should notice that justification is a declaration, a legal act, in which God pronounces the sinner not guilty as a result of Jesus’ work. Justification happens once-for-all, and does not take place within the sinner. Sanctification, on the other hand, is a daily renewal, whereby God’s Spirit removes the pollution of sin and makes us eager to do good works. Sanctification takes place within the sinner. Again, justification is a one-time declaration, sanctification is an on-going process.

4. How would you explain “the great exchange” to a new Christian?

Your student should answer that the great exchange is the teaching that Jesus’ perfect obedience and righteousness was imputed, or accredited, to us freely by God’s grace through faith. But the exchange isn’t complete without our sin and death being imputed, or accredited, to Christ in His death on the cross, justifying us and declaring us free. Your student may compare this great exchange to a large debt owed to a neighbor, like the comparison given in the lesson.

**5. IN-DEPTH LESSON 7 ESSAY:** What is the significance of the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament?

Your student should explain how the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament point us forward to the New Testament and the dwelling of God with man in the person of Jesus Christ and the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of each believer.

The tabernacle was God dwelling with His people while they wandered in the wilderness. When they entered into the Promised Land, Canaan, God instructed Solomon to build Him a temple. Jehovah dwelt among His people in the tabernacle while they were in the desert and in the temple when they reached the Promised Land.

Moving forward in history, when the incarnate God walked the earth, He came to dwell with His people. This is the true meaning of God's temple: God dwelling among His people in the person of Jesus Christ. But that is not the end! After Jesus ascended into heaven, He left the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of God's people. Because the Spirit lives in each believer, each believer is a temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). The Spirit lives in us and thus we are God's temples.

## Challenge Questions: Read and Respond

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) served as a pastor in Scotland. The following quote is from his important work on the doctrine of justification. Pay careful attention to the extended quote from this work and answer the questions below.

“Man has always treated sin as a misfortune, not a crime; as disease, not guilt; as a case for the physician, not for the judge. Herein lies the essential faultiness of all mere human religions or theologies. They fail to acknowledge the judicial aspect of the question, as that on which the real answer must hinge; and to recognize the guilt or criminality of the evil-doer as that which must first be dealt with before any real answer, or approximation to an answer, can be given. God is a Father; but He is no less a Judge. Shall the Judge give way to the Father, or the Father give way to the Judge? God loves the sinner; but He hates the sin. Shall He sink His love to the sinner in His hatred of the sin, or His hatred of the sin in His love to the sinner? God has sworn that He has no pleasure in the death of a sinner (Ezekiel 33:11); yet He has also sworn that the soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezekiel 18:4). Which of the two oaths shall be kept? Shall the one give way to the other? Can both be kept inviolate? Can a contradiction, apparently so direct, be reconciled? Which is the more unchangeable and irreversible, the vow of pity or the oath of justice? Law and love must be reconciled, else the great question as to a sinner’s intercourse with the Holy One must remain unanswered. The one cannot give way to the other. Both must stand, else the pillars of the universe will be shaken. The reconciliation man has often tried; for he has always had a glimpse of the difficulty. But he has failed; for his endeavors have always been in the direction of making law succumb to love. The reconciliation God has accomplished; and, in the accomplishment, both law and love have triumphed. The one has not given way to the other. Each has kept its ground; nay, each has come from the conflict honored and glorified. Never has there been love like this love of God; so large, so lofty, so intense, so self-sacrificing. Never has law been so pure, so broad, so glorious, so inexorable. There has been no compromise. Law and love have both had their full scope. Not one jot or tittle has been surrendered by either. They have been satisfied to the full; the one in all its severity, the other in all its tenderness. Love has never been more truly love, and law has never been more truly law, than in this conjunction of the two. It has been reconciliation, without compromise. God’s honour has been maintained, yet man’s interests have not been sacrificed. God has done it all; and He has done it effectually and irreversibly. Man could not have done it, even though he could have devised it. But truly he could do neither. God only could have devised and done it. He has done it by removing the whole case into His own courts of law, that it might be settled there on a righteous basis. Man could not have gone into court with the case, save in the certainty that he would lose it. God comes into court, bringing man and man’s whole case along with Him, that upon righteous principles, and in a legal way, the case may be settled, at once in favour of man and in favour of God. It is this judicial settlement of the case that is God’s one and final answer to man’s long unanswered question, “How shall man be just with God?” “Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God?” (Micah 6:6). God provides the basis of the reconciliation; a basis which demonstrates that there is no compromise between law and love, but the full expression of both; a basis which establishes both the authority and the paternity of Jehovah, as Lawgiver and Father; a basis which reveals in infinite awfulness the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the spotless purity of the statute, the unbending character of God’s governmental ordinances; and which yet secures, in and by law, the righteous overflow of His boundless love to the lost sons of Adam. This basis of reconciliation between law and love God has Himself not only provided, but brought into His own courts of law; proposing to the sinner that all the questions between Himself and the sinner should be settled on this basis, so equitable, so friendly, so secure; and settled in judicial form, by a legal process, in which verdict is given in favour of the accused, and he is clean absolved justified from all things.”<sup>1</sup>

In another chapter Bonar explains that this apparent contradiction is reconciled in the cross, where sin was atoned, and our guilt was substituted for his love.

<sup>1</sup> Horatius Bonar; *The Everlasting Righteousness; or How Shall Man Be Justified with God?* (London: James Nisbet And Co., 1873), 5-7.

“In so far, then, as substitution is concerned, we have to do with the cross alone. It was, indeed, the place of death; but on that very account it was also to us a place of life and the pledge of resurrection.”<sup>2</sup> The climax of this event is found in Jesus’ words, “It is finished.”

“It is so finished that a sinner may at once use it for pardon, for rest, for acceptance, for justification. Standing beside this altar where the great burnt-offering was laid and consumed to ashes, the sinner feels that he is put in possession of all blessing. That which the altar has secured passes over to him simply in virtue of his taking his place at the altar, and thus identifying himself with the victim. There the divine displeasure against sin has spent itself; there righteousness has been obtained for the unrighteous; there the sweet savor of rest is continually ascending from God; there the full flood of divine love is ever flowing out; there God meets the sinner in His fullest grace, without hindrance or restraint; there the peace which has been made through blood-shedding is found by the sinner; there reconciliation is proclaimed, and the voice that proclaims it from that altar reaches to the ends of the earth; there the ambassadors of peace take their stand to discharge their embassy, pleading with the sons of men far off and near, saying, ‘Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.’”<sup>3</sup>

1. A. Bonar begins by discussing the apparent contradiction between God’s love for the sinner and hatred for sin because God is both just and loving. Explain how both law and love triumphed in the reconciliation God accomplished on the cross.

On the cross, Christ satisfied the justice of God by perfectly fulfilling the law of God. As the perfect law-keeper, He paid the penalty for the sins of His children and took upon Himself the wrath of the Father for the iniquities He bore. As sin was punished, God’s just nature was fulfilled. Yet, at the same time, love held Christ to the cross. He willingly laid His life down for His beloved children and He willingly obeyed the Father—out of love. Only because the Lord loved His own did He sacrifice His Son, and only because the Son loved those the Father gave Him did He allow Himself to be ridiculed, beaten and killed.

- B. According to this quote, how is man made just with God? Is justification a work of God or of man?

Man is made just with God through the full expression of God’s love and law. And who is the full expression of God’s love and law but Christ? The sinner is made just before God through Christ and Him alone. It is by His work, His sacrifice, His obedience, His law-keeping, His love that Christians are justified. We are declared righteous before Almighty God not based on our works. In fact, we are declared righteous in spite of our own works, on the basis of another’s work: the work of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> Horatius Bonar; *The Everlasting Righteousness; or How Shall Man Be Justified with God?* (London: James Nisbet And Co., 1873), 20.

<sup>3</sup> Horatius Bonar; *The Everlasting Righteousness; or How Shall Man Be Justified with God?* (London: James Nisbet And Co., 1873), 27-28.

John Owen (1616-1883), a prolific writer and Puritan theologian wrote a practical book on the process of sanctification entitled *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*. (Here the word “mortification” is similar in meaning to “putting to death.”) Read what he writes about the responsibilities of believers and the role of the Holy Spirit in the mortification of sin.

“It is our duty to be “perfecting holiness in the fear of God,” 2 Corinthians 7:1; to be “growing in grace” everyday, 1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 3:18; to be “renewing our inward man day by day,” 2 Corinthians 4:16. Now, this cannot be done without the daily mortifying of sin. Sin sets its strength against every act of holiness, and against every degree we grow to. Let not that man think he makes any progress in holiness who walks not over the bellies of his lusts. He who doth not kill sin in his way takes no steps towards his journey’s end. He who finds not opposition from it, and who sets not himself in every particular to its mortification, is at peace with it, not dying to it...He [Holy Spirit] is *promised* of God to be given unto us to do this work. The taking away of the stony heart,—that is, the stubborn, proud, rebellious, unbelieving heart,—is in general the work of mortification that we treat of. Now this is still promised to be done by the Spirit, Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26, “I will give my Spirit, and take away the stony heart;” and by the Spirit of God is this work wrought when all means fail, Isaiah 57:17, 18. We have all our mortification from the *gift* of Christ, and all the gifts of Christ are communicated to us and given us by the Spirit of Christ: “Without Christ we can do nothing,” John 15:5. All communications of supplies and relief, in the beginnings, increasings, actings of any grace whatever, from him, are by the Spirit, by whom he alone works in and upon believers. From him we have our mortification: “He is exalted and made a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance unto us,” Acts 5:31; and of our repentance our mortification is no small portion. How doth he do it? Having “received the promise of the Holy Ghost,” he sends him abroad for that end, Acts 2:33. You know the manifold promises he made of sending the Spirit, as Tertullian speaks, “Vicariam navare operam,” to do the works that he had to accomplish in us. The resolution of one or two questions will now lead me nearer to what I principally intend. The first is, *How doth the Spirit mortify sin?* I answer, in general, three ways:— [1.] By causing our hearts to abound in *grace* and the fruits that are contrary to the flesh, and the fruits thereof and principles of them. So the apostle opposes the fruits of the flesh and of the Spirit: “The fruits of the flesh,” says he, “are so and so,” Galatians 5:19-21; “but,” says he, “the fruits of the Spirit are quite contrary, quite of another sort,” verses 22, 23. Yea; but what if these are in us and do abound, may not the other abound also? No, says he, verse 24, “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” But how? Why, verse 25, “By living in the Spirit and walking after the Spirit;”—that is, by the abounding of these graces of the Spirit in us, and walking according to them. For, saith the apostle, “These are contrary one to another,” verse 17; so that they cannot both be in the same subject, in any intense or high degree. This “renewing of us by the Holy Ghost,” as it is called, Titus 3:5, is one great way of mortification; he causes us to grow, thrive, flourish, and abound in those graces which are contrary, opposite, and destructive to all the fruits of the flesh, and to the quiet or thriving of indwelling sin itself. [2.] By a *real physical efficiency* on the root and habit of sin, for the weakening, destroying, and taking it away. Hence he is called a “Spirit of judgment and burning,” Isaiah 4:4, really consuming and destroying our lusts. He takes away the stony heart by an almighty efficiency; for as he begins the work as to its kind, so he carries it on as to its degrees. He is the fire which burns up the very root of lust. [3.] He brings the *cross of Christ* into the heart of a sinner by faith, and gives us communion with Christ in his death, and fellowship in his sufferings...”<sup>4</sup>

2. A. Why must the Christian work to mortify the lusts of the flesh?

The Christian must mortify sin because it is the Christian’s calling to be holy as God is holy. Holiness is not possible when sin is present because sin constantly wars against the spirit, preventing holiness, stopping spiritual growth. If left unchecked, sin will continue to take over more corners of the Christian’s heart. It is the nature of sin to choke out godliness, and as sinful beings, this struggle is constant and tedious for the Christian.

<sup>4</sup> John Owen, *Overcoming Sin and Temptation*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 55, 61.

B. According to Owen, how does the Spirit help Christians in the struggle against sin?

First, the Spirit causes our hearts to abound in grace, growing the fruits of the Spirit in our hearts in the place of the vile fruits of sin that rot out our spiritual center. Second, the Spirit brings us what Owen calls “real physical efficiency” so that He replaces our hearts of stone with hearts of flesh and with His holy fire burns out the roots of sin within us. Third, the Spirit brings the cross of Christ to our hearts, making us to fellowship with him and to become unattracted to fellowship with the world and the devil.

## Definitions

---

Regeneration: The act of God by which He makes the spiritually dead sinner alive.

Justification: A judicial act of God in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the sinner.

Adoption: The legal act in which God brings a believer into the position of His child and gives the believer all the legal rights of a family member.

Sanctification: The daily process of the Spirit working in us to purify us from the pollution of sin, renew us into the image of God and enable us to do works that are pleasing to God.

## What I Confess

---

1. I praise the work of God and the Holy Spirit in my life. It is the Holy Spirit who unites my life to Jesus Christ my Savior. Without this wonderful work of the Holy Spirit I would still be spiritually dead.
2. I believe that I am a born-again child of God. God the Holy Spirit came into my life and made a new creature out of me. I do not know just how the Holy Spirit did this, but I do know that He did it all. Because God worked this miracle in my life, I now am able and willing to confess Christ as my Savior and Lord.
3. I give God the glory for making me alive. I did not cooperate with the Holy Spirit in this work of regeneration. He opened the closed doors of my life and entered in. He softened my hard heart. Now, I delight to do God's will and love God above all.
4. I believe that the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ are working together in saving my life. Now that I am a regenerated person, I know that Jesus Christ lives within my heart. My Savior's personal presence in my life is my biggest joy and strength.
5. I believe that preaching the Gospel is very important. The Holy Spirit usually works in connection with this work of preaching to give dead sinners new life. I shall continue to pray that God may save others through the preaching of the Gospel. I know in my own life that the Gospel is a power of God unto salvation.
6. I have heard God's call to repentance in my own life. As my spiritual life grows I discover a deep sorrow for sins because I have wounded the love of God. The more I see of sin in my life and around my life the more I detest it and fight against it.
7. I believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. I know something about His marvelous work and am convinced that it fits exactly the needs of my life. Not only do I know Jesus Christ but I trust Him completely. By God's grace I have abandoned my whole life to Him.
8. I know that I am justified by faith. God, my Holy Judge, no longer holds my sins against me. My sins are forgiven because of everything Jesus did for me. God declares the perfect work of Jesus to be mine, so completely that God now looks on me as if I did it myself. How I praise my Savior for His free and rich gift of salvation!
9. I realize that I am justified only in the way of faith. Nothing I do could possibly make me right with God. Even the best actions of my life are stained with sin. Even my faith does not save me. It is God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who saves me in the way of faith.
10. I know that I have been bought by the precious blood of Christ. I no longer belong to myself, but belong completely to my Savior. I shall try to glorify, praise and serve my God completely. I realize this will demand much sacrifice, self-denial and strength, but I can now do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
11. As a citizen of heaven, I long for my true homeland. I rejoice in the fact that God is purifying me by His Spirit and making me more holy each day. I live in the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When He was raised, so was I, and now I am seated with Him in heaven because of what He has already done.

## IN-DEPTH LESSON SEVEN

---

When Paul says, “*your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit*” in 1 Corinthians 6:19, he is making a powerful and profound connection between an Old Testament Israelite religious truth and the New Testament Church religious truth. Looking back several thousand years, consider the meaning of the tabernacle as God had instituted it in the religious sphere of His people’s worship. When God said, “...*have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them,*” He was telling the Israelites that the tabernacle would be His actual presence with them (Exodus 25:8). The tabernacle was God dwelling with His people while they wandered in the wilderness; it moved when they moved and stopped when they stopped. When they entered into the Promised Land, Canaan, God instructed Solomon to build Him a temple—one that was in a fixed location in Jerusalem (see 2 Samuel 7:12-16 and 1 Kings 5:5). Jehovah dwelt among His people in the temple, in Jerusalem, in the Promised Land.

Moving forward in redemptive history, we find the true meaning of the tabernacle, temple and God dwelling among His people. Hopefully, you see it—“*the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us*” (John 1:14). Hopefully, you know that Jesus is Immanuel, “*which means, ‘God with us’*” (Matthew 1:23). The tabernacle was never intended to be permanent, nor was the temple. These things bring us onward in history to God dwelling among His people in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself declared that He was the true temple of God (John 2:19-20). He said, “*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father*” (John 14:9). Yes, beloved Christian, God came to earth, in the flesh, as a human, in our Savior Jesus Christ! We never need to look forward to another temple, because we have one—Jesus!

But that’s not the end of this beautiful drama. Remember Paul’s words, “*Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you*” (1 Corinthians 3:16). After Christ was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, He did not leave His people alone. God is not merely *with* us always, He is *in* us through His Spirit! It is certainly a deep spiritual mystery, but the Bible makes no uncertain statements concerning this comfort: “*if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you*” (Romans 8:11). We know that the Spirit lives in us, and we are God’s temples; He dwells in His people. It is a deep comfort for us: “...*this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us...the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world*” (1 John 3:24 & 4:4).

## LESSON 8

# The NEW LIFE In Fellowship

## *The Doctrine of the Church*

A citizen is part of his/her nation. A soldier is a member of the army. So a Christian belongs to the church. A citizen cannot be a citizen without belonging to the nation. The soldier cannot be a soldier without being in the army. Thus, a Christian cannot be a Christian without belonging to the church.

### The Church

The church of Jesus Christ is a family of believing sinners who rely on their Savior for salvation. The church is the gathering “of true Christian believers, awaiting their entire salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by his blood, and sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit” (Belgic Confession, Article XXVII). The Christian believer becomes a spiritual relative of every other Christian believer, and together they have a common life. “*There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all*” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

The Bible uses many names to describe this family of saved sinners. The church is called the *Body of Christ*, the *Bride of Christ*, the *Household of Faith*, the *Sheep of the Great Shepherd*, and the *Temple of God*, among others (1 Corinthians 12:27, Revelation 21:9, 1 Peter 2:5, Hebrews 13:20 and 2 Corinthians 6:16). Each name describes some special quality of the church. The important thing to remember is that it is Christ Jesus who makes the church what it is (Ephesians 2:20). His life gives heart to the church. His truth is the message of the church. His word is the standard by which the church measures its actions (1

Thessalonians 2:13). His work is the hope of the church.

1. The **CHURCH** of Jesus Christ is a **FAMILY** of believing **SINNERS** who rely on their **SAVIOR** for **SALVATION**.

### The Church and the Churches

This one church is seen by us as many churches. There are Reformed, Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian churches and many others. These groups of churches are called denominations, and each denomination has its special way of working. Some churches are not part of any denomination and are independent. All churches, however, should try to be obedient to Christ’s will as made known in the Bible. Other denominations believe and practice only that which makes sense to them, using the rule of human reason as the standard for their actions.

Newly-born Christians are often confused when they see all these churches. Their confusion grows worse when they hear each of these churches claiming to be the true church. When this happens, the new Christian must do one important thing. He/She must take the official teaching and public actions of the churches in their neighborhood and measure them by the truth of the Bible. Christians must work and pray in order to follow after Christ’s will as made known in the Bible.

This is not always done. Some Christians act carelessly. They do not seem to care which church they join. In mistaken sincerity they say, “It

makes little difference which church I join. The important thing is to love Jesus as my Savior.” Such thinking forgets that loving Jesus includes loving the Word of their Savior. Anyone who genuinely loves the Lord will desire to remain loyal to all of Christ’s truths. We must also understand that not everything that calls itself a church is truly a Christian church. Therefore the Christian must join a church which officially teaches the whole Word of God and which publicly practices this truth. This means prayerful study on our part and loyal service in the church which the Christian joins.

**2. Not everything that CALLS itself a CHURCH is truly a CHRISTIAN CHURCH.**

There are three important factors to be considered:

1. The preaching of the Gospel must be loyal to the whole Bible. The churches today must follow Paul’s example in the church of Ephesus: *“For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God”* (Acts 20:27).
2. The sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Holy Supper must be observed according to the regulations of Christ. Here, too, private ideas must bow to the Word of the Lord.
3. Christian supervision must be carried on loyally and lovingly. This is called Christian discipline or discipleship. This work is carried on by the whole membership (Matthew 18:15ff) and especially by the ruling officers of the church (Matthew 16:19). Christians should care for each other and demonstrate this in fellowship.

These three factors are called the marks of the true church. The Christian who prayerfully and intelligently watches for these three marks will join a Christ-honoring church.

**3. A Christian can determine which denomination teaches the Word of GOD and publicly**

**PRACTICES this truth by using the following criteria:**

1. Is the **PREACHING** loyal to the whole Bible?
2. Are the **SACRAMENTS** observed according to the regulations of **CHRIST**?
3. Is the work of Christian **DISCIPLINE** carried on by the whole membership?

### The Church: Visible and Invisible

Not everyone who has a church membership is truly a member of the church. Paul indicates that this was true of God’s people in the Old Testament when he wrote that *“a man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly”* (Romans 2:28). John says the same thing about the New Testament church. When many left the church with some false teachers, he noted that *“they went out from us, but they did not really belong to us...their going showed that none of them belonged to us”* (1 John 2:19). While we must not doubt the faith of others who have professed to follow Christ, at the same time we must not think that just having our name on the church membership roll means that we are really in the church, that is, united to Christ as God’s elect. In several places the Bible acknowledges that there are hypocrites in the church (Matthew 6:5 and 1 Timothy 4:2).

There’s also another way to look at true church membership. Do you think it is possible for someone to be truly in Christ who is not a member of a particular church? Think of the thief on the cross (Luke 23:40-43). He was neither baptized nor a member of a local body of Christians. Yet, Jesus said to him, *“Today, you will be with me in paradise.”* So, in a real sense, he was in the church because he was united to Christ by faith.

Think also of Christians in prison or in hiding due to extreme persecution. At times in history, the church in a certain place can become so corrupt that it excommunicates true Christians. Are they,

then, after a faulty excommunication, not true Christians? They *are* Christians, because a wrongly excommunicated member of a church can still be in God's kingdom.

That's why some theologians have found it helpful to talk about the invisible and visible church.

The **invisible church** is the church as God sees it. Those who are members of the invisible church are God's elect, true believers and their children who trust in Christ alone for their salvation.

The **visible church** is the church as humans see it. This is usually the church that gathers Lord's Day after Lord's Day, in a particular place and particular time. Not everyone who gathers in the visible worship services is necessarily a member of the invisible church.

**4. The invisible church is the CHURCH as GOD sees it.**

**5. The visible church is the CHURCH as HUMANS see it.**

These are not two churches, but one church with two aspects: visible and invisible. In the best of times, the two circles almost completely overlap. All true Christians are members of the invisible church and ought to be members of the visible church. But this aspect of the church will never be perfect until God's people are all in glory after Christ's return. Therefore, we know that there will always be weeds in the wheat fields—that is, hypocrites within the church (Matthew 13:24-30). There will also always be Christians, who, for legitimate reasons, are not members of a local church, or the visible church.

The point is that everyone, if at all possible, should belong to a church. That's where the means of grace and church discipline are found, as we'll soon learn. God's people gather in church, the assembly. We must, however, allow for special and unique circumstances in which a person cannot be an active church member. In such cir-

cumstances, we pray that God will provide a special measure of His grace to the Christian who has no fellowship with other Christians. We hope when a person is unable to go to church, such as when someone is in prison, ill or in hiding because of extreme persecution, the church will go to them so that the communion of the saints might be enjoyed by all God's people.

**6. We know that there will always be HYPOCRITES within the CHURCH.**

## The Means of Grace

Many theologians have used the term **means of grace** to define those means through which God has chosen to communicate, or impart, His grace. Many people have searched for God in unusual and unbiblical ways. But there are means that God has promised to bless.

The means of grace are the means through which the Holy Spirit is pleased to work. God has promised that preaching, the Lord's Supper and Baptism are the primary means of grace by which He will meet His people. *"You have been born again...through the living and enduring word of God...and this is the word that was preached to you"* (1 Peter 1:23-25; see also Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 10:16, 1 Corinthians 11:25, Ephesians 4:5, Colossians 2:12 and 1 Peter 3:21).

**7. Means of GRACE are the MEANS through which GOD has chosen to communicate, or IMPART, His GRACE.**

## The Preached Word

The Christian must live as did the Berean Christians in the land of Greece. *"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true"* (Acts 17:11). The Word of God was the food of their lives. Peter urged his readers, *"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation"* (1 Peter 2:2). As

Christians today, we also acknowledge the authority of God's Word, and we measure all things according to this perfect Word. The Word of God must be the center and foundation of all that we do, and the preaching of the Word must be the church's strong pillar (Psalm 33:4, Psalm 119, Romans 10:14, 1 Corinthians 1:23, 2 Corinthians 4:5, 1 Timothy 4:2, Hebrew 4:12, 1 Peter 1:23-25 and Revelation 20:4).

Christ works wonders of salvation and strength in the lives of His people through the preaching of the Gospel. Preaching is the means God has established to create and strengthen faith. And, as Paul tells us, it's not just any preaching—it is the preaching of the Gospel that must be central: “[*the Gospel*] is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16; see also 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5). The preaching of the Gospel is the proclamation of the good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to save His people from their sins and God's wrath against sin (Matthew 1:21 and Romans 5:9). God has chosen the preaching of the Gospel to save those whom He has chosen.

But preaching is much more than a message about Christ and what He has done for us. Through the preaching of the Gospel, Christ makes His own voice heard unto salvation. Paul puts it this way, “*How can they believe in the one whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*” (Romans 10:14). That's why “*faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ*” (Romans 10:17). Jesus Himself assured the first preachers of the Gospel that “*He who listens to you, listens to me*” (Luke 3:16). Literally, this says, “He who hears you, hears Me.” It is through faithful preaching that Jesus' sheep hear His voice (John 3:4, 10, 16 and 27). That is why the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be central to the worship service and the life of the Christian. As we listen to the preaching of the Word, we should not focus so much on the person in front of us doing the preaching as on listening for what Christ Himself is speaking to our hearts through

the message. In this way, God is pleased to save sinners through the preaching of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 1:21-25).

Of course, not only faithful attendance of the public worship services in your church, but also your private devotions are important for your Christian life. A Christian must take time to listen to God as He speaks in and through the Bible. Only as this Word of God enters into the Christian life will there be strength, joy, comfort, wisdom and other blessings. This also includes taking time for family worship. Often, this is done at meal times where the Bible is read in the presence of the whole family. Christ Jesus has promised to use the Word of truth as a means of genuine spiritual growth.

**8. The WORD of GOD must be the center and FOUNDATION of all that we do, and the PREACHING of the WORD must be the church's strong PILLAR.**

**9. As we listen to the preaching of the WORD, we should not FOCUS so much on the PERSON doing the preaching as on listening for what CHRIST HIMSELF is speaking to our HEARTS through the MESSAGE.**

**10. GOD is pleased to SAVE SINNERS through the PREACHING of the GOSPEL.**

## The Sacrament of Baptism

Christ has given two sacraments to His church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 28:19 Mark 16:16; Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25). These are, in some ways, the New Testament counterparts of circumcision and the Passover which were practiced by Israel in the Old Testament (Romans 2:29, Romans 6:3, 1 Corinthians 5:7, Ephesians 2:11, Philippians 3:3, Colossians 2:11-12 and 1 Peter 3:21). The Lord's Supper is observed often, like the Passover was; baptism is administered only

once to each person, just as circumcision was (1Corinthians 11:26 and Ephesians 4:5).

Baptism is an outward sign of an inward blessing. In picture language, it tells us what happens in the soul of one who believes in Jesus Christ. The outward sign is water, which is used for cleansing. Whether by sprinkling or immersion, baptism pictures the inward washing of the soul by the blood of Jesus (Titus 3:5-6), as well as our old selves being buried with Christ and rising with Him as a new creation. Baptism also tells us something about our union with Jesus Christ and with God. A person is baptized in the name of God—the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). The word “*in*” here underlines the truth that a believing sinner who is baptized is joined to God. Paul speaks this way in Romans 6:3: We are “*baptized into Christ Jesus.*” Being joined to God in Christ, we are cleansed from all defilement of sin.

**11. Baptism PICTURES the inward washing of the SOUL by the BLOOD of JESUS.**

Baptism is also a seal. A seal confirms and establishes what is pictured in the symbol; for instance, a seal on a diploma confirms the truth of the words written on it. Baptism is a seal used by Christ to confirm and establish in our lives the blessings of His salvation. In the Old Testament, Abraham received circumcision as “*a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised*” (Romans 4:11). Similarly, baptism is a seal of God’s promise of salvation.

In the ceremony of baptism, there are three factors that we see and one factor that we do not. We see the minister administering the sacrament, the water being used, and the person being baptized. However, we cannot physically see the working of the Holy Spirit. Even so, the Holy Spirit is at work according to Christ’s promise. He works to impart the blessings of salvation. The power of baptism does not rest in the minister, nor the water, nor in the believer who is baptized. The power of baptism rests in the Holy Spirit. God

uses this ceremony to declare and seal the blessings of salvation unto His people.

**12. BAPTISM is the SEAL of God’s promise of SALVATION.**

**13. The HOLY SPIRIT works in the sacrament according to CHRIST’S promise.**

## The Recipients of Baptism

Those who repent of their sin in faith, believe in Christ as their Savior, and profess Him as Lord must be baptized. Though all Christians agree that adults who become believers ought to be baptized, there is disagreement on whether the children of believers should also be baptized. Christians who believe that baptism is to be administered only to adult believers hold to a view called **believers’ baptism (credobaptism)**. Christians who believe that baptism is administered not only to believers but also to the children of believers hold to a view called **infant baptism (paedobaptism)**.

## Believers’ Baptism

There are several reasons Christians give for the practice of baptizing only adult believers. Mark 16:16 says that “*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved...*” This was obviously addressed to adults and says that faith must come first. Proponents of believers’ baptism note that Jesus Himself was baptized as an adult (Matthew 3:13-17). They also hold that Christ instituted the sacrament of baptism in Matthew 28:19-20 to be used as a public profession of faith—part of an adult’s conversion experience. This baptism is therefore administered to the adult believer alone as a demonstration of their new life and obedience, and it brings them into church membership and fellowship within the body of Christ.

Proponents of believers’ baptism point to the thousands of adult believers baptized in the New Testament as proof that baptism is only for adults who repent and believe in Jesus Christ (see Acts 2:37-38; 8:36-38; 9:17-19; 16:14-15; 16:30-33;

18:8; 19:5). They maintain that the New Testament gives no explicit examples of the baptism of infants. They also reject the notion that circumcision in the Old Testament is an exact parallel to baptism in the New Testament.

Christians who believe that only adults are to be baptized feel that their children are to be baptized only when they can make a public profession of faith themselves. However, believing parents will often participate in a ceremony known as “infant dedication” in which they present their children to God, promising to teach and instruct them in the way of the Lord and pray for their salvation.

## Infant Baptism

There are reasons Christians give for the practice of also baptizing the children of believers. They note that the children of Old Testament believers received the sign and seal of circumcision. They were thus included in God’s covenant of grace as described in God’s words to Abraham, “...*I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you*” (Genesis 17:6-7). God is pleased to work through the lines of descendants, or families, including children (see Deuteronomy 11:18-20, Psalm 115:13-15, Jeremiah 32:38-39 and 1 Corinthians 7:14).

In the New Testament, they point to how baptism is called the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2:11-12). They note that in the Old Testament, circumcision included children, even though it was called a sign and seal of the righteousness *faith* brings (Romans 4:11). They claim that God extends His grace similarly in the New Testament. They would, however, acknowledge that parents are duty bound to teach their children the ways of the Lord and the meaning of their baptism—the washing away of sins through the blood of Christ.

Proponents of infant baptism believe that the New Testament does not exclude believers’ children from God’s covenant. They suggest that God’s

saving grace includes the children of believers based on verses like Acts 2:39: “*The promise is for you and to your children. . .*” Those who support infant baptism believe, therefore, that God’s covenant of grace regarding the family is essentially the same in both the Old and the New Testaments.

Those who practice infant baptism also point to the household baptisms in the New Testament to support their position. Lydia, the first European convert (Acts 16:15), the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:33) and Crispus, the synagogue ruler (Acts 18:8), believed and were baptized by Paul together with their families. They suggest that it would be odd if none of their families contained children. They also note that Jesus lovingly welcomed little children and blessed them (Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15-17). Proponents of infant baptism claim that the blessings pictured and sealed in baptism belong to believers and their children, not to adult believers alone. However, they would agree that when adults are baptized, faith must come first (Mark 16:16). They also require a public profession of faith when children who were baptized come to years of understanding.

**14. GOD is pleased to work through the LINES of DESCENDANTS, or families, including CHILDREN.**

**15. Proponents of INFANT baptism claim that the BLESSINGS pictured and sealed in baptism belong to BELIEVERS and their CHILDREN, not to ADULT believers alone.**

## The Lord’s Supper

The second New Testament sacrament is the Lord’s Supper, also called Holy Communion or the Eucharist. It was instituted by Jesus while He celebrated His last Passover feast with His disciples (Matthew 26:26-29 and Mark 14:22-25).

Like baptism, the Lord’s Supper is also a sign. It is the Gospel in picture form. The broken bread

signifies Christ's broken body. The poured-out wine represents His shed blood. Jesus tells us why His body was broken and His blood shed. "*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins*" (Matthew 26:28). As believers look at the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, they see in picture form the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ dying on the cross for their sins.

The Lord gives strength by means of this Holy Supper. Just as the ordinary foods we eat give strength to our bodies, so the elements of the bread and the wine are used by the Holy Spirit to make our faith and Christian life strong. In a strange and wonderful way, believers are joined to the body and blood of Jesus by the working of the Holy Spirit. We do not know just how this happens, but that it does happen can be experienced at the table of the Lord.

**16. The Lord's SUPPER is a sign; it is the GOSPEL in PICTURE form.**

Jesus explains the spiritual reality of partaking of Himself: "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty*" (John 6:35; see also 6:36-59). As certainly as we receive and hold the bread and wine in our hands and taste them in our mouths, we also just as certainly receive by faith the true body and blood of Christ in our souls, for the strong support of our spiritual lives. The Lord's Supper is more than just a memorial; it is the actual spiritual partaking of Jesus' body and blood by faith. In a profound and wonderful way, believers are joined to Jesus by the working of the Holy Spirit. We do not teach that Christ is physically in the bread and wine; we learn from Scripture that He is spiritually present. Consider the fact that Jesus ascended into heaven, and now sits at God's right hand. From there, He gives Himself to us by His Spirit. From there, He spiritually works through the sacrament. Jesus, after His resurrection, is a life-giving Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45).

**17. The LORD'S SUPPER is more than just a MEMORIAL; it is the ACTUAL SPIRITUAL partaking of JESUS' body and BLOOD by faith.**

The Lord's Supper is a badge of the Christian profession. By taking the bread and the wine, the Christian proclaims the Lord's death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26). At the Lord's Supper, believers raise a memorial to the death of Christ which is their source of life.

The Lord's Supper is also a fellowship with other Christians. As many berries pressed together produce one wine, so believers are more and more joined together in the blessed fellowship of the saved. As sinners taste the love of Christ in their lives, they radiate love to each other in the richest and sweetest companionship found in this world. (1 Corinthians 10:16). The Lord's Supper also anticipates the great and coming marriage supper of the Lamb when all believers will be united in fellowship around God's throne.

Christ gives great blessings at His table. This high privilege is not given to just any and everyone. Each person must first examine themselves. Paul says, "*Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup*" (1 Corinthians 11:27-28). This self-examination revolves around three things:

1. A person must personally know him/herself to be a sinner in the sight of God.
2. A person must genuinely believe he/she is saved by the Lord Jesus.
3. A person must promise to live a godly and obedient life of thankfulness for his/her deliverance.

The saved sinner comes to the Lord's Supper in repentance, faith and obedience. Such sinners are blessed by the Lord who uses this means to feed

the new life of the Christian. A 16<sup>th</sup> century liturgical reading for the celebration of the Supper says it beautifully, “For we do not come to this supper to testify thereby that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves, but on the contrary, considering that we seek our life apart from ourselves in Jesus Christ.”

18. **SELF-EXAMINATION** revolves around three things:

1. A person must personally know him/herself to be a **SINNER** in the sight of **GOD**.
2. A person must genuinely believe he/she is **SAVED** by the **LORD JESUS**.
3. A person must promise to live a **GODLY** and **OBEDIENT** life of **THANKFULNESS** for his/her **DELIVERANCE**.

## Short Answer Essays

1. Look up the following verses and write down the different names the Bible gives the church of Christ: Psalm 89:7, Isaiah 62:4-5; 62:12, Ezekiel 34:15, Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 3:9, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Galatians 4:26, Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:21; 3:15; 5:23-27, 1 Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 12:23, 1 Peter 1:1-2 and Revelation 19:7; 21:2.

Some of the different names that the Bible ascribes to the church are: the council of the holy ones (Psalm 89:7), the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, the sought after ones, a city no longer deserted (Isaiah 62:4-5, 12), the sheep, or flock, of God, (Ezekiel 34:15), the church of God (Acts 20:28), God's building or God's field (1 Corinthians 3:9), the temple of the living God (2 Corinthians 6:16), "the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother" (Galatians 4:26), the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23), the holy temple (Ephesians 2:21), the family in heaven and earth (Ephesians 3:15), the wife of Christ, the husband (Ephesians 5:23-27), God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15), the church of the firstborn (Hebrews 12:23), God's elect who have been chosen (1 Peter 1:1-2), the Lamb's wife (Revelation 19:7) and the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down as a bride (Revelation 21:2).

2. Explain the description of the church found in Ephesians 2:19-22.

Your student should explain that the church is being built to be a dwelling where God lives by His Spirit. God's people are members of His household built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ as the chief cornerstone. And, in Christ, the whole church is built up and becomes a holy temple in the Lord where the Holy Spirit dwells.

3. What are the marks of a true church? Explain them.

Your student should explain that the marks of a true church are: the loyal preaching of the Gospel, the observance of the sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper) and the practice of church discipline. The Christian who prayerfully and intelligently watches for these three indicators will join a Christ-honoring church by God's grace.

4. Explain the doctrine of the visible and invisible church, defining both, using Matthew 13:24-30.

A. Visible:

Your student should explain that this is the church as we see it. This is usually the church that gathers Lord's Day after Lord's Day, in a particular place and particular time. Not everyone who gathers in the visible worship services is necessarily a member of the invisible church. According to Matthew 13:24-30, there may be weeds in the wheat field, or hypocrites within the church.

B. Invisible:

Your student should explain how the invisible church is the church as God sees it. Members of the invisible church are made up of God's elect, believers and their children who trust in Christ alone for their salvation. There will also always be Christians who, for legitimate reasons, are not members of a local church, or the visible church.

5. Explain the "means of grace."

Your student will explain that the means of grace are those means through which God has chosen to communicate, or impart, His grace. Many people have searched for God in unusual and unbiblical ways. On the contrary, the means of grace are the means through which the Holy Spirit is pleased to work, and these are the means that God has promised to bless. He has promised that preaching, the Lord's Supper and Baptism are the primary means of grace by which He will meet His people.

6. How significant is the preaching of the Gospel to the Christian church?

Your student should respond that the preaching of the Gospel is very significant. God has selected the preaching of the Gospel to save those whom He has chosen. The preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be central to the worship service and the life of the Christian. God is pleased to save sinners through the preaching of the Gospel. A Christian must take time to listen to God as He speaks in and through the Bible. Only as this Word of God enters into the Christian life will there be strength, joy, comfort, wisdom and other blessings. Christ Jesus has promised to use the Word of truth as a means of genuine spiritual growth.

7. Explain how the fact of Christ being heard through preaching should impact your Christian life, specifically regarding how you listen to sermons.

It is important to understand that the true importance of preaching is not in the catchy illustration or well structured thesis, but rather it is in the way that Christ can speak to His people through those preaching the Word. Preaching is a method God uses to communicate to our hearts. It is the power of Christ which rouses hearts toward Himself, not the skill of the speaker. In godly preaching, it is Christ's voice that calls out to His sheep to exhort, chastise and encourage them. The people of God need to hear the voice of Christ in order to live godly lives, and one way God has chosen to communicate with us is through the preaching of His Word.

8. How is baptism an outward sign of an inward reality?

Your student should comment that the outward symbol in baptism is water, which is used for cleansing. When we see the water of baptism come in contact with the person being baptized, this pictures the inward washing of the soul by the blood of Jesus Christ. Baptism also tells us something about our union with Jesus Christ and with God. A person is baptized in the name of God—the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). The word “in” underlines the truth that a believing sinner who is baptized is joined to God. Paul speaks this way in Romans 6:3: We are “baptized into Christ Jesus.” Being joined to God in Christ, we are cleansed from the defilement of sin.

9. What are some Scriptural names for the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42; 20:7, 1 Corinthians 10:3-17; 11:20-21)?

As we look at these passages, we find that Acts 2:42 and 20:7 refer to the Lord's Supper as the breaking of bread, 1 Corinthians 10:3-17 refers to the Lord's Supper as the spiritual food and drink and as the Lord's Table and 1 Corinthians 11:20-21 mentions it simply as the Lord's Supper.

10. Who is to partake in the Lord's Supper: unbelievers or believers? Explain why your answer is correct.

The Lord's Supper is for believers only. Paul clearly states this fact in 1 Corinthians 11:28-29, when he says, *"a man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."* Also note Jesus' words in Luke 22:19-20, where our Savior declares that the Supper is only meant for those for whom Jesus died.

11. In your own words, what three things should a person acknowledge before they partake in the Lord's Supper?

Everyone needs to examine themselves before partaking of the Lord's Supper. This self-examination revolves around three things:

Each person must personally know themselves to be a sinner in the sight of God.

Each person must genuinely believe they are saved by the Lord Jesus.

All who join in this supper must promise to live a godly and obedient life of thankfulness for their deliverance.

## Digging Deeper

1. If you moved into a new and unknown location, explain how you would, according to Scripture, go about looking for and joining a church.

**Each student will respond differently to this question.** Be sensitive to their responses, being sure their wants and desires in a church are biblical. However, be sure that all students base their answers upon looking for and joining a church that upholds the three marks of the true church: the preaching of the Word, participation in the sacraments and engagement with church discipline.

2. Defend your position on who should receive the sacrament of baptism. Please support your answer with Scripture verses.

Whether your student believes that only adults or adults and their children should be baptized, they should support their position with Scripture. Be sensitive to each of their responses. Refer back to the section of the lesson entitled, “The Recipients of Baptism,” for additional insight into instructing and guiding your student regarding this sometimes controversial topic. We pray that your student will begin to understand both arguments and seek the truth that Scripture reveals regarding who the recipients of baptism should be.

3. How would you respond to the following statement: “I don’t need to go to church. I can worship God when I want and where I want. The church is full of hypocrites anyway.”

Your student should respond to this statement by saying that the statement is false. Everyone who is able should belong to a church. Throughout the New Testament, Paul affirms that this gathering of believers is a true manifestation of the Church. In fact, when Paul writes to these groups he calls them “churches.” The church gathering is where the means of grace and church discipline are found. A person who worships God outside this gathering can not experience the means of grace and church discipline. Also, a person who does not go to church misses out on the community and fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ.

We must, however, allow for special and unique circumstances in which a person cannot be an active church member. In such circumstances, we pray that God will provide a special measure of His grace to the Christian who has no fellowship with other Christians. We hope that when a person is unable to go to church, such as when someone is in prison, ill or in hiding because of extreme persecution, the church should go to them so that the communion of the saints might be enjoyed by all of God’s people.

4. Using Scripture, write an essay about the Lord's Supper and what it means, both to the church and to you personally.

Your student should explain how the Lord's Supper is a sacrament instituted by Christ when He celebrated His last Passover with His disciples. The Lord's Supper is also a sign—the broken bread signifies Christ's broken body, and the poured-out wine represents Jesus' shed blood. When we examine the Lord's Supper, we see in picture form the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ dying on the cross for our sins. The Lord gives strength to believers who partake of communion. Also, by taking the bread and wine, the Christian proclaims the Lord's death until He comes again. The Lord's Supper is a fellowship with other believers. Each student should explain what the Lord's Supper means to them personally.

**5. IN-DEPTH LESSON 8 ESSAY:** Describe the universal church of Christ. Explain the fact that the church is made up of many peoples from many nations throughout history. What do all these believers have in common?

Your student should describe the universal church as one that is made up of those who find their salvation in Christ, are washed by His blood and sanctified by His Spirit. They should also mention that although this universal church does not have a single denominational name, such as Baptist, Reformed or Presbyterian, she is called the body of Christ, the bride of Christ and the elect of God. The universal church is not confined, bound or limited to a certain place or a certain nation, but is spread out over the entire world. Your student should be able to explain that, although the universal church is made up of people from all tribes, tongues and nations, the church is one church with one Head: Jesus Christ. Though the universal church has many differences, Jesus is what the universal church has in common. Believers from all nations throughout history have called Jesus their Savior—their names are written in the book of life—and are thus members of His body, brothers and sisters in Him.

## Challenge Questions: Read and Respond

In his *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Francis Turretin wrote extensively on the doctrine of the church. Read how he explains why Christians confess in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the holy catholic church."

"...the proper signification of this word teaches not that an assembly, which is restricted to certain places, can claim for itself the name of catholic church; but only that society which embraces all the elect and believers (those triumphant in heaven as well as those militant upon earth), in whatever place they have lived from the beginning of the world or will live even unto the end. In this sense, "The whole family of God" is said "to be named in heaven and on earth" (Eph. 3:15). Therefore in the Apostles' Creed the church is properly called catholic. Thus Augustine expresses it on Ps. 62: "His whole church, which is diffused everywhere, is his body, of which he is also the Head; however, not only believers of the present time, but also they who were before us, and who will be after us even to the end of the world, all belong to his body" (*In Psalmum LXII\* Enarratio* 2 [PL 36.749]. And on Ps. 90: "The body of this Head is the church, not that which is in this place, but which is in this place and through the whole world; nor that which is in this time, but which was from Abel himself even unto those who will be born in the end, and will believe in Christ; the whole people of the saints belonging to one state, which state is the body of Christ" ("Sermo II," *In Psalmum XC Enarratio* 1 [PL 37.1159]. Gregory says, "Our maker has a universal vineyard (to wit, the church) which from Abel the just even to the last elect one who will be born, puts forth as many saints as it sends forth branches" ("Homilia 19," *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia* 1 [PL 76.1154]).<sup>1</sup>

1. A. In the context of the Apostles' Creed, what does the word "catholic" mean? Define this term by explaining what it **is** and what it is **not**.

When Christians confess the holy catholic church, we do not mean the Roman Catholic Church as in a particular, organized denomination or church government. Instead, we mean the universal church as in all true believers from all denominations, lands and time periods from the beginning of time until the return of Christ.

- B. What do you suppose Turretin means by "those triumphant in heaven as well as those militant upon earth"?

The triumphant saints are those who have reached their eternal rest in heaven. They sit triumphant at the feet of our victorious Savior. The militant saints are those who still battle against sin, the flesh and the Devil here on earth. The militant saints are being sanctified, but have not yet been glorified in heaven.

<sup>1</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing), 30.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) was a passionate preacher and key leader of the evangelical movement. He strongly believed that preaching should remain based uncompromisingly upon the proclamation of the Word to believers. Below is his definition of preaching.

“What then is preaching? What do I mean by preaching? Let us look at it like this. There is a man standing in a pulpit and speaking, and there are people sitting in pews or seats listening. What is happening? What is this? Why does that man stand in that pulpit? What is his object? Why does the Church put him there to do this? Why do these other people come to listen? What is this man meant to be doing? What is he trying to do? What ought he to be doing? These it seems to me are the great questions. We must not rush to consider techniques and methods and ‘the problem of communication.’ It is because these preliminary questions have not been asked, and faced, that people get bogged down in all the details and discussions. This is the big question and the controlling consideration—what is this man doing there? Any true definition of preaching must say that that man is there to deliver the message of God, a message from God to those people. If you prefer the language of Paul, he is ‘an ambassador for Christ.’ That is what he is. He has been sent, he is a commissioned person, and he is standing there as the mouthpiece of God and of Christ to address these people. In other words he is not there merely to talk to them. He is not there to entertain them. He is there—and I want to emphasize this—to do something to those people; he is there to produce results of various kinds, he is there to influence people. He is not merely to influence a part of them; he is not merely to influence their minds, or only their emotion, or merely to bring pressure to bear upon their wills and to induce them to some kind of activity. He is there to deal with the whole person; and his preaching is meant to affect the whole person at the very centre of life. Preaching should make such a difference to a man who is listening that he is never the same again. Preaching, in other words, is a transaction between the preacher and the listener. It does something for the soul of man, for the whole of the person, the entire man; it deals with him in a vital and radical manner.”<sup>2</sup>

2. A. In defining preaching, what does Lloyd-Jones call the “controlling consideration”? What should be the answer to the controlling consideration?

Lloyd-Jones believes that when a man stands to preach, the most important consideration is to ask: “What is this man doing there?” A true preacher should be there to deliver the message of God to the people.

- B. Based upon your reading in this lesson, when a preacher delivers the message of God, may his message be extra-biblical revelation, a vision, dream or secret-coded message? What is the danger of these supposed “messages from God”?

Preaching must always be based upon the Bible. The text of Scripture forms the message of the preacher. He may expound it, explain it and give examples to increase his congregation’s understanding of it, but the preacher’s message is never to be separated from the Word of God. It is presumptuous and dangerous for a man to stand and say, “Thus saith the Lord...” if his message is not expounding a Scriptural passage. The Scriptures are Christian laypeople’s only standard for determining the truth of the preacher’s message (like the Bereans who searched the Word to determine the truth of Paul’s message). God has no need to send conflicting private or secret messages or new revelations to individuals when He has revealed Himself in Scripture. The Gospel is contained in Scripture, the counsel of God is contained in Scripture, and preaching should always reveal and explain the Gospel and the counsel of God.

<sup>2</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching & Preachers*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 53.

- C. In your own words, explain why it is important for preaching to affect the whole person at the very center of life.

Preaching should not merely be an intellectual exercise for listeners, nor should it be merely a physical or emotional or social exercise for listeners. Preaching is meant to change the spiritual core of a person—the spiritual is the very center of life. However, the spiritual aspect of people is not disconnected from the physical, intellectual, emotional or social aspects of people. All these components form one whole person, who is at very center spiritual. A sermon which changes the spiritual will inevitably change every other facet of a person's life. That is why the preacher must preach to the whole person, rather than merely appealing to one part of his listeners.

## Definitions

---

Visible church: The church as humans see it, including believers and unbelievers who are in a church body.

Invisible church: The church as God sees it, including only those who are His elect.

Means of Grace: The means through which God has chosen to communicate, or impart, His grace (Preaching, Baptism and the Lord's Supper).

Believers' baptism (credobaptism): The position that baptism is to be administered only to adult believers.

Infant baptism (paedobaptism): The position that baptism is to be administered not only to believers, but also the children of believers.

## What I Confess

---

1. I believe that every Christian is made a member of the church of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. This church is the one body of Jesus Christ, my Savior, in which every member has a place. Just as one finger is important to proper health of my physical body, so every church member is important for the spiritual health of the body of Jesus Christ.
2. I believe that it is possible to discover a genuine church of Jesus Christ in the face of the many denominations which one sees in every community. In trying to choose the best church, I look for the three marks of the true church. These three marks are: 1. Preaching that is true to the whole Bible; 2. Proper administration of the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper; 3. The loyal exercise of Christian discipline.
3. I believe that Christ Jesus established three special offices or tasks in the church. These offices are the ministry, the eldership and the deaconate. Each of these office-bearers reflects the work of Jesus Christ in the church in a special way. I shall honor and respect these servants as they work on behalf of my Savior.
4. The organizational setup of the church is important so that all things may be done decently and orderly within the church. Since I am a living member of the whole, I shall pray and work within the framework of this organization. I shall support the whole church with my whole life so that I may show my grateful love to Jesus Christ.
5. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Head and King of the church. I shall work and pray that I, together

with the whole membership and the officers, may faithfully and obediently serve Christ our common Savior and Lord. I promise to do my part in building up the body of Christ.

6. Christ Jesus must feed the new life that He gave me. I am as dependent upon Him for this nourishment as I was for the gift of spiritual life itself. I am grateful that He provides the means of grace and I promise to use them faithfully.
7. The Word of God is the primary means of grace in my life. I shall faithfully listen to the preaching of the Gospel in public worship. I also recognize the need for daily fellowship with God through His Word. In my personal devotions as well as in family devotions, I shall continue to work and pray that Christ may feed my life with His Word.
8. As a believer, I am grateful for the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Even though I may have been baptized many years ago, the meaning of my baptism continues to be a blessing for my life. Baptism is a sign and seal of my union with God and of the cleansing I receive in the blood of Jesus Christ.
9. The Lord's Supper is another sacrament which Christ has established to strengthen my spiritual life. At the table of the Lord, I believe I am fed spiritually with the crucified body and shed blood of my Savior. It is a joy to proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

## IN-DEPTH LESSON EIGHT

The Christian church has existed from the beginning of the world and will exist to the end of it. We can clearly see this from the fact that God in Christ is an eternal King (1 Timothy 1:17, Hebrews 1:8-12 and Revelation 19:16). As King, Christ cannot be without subjects. God Himself supports this church, and Christ is the cornerstone and foundation of it (1 Peter 2:6). The King has said of His church, "*the gates of hell will not overcome it*" (Matthew 16:18). The world rages against the church and people hate it, but it will never fail, even though at times it may appear to be very small (1 Kings 19:18, Isaiah 1:9 and Romans 11:4-5). This church universal is made up of those who find their salvation in Christ, are washed by His blood and sanctified by His Spirit (John 17:21-23, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:20-22, Ephesians 4:13-16, 1 Peter 2:5-7, 1 John 4:13-16 and Revelation 1:5).

Although this universal church does not have one denominational name, such as Baptist, Reformed or Presbyterian, she is called the body of Christ, the bride of Christ and the elect of God (Jeremiah 33:11, Ephesians 4:12, 1 Peter 1:2 and Revelation 21:9). This universal church is not confined, bound or limited to a certain place or a certain nation, but is spread out over the entire world (Psalm 117:1, Zechariah 2:11, Romans 15:11-12 and Revelation 7:9). Although the universal church is made up of people from all tribes, tongues and nations, the church is one church with one Head, Jesus Christ (Romans 12:5, Galatians 3:8, Ephesians 1:22, 3:21, 5:23-32, Colossians 1:18, Revelation 7:9 and 15:4). Believers from all nations throughout history have called Jesus their Savior—their names are written in the book of life—and are thus members of His body, brothers and sisters in Him (1 Corinthians 1:10, Galatians 4:28, Revelation 13:8 and Revelation 21:27).

Theologians distinguish this one church in three aspects: the church militant, the church triumphant and the church latent. These distinctions are useful simply to distinguish different aspects of the one church. The church militant is the church on earth, at war with the powers of darkness (Acts 8:1, 11:22, Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 1:2). The church triumphant is the church in heaven—Christians who have died and gone to be with our Head (Revelation 6:9, 12:11 and 20:4). The church latent is the church unconverted, that is, the elect of God who are not yet believers, those who are God's people but have not been converted (John 17:20-23).

## New OBEDIENCE

### C h r i s t i a n E t h i c s

#### Prayer

Genuine prayer is like a great highway with traffic going both ways. In the holy mystery of prayer, we draw close to God and God comes nigh to us. As this holy and intimate fellowship is experienced, the Christian enters into one of the supreme delights of their new-born life.

The praying Christian follows the example of the Savior. Jesus often communed with His Father in prayer. At times, He would rise before dawn and pray (Mark 1:35). Other times, He would spend the whole night in prayer (Luke 6:12). During moments of great stress such as He endured in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus entered the holy sanctuary of prayer (Luke 22:41). From these hallowed moments of prayer, our Substitute drew strength to carry out the Father's will for our salvation.

The longer the disciples followed after Jesus, the more they realized the importance of prayer in their lives. One day while they watched the Savior pray, they asked Jesus to teach them the perfect prayer which we now know as The Lord's Prayer. The more thoroughly we understand the meaning of this prayer, the better we will be able to pray.

#### The Lord's Prayer

Jesus sets the proper mood for prayer in the address, "*Our Father in heaven*" (Matthew 6:9). Because Jesus has forgiven our sins, we may talk with God as our Father. He loves us, provides for us and directs our lives with infinite wisdom and tender compassion. Because God is the Christian's Father, the Christian enters into a

delightful and close fellowship with God. We must, however, catch the meaning of the place where the Father lives. God dwells in the resplendent glory of heaven (see Genesis 24:7, Jonah 1:9, Matthew 7:21 and Revelation 4). There, He is surrounded by millions of worshiping angels. The words "*in heaven*" emphasize the need for reverence, awe, worship and adoration in our prayers.

After addressing God in the mood of love and reverence, Jesus outlines the things we ask for in our prayers. Notice that God Himself forms the first focus of our petitions. The whole life of Christ is God-centered. Jesus tells us to pray in this manner: "*Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*" (Matthew 6:9-10). It is God's honor, His glory and His Kingdom which becomes the basic concern of the true Christian.

**1. Because JESUS has forgiven our SINS, we may talk with GOD as our FATHER.**

Such prayer involves many practical things for our daily lives. We ask God to order our lives in such a way that His wonderful name be praised on our account. In this prayer, we beg the Lord to rule over our lives by His Word and Spirit. To take the Lord's Prayer upon our lips is to ask our Father to have His own way in our lives (Psalm 40:8, Acts 21:14, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 6:6 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3). Every Christian knows how hard it is to renounce our own wills and surrender everything to God. In our prayer life, we practice the truth that we are no longer our own but that we belong to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ (Psalm 100:3, Romans 14:7-9, 1 Corinthians 6:19 and

Titus 2:14). As we sincerely make this prayer the expression of our lives, we discover that our new life grows more and more Christ-like.

But there is still more involved in true prayer. Jesus also taught His disciples to pray for their needs. This is heard in the words, *“Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”* (Matthew 6:11-13). Included in these few words are all the basic needs for the body and soul. The Savior is interested in our bodies, the clothes we wear, the food we eat and the health we enjoy (Psalm 103:13 and Matthew 6:25-33). Freely, as a child coming to his parents, we may go to our Father and ask Him for these things that we need (Luke 11:11-13 and Luke 12:30). The Savior is also interested in our peace of soul, in a conscience freed from the burden of guilt. He urges us to take these needs to our Father who is in heaven. And since no Christian is alone but always in fellowship with others, the Lord reminds us about our debt to love and forgive those with whom we live. The personal relationships of life are also included in the prayers of true believers.

So, we see the Savior teaching us to take all our needs to our blessed Father. As we travel the road to heaven in prayer, God Himself returns and crowns our lives with His gifts of grace.

**2. To take the LORD’S PRAYER upon our LIPS is to ask our FATHER to have HIS own WAY in our LIVES.**

**3. We may go to our FATHER and ask HIM for these THINGS that we NEED.**

Satan, the enemy supreme, works hard in the sanctuary of prayer. He tries to work his way into our prayer life, thus destroying its delights. In the Bible, we discover some of the reasons why prayer often loses its power and its pleasure in the Christian’s life. Secret sins (Psalm 66:18), indifference (Proverbs 1:28), the neglect of mercy

(Proverbs 21:13), stubbornness (Zechariah 7:13), instability (James 1:6-7) and self-indulgence (James 4:3) are some of the insidious barriers, erected by the enemy, which block the road of prayer. The Christian must continue to examine his/her own heart lest they merely repeat some words and fail to pray. Even in the holy sanctuary of prayer, there is need for daily repentance as well as faith (Luke 17:5 and 1 John 1:9).

Any Christian who expects their new life to grow must pray. Jesus wanted His disciples to *“always pray and not give up”* (Luke 18:1). The person who perseveres in prayer discovers many new and rich experiences of spiritual power. Christ gave us this beautiful promise to encourage us in our prayer life: *“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer”* (Matthew 21:22). In moments when our prayers seem so futile and in seasons when Christ gives us different things than we ask for, let us hold fast His Word in faith. Here, too, the persistent Christian is the victorious Christian.

The Christian should organize their daily routine of life in such a way that they never neglect their prayers. We must find moments when we can be alone with our God in our inner chambers. We must take time at family meals to achieve the beauty of a praying family. In our church life, there ought to be seasons of common prayer as the members of the church link heart with heart in the holy moments of praise and prayer. A praying Christian is a God-glorifying Christian. *“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* (Hebrews 4:16).

**4. A PRAYING CHRISTIAN is a God-glorifying CHRISTIAN.**

## S e r v i n g   G o d

**I**n what ways should the Christian serve God? How can a saved person know that their actions and attitudes honor the Lord? It may happen that someone thinks they are honoring God while in

fact they are dishonoring Him. We need a reliable standard by which to measure life's actions and attitudes. This standard is provided by God. The whole Bible is the only rule by which we measure our obedience, and the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20 gives us a summary of God's will for our new lives as we grow in joyful thanksgiving.

## Special Obedience

The Christian's obedience is a special kind of obedience. It is the obedience of a new creature, of a saved person. It is obedience which arises out of thanksgiving for salvation received. It is a joyful obedience given by one who has tasted the love of God.

This fact becomes plain as you read the introduction to the Ten Commandments. *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery"* (Exodus 20:2). Egypt was the country that had enslaved the Israelites. God freed His people from this slavery. Because God had delivered His people, they were to obey the law. Their obedience was proof of their gratitude. This story of liberation from Egypt is an Old Testament fact which tells basically the same story as the liberation from sin through Jesus Christ. The proof of the Christian's gratitude is the joyful obedience he gives to God's law.

The fact that the Christian's obedience is a new obedience is important. There is nothing more dishonoring to Christ than to act as if His work were unnecessary or insufficient for our salvation. This is done if a person tries to obey the law in order to achieve salvation. Besides this, such a person will always live in fear and uncertainty. They will never know whether their obedience is good enough and acceptable to God. Therefore we must remember this: A sinner may not obey in order to become saved, but must obey simply because they are saved through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:1-10). Salvation makes obedience new with the newness of gratitude, love and joy.

**5. A Christian shows GRATITUDE for deliverance from the bondage of SIN by joyful**

## **OBEDIENCE to God's law.**

**6. Obedience to God's law to ACHIEVE salvation is acting as though CHRIST'S work were not sufficient.**

### Commandment One

*"You shall have no other gods before me"*  
(Exodus 20:3).

The Ten Commandments begin with God because God is always first in the Christian life. God wants us to acknowledge Him alone. Life's love, hope, honor and praise belong to God. The Christian must worship God alone, with a full life from a full heart.

There is more idolatry in life than we realize. Humans have many gods. Anyone or anything that we love more than God is really a false god. There are many such gods. Self, friends, family, success, the social club and money become gods for many. These things and values may be good in themselves, but they must be kept out of first place, as first place belongs to God. The writer of Psalm 73:25 caught the meaning of this commandment: *"Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you."*

### Commandment Two

*"You shall not make for yourself an idol . . . You shall not bow down to them or worship them . . ."* (Exodus 20:4,5).

Besides commanding us to worship Him alone, God demands that we worship Him in the right way. The way of worship is referred to in the second commandment. To glorify God, we must worship Him in the way that He has commanded in His Word. We must not try to improve on God's instructions.

The second commandment can be disobeyed in many different ways. God's Old Testament people tried to improve their worship by building a golden calf at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 32). Later, King Jeroboam set up his altars and images at Bethel and Dan with which to worship God (1 Kings 12). Some people try to improve on God's directions

for true worship by dreaming up innovative components that are not found in God's Word. Others, and this is much more clever, make mental pictures of God which are contrary to the truth of God's Word. For example, they think of God as a good-hearted person who does not take sin too seriously. Or they think they can ignore the services of Christ's church on Sunday and worship God just as well at a good trout stream. We err to think that God is pleased with whatever ideas come to our heads regarding worship. Rather, we ought to be concerned with how God Himself wants to be worshiped.

*"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). The Spirit leads us to Jesus Christ, who is the Truth. He is the only Mediator between God and the sinner. The Christian must worship God through Jesus Christ and in submission to the Word of God.

7. Anyone or anything that we **LOVE** more than **GOD** is really a **FALSE** god.

8. To glorify **GOD**, we must worship **HIM** in the **WAY** that He has **COMMANDED** in **HIS WORD**.

### Commandment Three

*"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God . . ."* (Exodus 20:7).

A name is important because it identifies you as you associate with other people. By means of your name, you are kept distinct from others and you exercise fellowship with others. A good name opens up new opportunities, and you want it to be treated with respect.

God's name is His revelation through which He comes into fellowship with His creatures. A flower, a ray of sunshine and a star are part of God's name. *"How majestic is your name in all the earth!"* (Psalm 8:1). After sin blinded our eyes, God made Himself known by using other names, as we learned in the first lesson. The *"God of Abraham,"* the *"I AM WHO I AM"* and the

*"Sovereign LORD"* are a few of these names (Exodus 3:6, 3:14 and Ezra 24:9). God's most beautiful name is read in Jesus Christ.

All these names of God must be treated with reverence, respect, awe and adoration. The third commandment demands that we use the holy names of God in fear and reverence. In worshipful awe and cautious reverence we truly confess and glorify God.

There are many ways in which the name of God is abused. Swearing and cursing are obvious violations of this third commandment. So is perjury, the sin of lying while under oath. Preachers can disobey this commandment when they use God's name in preaching for such selfish reasons as gaining popularity and applause. The worshiping congregation can dishonor God's name in a church service when attendees carelessly allow their minds to wander. When we do not use God's name in certain circumstances, we fulfill this third word of the law. Remember this: If your name is important to you, how much more important is the name of Him who made and saved you.

9. The third commandment demands that we **USE** the **HOLY NAMES** of **GOD** in **FEAR** and **REVERENCE**.

### Commandment Four

*"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy"* (Exodus 20:8).

The Sabbath is a special day. It was first observed in the Garden of Eden. *"And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy"* (Genesis 2:3). This special day was given to us for two reasons. First, God invited us to enjoy the His works in special companionship with Him. He wanted us to share in that pleasure that He Himself enjoyed when He completed the work of creating the world. Second, God wanted His people to have some free time. He made us to work in His world. He made us to be the masters of creation in God's name and for God's sake. But God did not want us to work all the time. He also wanted us to rest. If you

understand this, then you will understand the words of Jesus: “*The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*” (Mark 2:27).

The Sabbath is now observed on the first day of the week. Jesus Christ and His apostles substituted the first day for the seventh day. On the first day of the week, Jesus was raised from the dead and appeared to His people in the morning and in the evening (John 20). This is the Lord’s Day. On this day, we must use our time for the purposes which God set aside for us. It is to be a day of spiritual refreshment, physical rest and Christian service. On this day, we receive spiritual blessings from our Savior. On this day, we enjoy some physical rest. On this day, we enjoy performing special spiritual services for which we have so little time during the week. It is a day in which we delight to worship God in the company of the saved. It is a day in which we go about visiting the sick, the lonely and the needy.

This commandment is widely disobeyed. A sure sign of little love for the Lord is the way in which people abuse the Lord’s Day. In countless ways people use this day for themselves, apart from God’s companionship. In order to discover what you should and should not do on this day, ask yourself this question: Am I using the Lord’s Day for the purposes the Lord intended (see Isaiah 58:13-14)? As you use this day in God’s way, you will discover seasons of joy and refreshment in your life.

**10. JESUS CHRIST and His APOSTLES substituted the first DAY for the SEVENTH day.**

### Christ’s Summary

The first four commandments focus on our duties toward God. Jesus gave this summary: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment*” (Matthew 22:37-38). The Christian’s new obedience is loving God above all. This love is our answer to God’s love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord, as John tells us, “*this is love: not that we loved God, but that he*

*loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins*” (1 John 4:10).

## Commandment Five

**“Honor your father and your mother”  
(Exodus 20:12).**

The fifth word is a bridge between the two parts of God’s law. In the first table of the law, we discover our responsibilities to God. The second table concerns our responsibilities to our neighbors. We must honor, respect and obey the authority of parents because they take the place of God in our young lives. God is pleased to rule our lives through them. In this sense, the fifth word concerns our duty to God. It is also true, however, that this commandment tells about all delegated authority such as is found in the state, the church and other social institutions. Here we come close to our duties involving our neighbors. For this reason, we can speak of this commandment as a bridge joining the two tables of God’s law.

In the home, children learn how to live with fellow human beings. It is the duty of parents to train their children in the fear of God. As parents bring God’s will to bear upon the lives of their children, sons and daughters learn respect, honor and obedience. If children do not learn to follow the regulations of God in the home, they will be unable to follow the regulations of life. And if parents ignore, abuse or ill-train their children, they contribute to the breakdown of society.

## Commandment Six

**“You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13).**

God wants His children to love life. Obviously, murder is wrong; this commandment covers much more, however. It forbids anything that is harmful to the physical well-being of ourselves and others. Jesus said, “*But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment*” (Matthew 5:22). John caught Jesus’ meaning and wrote, “*Any one who hates his brother is a murderer*” (1 John 3:15). Loss of temper joined with insulting words is murder. If looks could kill, many people would be dead. The desire for revenge is murder. God demands that we seek the welfare of our fellow people.

This means paying attention to the proper regulations for health. This means watching how one drives one's car. This means listening to all those precautions which are given to help safeguard our lives. The Christian will learn to love their own life for God's sake and love their neighbor as themselves.

11. The Christian's new **OBEDIENCE** is loving **GOD** above **ALL**.

12. The sixth commandment is, "**You SHALL NOT MURDER.**"

### Commandment Seven

*"You shall not commit adultery"*  
(Exodus 20:14).

God has ordained that there be one husband and one wife in the home, which is the basic unit of society. Marriage is an unbreakable bond. *"Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."* (Matthew 19:6). Within the sacred bond of marriage, sex drives are to be satisfied. To satisfy sexual desires in other ways than those within marriage is forbidden.

Here again, God's will has wide application. This commandment includes strict morality all along the line. Jesus gave the depth dimension to this seventh commandment when He said, *"But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart"* (Matthew 5:28). To entertain murderous thoughts in one's heart is to commit murder, and to entertain adulterous thoughts in the heart is to commit adultery. In a sexually permissive time, this word needs new emphasis and understanding.

### Commandment Eight

*"You shall not steal"* (Exodus 20:15).

God owns all things. *"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it"* (Psalm 24:1). The divine owner has given certain property rights to His people. We must use this world and its gifts for God's praise and the welfare of our fellow humans. We may never gain our wealth at the expense of some-

one else. God gave us rights of possession so that our material goods might be used in spiritual service. The Christian must respect these God-given property rights of others.

This commandment also covers a broad area. Tax evasion is stealing. To overwork and underpay employees is robbery. Refusing to do a good day's work for a fair wage is stealing. The Christian does not expect to get something for nothing. This eighth word of the law requires diligent work, conserving and consolidating our gains in thrift and economy. It also includes using our gifts for the welfare of our neighbors. Paul urged the thief to stop stealing. He had to start working and then use his gains to help those in need (Ephesians 4:28). God turns burglars into benefactors.

13. **MARRIAGE** is an unbreakable **BOND** between **MAN** and **WOMAN**.

14. "**The EARTH is the LORD'S and EVERYTHING in it**" (Psalm 24:1).

### Commandment Nine

*"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor"* (Exodus 20:16).

Loving our neighbor means respecting their rights. To disobey God's Word as described in the second table of the law is to rob someone of the things most precious to them: their life (killing), their home and honor (adultery), their property (stealing) and also their good name. A good name is to be desired above great riches (Proverbs 22:1).

This commandment covers a great deal of ground. It includes the law courts and the sin of perjury. It also includes idle gossip, deliberate exaggeration and distortion of the truth and all slander. We can break this commandment by listening to unkind rumors and then passing these rumors on to others.

God is the God of truth. He requires that His children always speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:25). Satan is the great deceiver, the liar from the

beginning (John 8:44). He started his lying campaign in the Garden of Eden and continues it today. The lie is one of the chief weapons in his war against the kingdom of Jesus Christ. He delights to condemn the godly and to condone the godless. The Christian must love the truth and hate the lie in every form; by doing this, they honor the God of truth.

## Commandment Ten

***“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house . . . or anything that belongs to your neighbor”***  
**(Exodus 20:17).**

God’s law is very broad. It begins with God and ends deep in the human heart. This commandment defines our duty in terms of the inner desires of the soul. It covers the area of life where the laws of the state cannot reach. The police and courts of the land are not concerned with making rules to govern what a person desires. God, however, *is* concerned about it.

The Christian must not become jealous or envious of what someone else possesses. They are to rejoice in the prosperity and blessings of their neighbor. The Christian does not put a premium on the material things of life. *“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions”* (Luke 12:15). *“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”* (Mark 8:36). The Christian seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). *“Covetousness is idolatry,”* wrote Paul (Colossians 3:5), but *“godliness with contentment is great gain”* (1 Timothy 6:6). The Christian watches the desires of the heart, for out of the heart are the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23 and Matthew 12:35).

**15. God requires that His CHILDREN always speak the TRUTH in LOVE.**

**16. The Christian SEEKS first the KINGDOM of GOD and His RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

## Reacting to God’s Law

The more seriously the Christian tries to live according to all the commandments of the law, the more they see their own sinfulness and ugliness. God’s law exposes the sinner’s life. *“Through the law we become conscious of sin”* (Romans 3:20). Under the conviction of his/her sin, the believer cries out with Paul, *“What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 7:24-25). The Christian begins to understand more clearly the words of John, *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves...If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves...If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives”* (1 John 1:8, 10). The sinner continually turns to God for mercy and tastes the goodness of God’s forgiving love in Jesus Christ.

The Christian also tries hard to grow in true obedience. Grateful for salvation, rejoicing in forgiveness, the believer seeks to glorify God by obeying His law. Looking to his/her Savior, the new-born sinner says, *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength”* (Philippians 4:13).

**17. As the sinner tries to obey God’s COMMANDMENTS, his/her life is increasingly EXPOSED as sinful and ugly.**

**18. The BELIEVER, however, continues to seek to GLORIFY God by obeying His law.**

## Short Answer Essays

### 1. What is prayer?

Prayer is a holy mystery whereby we draw near to God and God comes nigh to us. It is like a great highway with traffic going both ways. In prayer, a Christian enters into one of the supreme delights of their new-born life.

**EXTRA:** The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order of 1658 defines prayer: “Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of natural worship, is by God required of all men; but that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others in a known tongue (chapter 22.3).”

### 2. What does the phrase, “*Our Father*” mean?

This phrase means that God loves us, provides for us and directs our lives with infinite wisdom and tender compassion. Because God is our Father, we can enter into a delightful and close fellowship with Him.

**EXTRA:** “In calling Him ‘Father’ we express a relationship we have all known and felt surrounding us even from our infancy; but in calling Him our Father ‘who art in heaven,’ we contrast Him with the fathers we all have here below, and so raise our souls to that ‘heaven’ where He dwells, and that Majesty and Glory which are there as in their proper home. These first words of the Lord’s Prayer—this invocation with which it opens—what a brightness and warmth does it throw over the whole prayer, and into what a serene region does it introduce the praying believer, the child of God, as he thus approaches Him! It is true that the paternal relationship of God to His people is by no means strange to the Old Testament. (See Deuteronomy 32:6, Psalm 103:13, Isaiah 63:16, Jeremiah 3:4, Jeremiah 3:19, Malachi 1:6, Malachi 2:10).” [From Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Critical Commentary and Explanatory on the Whole Bible: Matthew 6:9]

### 3. Explain, “*Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*”

Use the lesson and the following verses to guide your answer: Psalm 40:8, Psalm 111:9, John 4:34, John 6:40, Colossians 1:3, 1 Timothy 6:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and Hebrews 10:7.

This phrase means that the basic concern of the true Christian is God’s honor, His glory and His Kingdom. Psalm 40:8 describes the Christian’s desire to do God’s will, and John 4:34 and Hebrews 10:7 explain how doing God’s will was Jesus’ desire as well. Psalm 111:9 shows the writer praising God’s holy and awesome name. In Colossians 1:3 and 1 Timothy 6:16, Paul thanks God the Father because of His love when he prays, and gives Him the honor, glory and might forever.

4. How important is the phrase, “*forgive us our debts*” (see Psalm 32:1, 130:4, Isaiah 1:18, Luke 7:47-50, Acts 13:38, Ephesians 1:7, 1 John 1:7-9 and 1 John 2:12)?

This phrase is very important. Though our forgiveness has been granted through Christ’s death on the cross, this plea is a reminder that, because we still sin daily, we need God’s grace every day of our lives. It also tells us that Jesus is not concerned with our physical needs alone, but also with our spiritual needs. Jesus does care about our bodies and nourishment, but He is also interested in the peace of our soul.

**EXTRA:** “It is true that the basis of our daily forgiveness has been established once for all by means of Christ’s atonement. Nothing need be and nothing can be added to that. But this total, objective cleansing needs daily application for the simple reason that we sin every day...The prayer for forgiveness implies that the supplicant recognizes that there is no other method by which his debt can be wiped out. It is therefore, a plea for grace” (William Hendriksen’s commentary, *The Gospel of Matthew*).

5. Why does God hear your prayers (see John 14:6, Ephesians 3:12, Hebrews 4:16, 7:25, 10:19-20 and 13:15 and 1 John 2:1-2)?

God hears our prayers only because of the work of Christ. John 14:6 says that Jesus is the way and that no one can go to the Father except through Him. Hebrews 7:25 also speaks of this truth. Ephesians 3:12, Hebrews 4:16 and 10:19-20 all explain that through faith in Jesus we can confidently approach the throne of God, because Christ has opened the curtain which had once separated us from God. Hebrews 13:15 explains how, in Christ, we can offer sacrifices of praise to God. 1 John 2:1-2 explains how Jesus speaks to the Father in our defense. Without Christ, God cannot hear our prayers because they are tainted with sin. Only through Christ will God hear our prayers, since He intercedes to the Father for us, making our prayers pleasing sacrifices unto God.

6. Can a person be saved by their good works? Prove your answer using Scripture.

A person’s good works do not save them, because, without Christ, a person is sinful all the time and unable to do any good. There is nothing more dishonorable to Christ than to act as if His work were unnecessary or insufficient for our salvation. This is done if a person tries to obey the law in order to achieve salvation. Additionally, such a person will always live in fear and uncertainty regarding their salvation. They will never know whether their obedience is good enough to be acceptable to God. Therefore, we must remember this: A sinner may not obey in order to become saved, but must obey *because* they are saved through Jesus Christ. Salvation makes obedience new with the newness of gratitude, love and joy.

Students may use Ephesians 2:1-10 to prove their answer. Also see: Romans 3:21-28, 4:3-5 and 10:10, 1 Corinthians 1:30-32, 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, Galatians 2:16, Philippians 3:8-11, 1 John 2:1-2 and 5:10-12.

7. Once God has saved someone, how do they react to their salvation? (see Matthew 5:16, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Colossians 1:10, 1 Timothy 2:10, Titus 2:14 and 3:1, Hebrews 10:24 and 13:21.)

Once God has saved someone, they will react with a special kind of obedience which arises out of thanksgiving and gratitude for salvation received. It is a joyful obedience given by one who has tasted the love of God.

8. What is the summary of the first four commandments? Explain the summary.

The summary of the first four commandments is to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. The Christian's new obedience is to love God above all things.

9. Explain what the seventh commandment teaches about God's design for marriage, using other relevant Scripture passages when necessary.

According to the seventh commandment, God ordained marriage with a specific framework, not to be taken lightly or treated casually. Marriage is an unbreakable bond in which sex drives are to be satisfied. Satisfying sexual desires in another way is forbidden. Even entertaining sinful desires and fantasies in the heart is to sin against God.

10. Write out the Ten Commandments in your own words.

**Each student will respond differently to this question**, as we are asking them to be creative in their writing. Be sure to check their paraphrase of the Ten Commandments against the translation in the Bible, making sure they didn't mix up or miss any. As with all creative writing essays, if your student responds exceptionally well, please feel free to share it with CBI by making a copy of it and sending it to our offices.

## Digging Deeper

1. Look up the following prayers in the Bible and write a structured essay that explains the similarities between each: 1 Kings 8:23-61, Daniel 9:4-19, Jonah 2:2-9, Luke 11:2-4, 2 Corinthians 13:7, Ephesians 3:14-21, Philippians 1:9-11 and Colossians 1:9-17.

Your student may respond with many particular similarities between these prayers. However, though these prayers are all very different, they still all contain certain general aspects regarding prayer. Generally speaking, each prayer includes a section which honors and esteems God and His name. The prayers praise or glorify God, thanking Him for who He is and what He has done. The prayers also include petitions, or requests, to God, asking Him for something personal on behalf of another person or group of people. The prayers also include a time of confession, asking God to forgive sins and wrongdoings.

2. Sometimes we distinguish between two different uses of God's Law. We say that the law first shows us our sin and brings us to a realization that we need Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). Second, after the law brings us to Christ we use the law as a guide of gratitude for the salvation God has given us (Romans 6:13 and 12:1-2). Write an essay that describes both of the above uses of God's Law.

Your student's essay should explain how the law shows us God's righteousness and His desire for us to be righteous. But we know that we cannot be righteous on our own strength, and therefore the law also shows us our sin. This occurs when we are confronted with what God requires from us in the law, and we realize that we cannot live up to God's standard for holy living because we are completely sinful. Therefore, the law brings us to realize that we need Jesus. Your student should explain that after recognizing their need for Jesus and learning that they have been covered by Jesus' righteousness, they can live a life full of gratitude and thanksgiving for the salvation God gave to them that was earned by Jesus Christ.

3. Write an exposition on *two* commandments of your choice.

**Each student's response will differ. Please check your student's exposition on *two* commandments of their choice with the appropriate section in the lesson.**

**4. IN-DEPTH LESSON 9 ESSAY:** Write a detailed commentary on Romans 13:1-7.

Paul tells the Roman Christians, and us, to submit, or subject ourselves voluntarily, to earthly authorities because they have been ordained by God. William Hendriksen, in his commentary on Romans, says that “it was by [God’s] will and in his providence that they had been appointed to maintain order, encourage well-doing, and punish wrong-doing.” Therefore, Paul says that anyone who opposes or rebels against the authority is rebelling against God, because the authorities have been given their position only by God.

Paul says that those who do good should have nothing to worry about from the authorities. Only those who do bad need be concerned. Those who violate the law don’t have the authorities to blame, instead they only have themselves to blame for their wrongdoings. It is true that there are authorities who do wrong and evil. There are corrupt governments and there are people who are oppressed and persecuted by authorities, however, Hendriksen says that “the basic aim of the one in authority is not to hurt you but to help...”

Paul does warn the wrong-doer that they should be afraid of the punishment to come. Paul also calls the authorities “God’s servants.”

He also mentions that we should submit to the authorities not simply to avoid punishment, but because of our conscience. This is also why we pay taxes, Paul explains. Hendriksen comments, “You should respect these men for the sake of their office, and honor them in view of their faithful devotion to their task. Remember: they are God’s ministers! And by means of what is done with this money not only the people in general, including you yourselves, are benefited, but so is the cause of the Gospel.”

Each student’s answer will vary. Be sensitive to their responses. This may be a tough subject to deal with for some students, so be gentle and careful in your response to them. Be instructive when necessary and true to the Word of God.

## Challenge Questions: Read and Respond

In this lesson we learned about the importance of prayer in the life of a Christian. Read what Matthew Henry (1662-1714), a pastor and author, wrote about prayer in the life of a Christian.

“Prayer is a principal branch of religious worship, which we are moved to by the very light of nature, and obliged to by some of its fundamental laws...Prayer is the solemn and religious offering up of devout acknowledgments and desires to God, or a sincere representation of holy affections, with a design to give unto God the glory due unto his name thereby, and to obtain from him promised favours, and both through the Mediator. Our English word prayer is too confined, for that properly signifies petition or request; whereas humble adorations of God, and thanksgivings to him, are as necessary in prayer as any other part of it...The Scripture describes prayer to be our drawing near to God, lifting up our souls to him, pouring out our hearts before him. This is the life and soul of prayer; but this soul in the present state must have a body, and that body must be such as becomes the soul, and is suited and adapted to it. Some words there must be, of the mind at least, in which, as in the smoke this incense must ascend; not that God may understand us, for our thoughts afar off are known to him, but that we may the better understand ourselves. A golden thread of heart-prayer must run through the web of the whole Christian life; we must be frequently addressing ourselves to God in short and sudden ejaculations, by which we must keep up our communion with God in providences and common actions, as well as in ordinances and religious services. Thus prayer must be sparsim—‘a sprinkling of it’ in every duty, and our eyes must be ever toward the Lord...It is desirable that our prayers be copious and full. Our burdens, cares, and wants are many, so are our sins and mercies. The promises are numerous and very rich, our God gives liberally, and has bid us open our mouths wide, and he will fill them, will satisfy them with good things, We are not straightened in him, why then should we be straitened in our bosoms? Christ had taught his disciples the Lord’s prayer, and yet tells them,...that hitherto they had asked nothing, that is, nothing in comparison with what they should ask when the Spirit should be poured out, to abide with the church for ever; and they should see greater things than these. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. We are encouraged to be particular in prayer, and in everything to make our requests known to God, as we out also to be particular in the adoration of the divine perfections, in the confession of our sins, and our thankful acknowledgment of God’s mercies.”<sup>1</sup>

1. A. Do we pray so that God may understand us or so that we may understand ourselves? Explain your answer.

The purpose of prayer is for us to understand ourselves, not in the sense that we think on ourselves and ponder our greatness or in the sense that we ignore God for thought of ourselves. There is nothing that God does not already know about us. He knows all our thoughts, motives and desires. There is nothing we can tell Him that He does not already know about us. Clearly, we do not pray to inform God or increase His knowledge. Rather, when we pray that our hearts would align with His and that His thoughts would become our thoughts; we draw near to Him, and He draws near to us. As this happens, we realize more of our own sinfulness and shortcomings. We see ourselves in the light of His holiness, and this sight humbles us and makes us to rely upon Him more.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *The Complete Works of the Rev. Matthew Henry* vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 1-2.

B. Why do you think Henry suggests that our prayers be “copious and full”? Does this statement go against Matthew 6:7?

Henry points out that when we talk to God there is much to be said. We cannot skip over requests or oversimplify our praises to the Lord God because our relationship with Him is primary to all others. Like maintaining a relationship with a good friend, we must spend time talking with God to deepen our relationship to Him. Matthew 6:7 warns against praying as those who repeat vain phrases and lengthen their prayers to gain the attention of others. These pray so that they will be respected by others. They do not pray to humble themselves before God but so that they will be called pious by other men. Matthew 6:7 doesn't condemn long prayers. Rather, it condemns unnecessarily long prayers spoken with proud motives.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) spurred a great reformation in the church during his lifetime. The church had become very worldly, ritualistic and immoral, and Luther, a monk at the time, challenged the church to get back pure Scriptural teachings and living. He wrote and taught extensively, especially emphasizing salvation by grace and not by works. Read what he writes about the law and Gospel.

“Moses with his law is most terrible; there never was any equal to him in perplexing, affrighting, tyrannizing, threatening, preaching, and thundering: for he lays sharp hold on the conscience, and fearfully works it, but all by God's express command. When we are affrighted, feeling our sins, God's wrath and judgments, most certainly, in the law is no justification; therein is nothing celestial and divine, but 'tis altogether of the world, which world is the kingdom of the devil. Therefore it is clear and apparent that the law can do nothing that is vivifying, saving, celestial, or divine; what it does is altogether temporal; that is, it gives us to know what evil is in the world, outwardly and inwardly. But, besides this, the Holy Ghost must come over the law, and speak thus in thy heart: God will not have thee affright thyself to death, only that through the law thou shouldest know thy misery, and yet not despair, but believe in Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness.”<sup>2</sup>

2. A. Why does Luther call Moses (who represents the law) “most terrible”? Why can the law never save?

Luther uses harsh language to speak of Moses (representing the law) because the law is imposed upon us with its demands and punishments and yet people are not capable of keeping the law. In our sinfulness, we aren't able to obey the law. And yet, the law condemns us, points its finger on our sins and sharply convicts our souls. Then we are left feeling hopeless and lost because though the law convicts us, it cannot save us. It is merely the means by which we learn our need for a Savior, teaching us what is good and what is evil. Because we cannot keep the law, it can never redeem, save or restore us.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, *The Table Talk of Martin Luther*, ed. Thomas Kepler (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1952), 169-170.

B. Why must Christians not despair despite the sharp conviction of the law? Use at least one Scripture in your answer.

Without Christ, knowledge of the law leads us to despair. We see our lack, our hopelessness. But with Christ, we have the joy of knowing that our sins have been paid for in full. We do not have to strive to fulfill the law because He did it perfectly. Not only did He perfectly fulfill the law, but He also took the sins of His children upon Himself that we would not have to pay the penalty for our guilt.

Scripture references will vary. An example passage is Romans 8:1-4 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit."

## What I Confess

---

1. I believe that I, praying from the heart to the one true God while acknowledging my need and misery, can boldly come to the throne of grace because of what Jesus has done and is doing.
2. Since it pleases God to rule my life through the authority of parents and others, I shall honor, respect and obey these authorities for God's sake. As a parent, I shall try to train my children in the fear and knowledge of the Lord.
3. I shall try to love my neighbor as myself. This includes seeking the best for him or her in every possible way. I shall respect his/her life, home, property and name. In a life of positive love toward my neighbor, I shall continue to glorify and honor my God.
4. I believe that God's law penetrates deep into my heart. God's will must mold and fashion my desires. Thus, I shall listen to the words of my Savior who commands me to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. As I do this, God shall provide me with all that is necessary for this life and the life to come.
5. The more I seek to honor God by obeying His law, the more I realize the extent of my sinfulness. From God's law, I learn to see myself as I really am in the sight of God. Seeing this, I take refuge in Jesus Christ as my personal Savior.
6. As a thankful Christian, I shall try to live according to all the commandments of my God. His law shall be the standard by which I measure all my conduct. His law has become the delight and joy of my life. I will keep it ever before me as my guide for a God-glorifying life.
7. I believe I owe God new obedience. This means that I try to obey God's law in order to show how thankful I am for being saved by God's grace. My new obedience is not a condition for salvation, but rather a fruit of my salvation. I have learned to delight in the law of the Lord.
8. I owe my supreme loyalty and deepest love to one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is my chief joy and supreme delight. I shall fight against the sin of setting up other gods in my life.
9. I know that I can worship God only in and through Jesus Christ. I shall study God's Word diligently to discover the proper ways of bringing my worship unto Him. I shall worship neither graven nor mental images of my God.
10. God's name is very precious to me. His name is the way in which He makes Himself known to me and comes into my life. I shall properly revere and honor His name and war against the sin of profanity.
11. The Lord's Day is a delight in my life. It is a day of spiritual refreshment, physical rest and special Christian service. In these times when many fail to keep the Lord's Day holy, I shall use it for the purposes that God intended.

## IN-DEPTH LESSON NINE

---

The debate whether a Christian should obey governmental authorities is an old one. A church father from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, Justin Martyr, said in a letter to the government authorities, “We worship only God, but in other things we will gladly serve you, acknowledge you as kings and rulers of men, and praying that, with your kingly power, you may be found to possess also sound judgment.” Others throughout the years have said that Christians have to obey God alone, and separate themselves from any form of secular government, calling it evil. Still others say that the only form of true government is an earthly theocracy, or government in which God is the king (similar to Israel’s government while they were in the Promised Land).

The Bible is clear on this issue. Paul says, *“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established...he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted...he [the authority-government established by God] is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities...this is also why you pay taxes...”* (Romans 13:1-7). Peter tells us, *“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men”* (1 Peter 2:13). When we hear the words of the fourth commandment, we hear the call to obey all authorities. Peter even tells slaves to submit respectfully to their masters, even if they are cruel (1 Peter 2:18). As Christians, we are in the world but not of the world (John 17:14). While we live as pilgrims on this earth, we must submit to the authorities God has established, even if these authorities aren’t exactly what we like.

To be sure, there have been many corrupt governments. And many Christians have been oppressed and persecuted by wicked authorities. In this light, God tells us, *“If you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed...if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name”* (1 Peter 3:14 and 4:16). If you still wonder about these things, read through the Epistle of 1 Peter, remembering that this Epistle was written to God’s elect (strangers or pilgrims in the world) who were scattered all over, most likely due to intense persecution (see Acts 11:19 and 1 Peter 1:1). Peter never tells the Christians to set up a theocracy, nor does he tell them to escape the governmental authorities that rule over them. He simply tells them to stay focused on Christ, enduring persecution as Christ Himself did (1 Peter 2:21-23).

We must also remember that we do obey God above men. When the apostles spread the message of the Gospel, the courts of Jerusalem ordered them not to teach or preach the name of Christ. Peter and the apostles all replied, *“We must obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:29). If a government sets up a decree outlawing the preaching of God’s Word, we must continue to preach the Gospel and be prepared to suffer for it, even unto death. When you are persecuted for following Christ and obeying God, you can *“rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you”* (Matthew 5:12).



## DEFENDING the Faith

### A p o l o g e t i c s

#### Every Thought Captive

As followers of Christ, we seek to “*demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*” (2 Corinthians 10:5). Peter tells us to “*always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have*” (1 Peter 3:15). **Apologetics**, simply put, is the defense of the Christian faith. Every Christian will engage in apologetics at some point or another in his/her life. Unbelievers ask serious and difficult questions of believers. We should be able to respond, in “*gentleness and respect,*” to those who ask questions about God, His Word, Christ and our salvation in Him (1 Peter 3:15).

Although the veracity of God’s truth does not depend upon our ability to defend it, the task we face in apologetics is an important one. We must understand that there is a mighty battle going on. There is a war between light and darkness, a spiritual war that Paul describes as “*not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*” (Ephesians 6:12). We don’t take up guns and swords to fight and defend ourselves in this battle; we are instructed to put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). When we defend the Christian faith, we do so clad with this spiritual armor.

**1. APOLOGETICS** means to **DEFEND** the **CHRISTIAN** faith.

When Peter instructs Christians to be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks about our hope, he is not only speaking to pastors and elders. Peter says that *every* Christian should be ready to defend their hope in Christ. Therefore, each of us must prepare ourselves and be ready to defend the Christian faith. As was stated above, while God’s existence and presence do not depend upon our apologetics, it is certainly true that our apologetics depend upon Him and His existence. He is the source of our salvation and His Word is the source of all truth. Therefore, since we have the hope of Christ in our hearts, we need to be able to explain this hope and take captive every thought into obedience to Christ. Apologetics is for every Christian, and every Christian will profit from studying the defense of the faith.

**2. Every CHRISTIAN should be ready to DEFEND his/her HOPE in CHRIST.**

#### Methods of Defense

Over the years, theologians and scholars have developed different ways to defend the Christian faith. Some have attempted to design an argument to prove God’s existence. Others, such as Descartes, have questioned everything and tried to start afresh with their reasoning and thinking, ultimately coming to a place of faith. A Roman Catholic theologian from the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, Thomas Aquinas, set up an intellectual-philosophical system of proofs for God’s existence. He used five arguments based upon reason and nature to prove that God existed. Some philosophical apologists would say, “If anything exists, something must be self-existent and eternal. There has to be being, and that’s where we start philosophically to

show the truth-claims of the Bible.” Throughout the years, godly men and women have defended the Christian faith in various ways.

Today, there are excellent Christian apologists who fearlessly defend the Christian faith. There is a wide variety of differing arguments and defenses, but for the purposes of this lesson, we will compare two methods: evidentialism and presuppositionalism.

3. **THROUGHOUT** the years, **GODLY** men and women have **DEFENDED** the faith in **VARIOUS WAYS**.

## Evidentialist Apologetics

Perhaps the most popular apologetic method today is the evidentialist method. This method seeks to compile historical, logical, scientific and natural evidence in order to prove the existence of God or the truth of the Bible. This apologetic view relies on the example of the Gospel of John, where the author sets forth many evidences and proofs that Jesus lived and did as was recorded (John 20:31).

Evidentialists try to establish the reasonableness of Christianity by relying on the intellectual assent of unbelievers. Rather than beginning with biblical truths which non-Christians do not accept, evidentialists begin with truths they already accept. Once these truths are established, evidentialists present new evidence to convince unbelievers of Christian truths which they may have initially been unwilling to accept. For instance, evidentialists begin their argument for the truth of Christianity or the existence of God by stacking up undisputed evidence, things about life and the natural world that everyone agrees upon. In this way, the evidentialist says to the unbeliever, “Let’s begin with what we both agree to be true.” As they further build their argument, they introduce the argument that the God of the Bible must have created the natural world.

4. The evidentialists try to **ESTABLISH** the **REASONABLENESS** of Christianity by

relying on the **INTELLECTUAL ASSENT** of unbelievers.

5. Evidentialists do not begin with **BIBLICAL TRUTHS** which non-Christians do not **ACCEPT**, but with truths they **ALREADY** accept.

The following are four popular arguments used by evidentialists to convince others of God’s existence:

1. Order: God provides the best explanation for abstract ideas, such as numbers, formulas and laws.
2. Causation: God provides the best explanation for the cause of the universe and everything in it.
3. Design: God provides the best explanation for the intricate order and design in the world.
4. Morality: God provides the best explanation for the existence of objective moral, ethical and religious truths and values in the world.

The evidentialist apologetic approach is set up like a courtroom trial. The evidence is set before the unbeliever, who acts as the judge. The evidentialist is the prosecuting attorney who presents evidence to convince the judge that facts, like the existence of God, are true. After making the case, the apologist says to the unbeliever, “Remain unbiased in your examination of the evidence, and judge for yourself whether God is real and His Word is true.” They have faith that God’s truth will eventually win the day.

Josh McDowell, a contemporary evidentialist and evangelist, writes to the Christian, “There’s proof that your faith is based on fact, not fiction.” An evidentialist would prove that Jesus was an actual historical figure by using extra-biblical eyewitness accounts of His life (1st and 2nd century writings). They would insist that each person must decide whether Jesus was crazy, a liar or truly the Son of

God, as He claimed. They would further argue that Jesus was the promised Messiah because He fulfilled so many Old Testament prophecies, and they would show that His words and actions prove that He truly is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. For instance, Lee Strobel, another Christian evidentialist, uses the following evidence to show that Jesus' resurrection is a historical fact:

1. Medical Evidence: He really died, so He could really be raised from the dead.
2. Missing Body Evidence: The tomb was empty on the 3rd day after the resurrection.
3. Eyewitness Accounts: Many people saw Him after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-6).
4. Historical Authorities: Many ancient documents, apart from the Bible, claim that Jesus really was raised from the dead.

Some would also consider Pentecostalism a form of evidentialism because, rather than emphasizing historical or scientific proofs to point to the truth of God's Word, Pentecostals point to miracles and signs as evidence of the veracity of the Bible.

6. The **EVIDENTIALIST** method of defending the faith says, "There's **PROOF** that your **FAITH** is based on **FACT**, not **FICTION**."

## Strengths and Weaknesses

Evidentialist apologetics has done much work in studying to defend and prove the faith historically, logically, scientifically and naturally. These proofs serve to bolster the faith of believers, root Christianity in reasonable facts and legitimize the faith to non-Christians who would otherwise call Christianity a religion of myths and superstitions. For some people, the Holy Spirit uses these facts and evidences to lead them to come face to face with the Gospel. Evidentialism is also a helpful apologetic method for Christians who work or study in academia or those who interact with thoroughly secularized realms where people are accustomed to respecting empirical facts and objective truths.

However, some agnostic or atheist unbelievers would say that all these evidences or proofs for the truth of Christianity can only prove that it is *probably* true. There is ultimately no way to empirically prove the existence of a spiritual being. Others hold that evidentialism can only lead to a generic understanding of God, or a higher power, rather than specifically to the God of the Bible.

Furthermore, all believers recognize that no person can be "argued" into the kingdom of God. All the proofs and evidences in the world cannot convince a person hardened in sin and spiritually dead that God exists or that the Bible is true. Some criticize the evidentialist apologetic approach because appealing to the *intellectual* reasoning of people can diminish the importance of *spiritual* rebirth. In other words, convincing some one that God exists and that the Bible is true does not necessarily make that person a Christian. In fact, the Scripture tells us that the devil and his demons also believe in God (James 2:19). It is a changed heart that makes one a Christian. In speaking with unbelievers about the truth of the Bible, intellectual arguments must only be used as a means to confront a person with the message of sin and the Good News of repentance unto life.

7. All believers recognize that no person can be **ARGUED** into the **KINGDOM** of God. All the **PROOFS** and evidences in the world cannot convince a person **HARDENED** in sin and **SPIRITUALLY** dead that God **EXISTS** or that the Bible is **TRUE**.

## Presuppositional and Evidential

The presuppositional apologist argues for the existence of God by assuming that all people, whether consciously or subconsciously, come to the discussion with established assumptions and beliefs. For instance, some presuppose that God does exist, but not the God of the Bible. Others presuppose that God doesn't exist at all, and still others presuppose that Christianity is true. As one presuppositional apologist, Cornelius Van Til, said, "We are committed to the notion that in the

apologetic process we must recognize clearly the strong religious convictions and presuppositions that anyone brings to such a discussion—whether they are Christian presuppositions...or non-Christian presuppositions.” To a presuppositionalist, unbelievers interpret facts on the basis of their own presuppositions just as Christians do; they just start with different beliefs. According to the presuppositional apologist, no amount of proofs—no matter how convincing or irrefutable they may be—can convince a person.

In this method, the apologist begins with the fact that God exists, the Scriptures are true and Christ is the Son of God. The apologist then seeks to appeal to the truths of Scripture in order to reach the heart of the unbeliever with these truths. The presuppositionalist maintains that God exists and that Christian beliefs are true because they were given by God. The presuppositionalist further maintains that only God can declare what is true and what isn't and that He alone imparts knowledge to humans. They believe that the truths of God's existence and His Word cannot be set on a table to be evaluated and examined, because the believer cannot operate apart from these truths. Without our dependence upon God, the presuppositionalist says, we are incapable of knowing absolute truth and should not act as the ultimate judge of this truth.

8. To a **PRESUPPOSITIONALIST**, unbelievers interpret **FACTS** on the basis of their own **PRESUPPOSITIONS** just as Christians do; they just start with **DIFFERENT BELIEFS**.

The presuppositionalist affirms the paramount importance of a mind and heart renewed by Christ. To the presuppositionalist, there is no middle ground; either a person has, by God's grace, the “*mind of Christ*,” or a person is alienated from God because of his/her sinfulness (1 Cor. 2:16 and Col. 1:21). Furthermore, the presuppositionalist points to Paul, Peter and Stephen's apologetic approach in the book of Acts. When speaking to unbelievers, the apostles relied on the testimony of

Scriptures, calling men to repentance rather than arguing for existence of God.

The presuppositionalist believes that everyone, believer and unbeliever alike, operates from a set of presuppositions, whether or not they acknowledge it. The approach they use, then, is to unmask the presuppositions of an opponent to show the bankruptcy of the unbeliever's positions and to point that person to Christ and His Word. The goal is to lead one to say as Peter did “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” John 6:68.

9. To the **PRESUPPOSITIONALIST**, there is no **MIDDLE GROUND**; either a person has, by God's grace, the “*mind of Christ*,” or a person is **ALIENATED** from God because of his/her **SINFULNESS**.

10. The approach they use, then, is to **UNMASK** the **PRESUPPOSITIONS** of an **OPONENT** to show the **BANKRUPTCY** of the unbeliever's positions and to **POINT** that person to Christ and to His **WORD**.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

A strength of the presuppositional method is its strong affirmation of God's sovereignty over all truth. The presuppositional apologist places ultimate value in the truths of God's Word, believing that it is through these very truths that God changes people. This position also takes seriously the infallibility of the Bible when it declares that biblical authority must never depend upon human verification or evidence.

Another strength of this method is that it tends to put greater emphasis on the call of the Gospel. The purpose and point of presuppositional apologetics is to show the sinner, through the power of the Word of God, his/her need for a Savior.

The primary weakness with presuppositional apologetics is that it underestimates the impor-

tance of factual and physical proofs. It is true that intellectual proofs alone cannot bring a person to salvation. However, coupled with Scriptural truths, some have seen that the Christian claims are not mere “myths” or “fables” and have come to faith and repentance. Also, presuppositional apologetics can dismiss the need for Christians to study science, history, etc. for the purpose of defending the faith or helping to dispel the doubts of believers.

A second weakness of the presuppositional approach is that it tends to be combative. The presuppositional apologist attempts to discover the error in the unbeliever’s thinking in order to confront that error with the Gospel. This is not always easy to do because some people’s presuppositions are convoluted, illogical or hidden under emotional scars and personal needs. At times, the unbeliever may need a gracious friend before he/she will trust you to expose his/her incorrect presuppositions.

Lastly, some say that this approach to apologetics is weak because it appears to use circular reasoning to prove its point (i.e. using the Bible to prove that the Bible is true). However, any argument which involves an ultimate point of reference must be circular.

**11. The purpose and point of presuppositional apologetics is to SHOW the sinner, through the POWER of the WORD of God, his/her NEED for a Savior.**

## Presuppositional and Evidential

Both presuppositionalists and evidentialists agree that we *must* defend the faith. The difference between the two is not whether we *should* speak to unbelievers—both emphatically say we should; rather, it is in the *way* we speak to them and *what* we speak to them. There are different situations that call for different approaches. For instance, a debate is an appropriate place for evidential apologetics while one-on-one conversations are appro-

priate places for presuppositional apologetics. No matter which apologetic method is used, there are certain things which should never be compromised.

**12. The difference between the two is not WHETHER we SHOULD speak to UNBELIEVERS—both emphatically say we should; rather, it is in the WAY we speak to them and WHAT we speak to them.**

## How to Approach Apologetics

No matter what apologetic approach one uses, it is important to keep the call of the Gospel central. The difference between apologetic approaches should not be the ends but merely the means. It can be tempting to make a hobby out of apologetic arguments and forget the importance of the Gospel message. However, when interacting with unbelievers, the ultimate goal should always be to confront sin with the cross of Christ. As we learned in earlier lessons, the Bible teaches that God alone can change a person’s heart and give someone faith in Christ. God alone can regenerate a sinner and give him/her the gift of faith in the Savior.

Whether you identify your apologetic approach as evidentialist or presuppositionalist, you must be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within you. You must answer unbelievers’ questions gently and respectfully, while setting apart Christ as Lord in your heart (1 Pet. 3:15). Remember when speaking to unbelievers that everyone in the world, regardless of race, religion or social class, is a sinner. And everyone in the world has a conscience; this means that everyone in the world struggles with guilt. The only thing that can dissipate guilt is to lay it at the cross of Jesus Christ. With this common starting place, you can talk to anyone about the Gospel.

As you defend the Christian faith, there are several fundamental elements of your task. One important aspect of apologetics is analysis. When you speak to an unbeliever, immediately begin analyz-

ing their thought-process. As you hear their ideas and questions about God, begin to evaluate what type of worldview they have. What causes them to think the way they do? Uncovering the worldview of the unbeliever with whom you are talking will aid you in determining which apologetic approach will be more effective to defend the faith. Scripture tells us that the unbeliever's mind is hostile to God and does not want to submit to His law (Romans 8:5-8). Remember what God's Word says about humans, and you will see how the unbeliever suppresses the knowledge of God (Romans 1:18). If you unfold and analyze the unbeliever's ideas and beliefs, you can better interact with them and respond to their concerns.

It is also important to remember to rely on God's Holy Word as you defend the faith. Keep in mind that the Bible assumes God's existence from the very first verse to the very last. Also note that *"the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge"* (Proverbs 1:7). When you defend the truths of our faith, use Scripture as much as possible, because *"the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12). Ultimately, your reasoning, arguments and proofs cannot change a person's heart. God alone, through His Word and Spirit, can change wicked hearts. Be assured, however, that He can use your testimony as a means of His grace; as one believer has said, "God can shoot straight with crooked arrows." So when you speak to an unbeliever, do so with patience and love, remembering the power of God through His Word. Rely on Him, His Word and His Spirit, and pray that He would help you in your conversation.

The third major part of apologetics is the call to repentance and faith. Although this could be more specifically labeled evangelism, we should never discuss the existence of God, or any other matters of our Christian faith, without a call to repentance and faith. Certainly, each conversation is different, and sometimes the unbeliever quickly leaves

after your discussion, but if at all possible we must make sure we exalt the name of Jesus and call the sinner to repentance, because God *"commands all people everywhere to repent"* (Acts 17:30).

We must always tell the sinner the truth of their condition apart from God. We must also remember to tell them the way of deliverance from sin: the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. When speaking to an unbeliever, remember that if you don't tell them the truth of their condition, you are like a doctor telling someone with a deadly disease that they have little to worry about, and will probably be fine. Instead, pray for them and tell them the truth in love: "You are dying—yes, already spiritually dead. Your condition is terrible, miserable, and humanly incurable. But there is good news, there is a cure: the blood of Jesus Christ. By believing in Him you will have life in His name."

13. *"The **WORD** of **GOD** is **LIVING** and active. Sharper than any double-edged **SWORD**, it **PENETRATES** even to dividing **SOUL** and **SPIRIT, JOINTS** and marrow; it **JUDGES** the thoughts and **ATTITUDES** of the **HEART**"* (Hebrew 4:12).

14. We should **NEVER DISCUSS** the **EXISTENCE** of **GOD**, or any other matters of our **CHRISTIAN FAITH**, without a call to **FAITH** and **REPENTANCE**.

## Short Answer Essays

1. Using the following verses and the lesson, describe apologetics: Psalm 119:46, Acts 5:29-31, Acts 22:1, Colossians 4:6, 2 Timothy 2:25 and 1 Peter 3:15.

Apologetics, simply put, is defending the Christian faith. These verses teach us to speak about God (Psalm 119:46), give a defense of the faith (Acts 22:1), be able to answer everyone (Colossians 4:6 and 1 Peter 3:15) and instruct those who oppose us (2 Timothy 2:25).

2. Should every follower of Christ be an apologist? Why or why not?

Every Christian is an apologist. When Peter instructs Christians to be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks about our hope, he is not only speaking to pastors and elders. Peter says that every Christian should be ready to defend their hope in Christ. Therefore, we must prepare ourselves and be ready to defend the Christian faith. Although God and His existence do not depend upon our apologetics, it is certainly true that our apologetics depend upon Him and His existence. He is the source of our salvation, His Word is the source of truth and since we have the hope of Christ in our hearts, we should be able to explain this hope and take captive every thought into obedience to Christ. Apologetics is for every Christian and every Christian will profit from studying the defense of the faith.

3. What are some different methods of apologetics that you have used or heard of in the past?

**Each student will respond differently to this question. Be encouraging in your response to your student.**

#### 4. What is the evidentialist method?

The evidentialist seeks to prove God's existence by appealing to certain facts or evidence in creation that point to a Creator. He seeks to establish the reasonableness of Christianity, counting on God's common grace that all people experience to some extent. What this means is that when defending the faith, the Christian doesn't begin with biblical truths the non-Christian cannot yet accept, but with truths he already accepts. On that basis, the evidentialist presents evidence to convince the unbeliever of the truths he may not have initially been willing to accept.

#### 5. What is presuppositional apologetics?

Presuppositional apologetics is defending the Christian faith by relying on the truths of God's Word. Rather than relying on physical, scientific or historic evidences, presuppositional apologetics recognizes that everyone has certain presuppositions concerning religion. Instead of beginning with arguments for the existence of God or the truth of the Bible, the presuppositional apologist asserts that there is a God, He is the God of the Bible, and the Bible is true. In this way, the presuppositional apologist attempts to reach the hearts of listeners. Because physical evidences can be rejected in sinful stubbornness, the presuppositional apologist only appeals to the truths of Scripture to convict and bring unbelievers to faith. The hope of the presuppositional apologist is that the Holy Spirit will change the presuppositions of the listener so that, by the Spirit's testimony, he/she will hear and believe the truths of the Bible.

#### 6. What are four key arguments for God's existence according to the evidentialist? Name and explain them.

**Order:** God provides the best explanation for abstract ideas, such as numbers, formulas and laws.

**Causation:** God provides the best explanation for the cause of the universe and everything in it.

**Design:** God provides the best explanation for the intricate order in the world.

**Morality:** God provides the best explanation for the existence of objective moral, ethical and religious truths and values in the world.

7. What evidence does the modern Christian apologist, Lee Strobel, use to prove Jesus' resurrection?

Lee Strobel, another Christian evidentialist, uses the following evidence that Jesus' resurrection is a historical fact:

**Medical Evidence:** He really died, so He could really be raised from the dead.

**Missing Body Evidence:** The tomb was empty on the 3rd day after the resurrection.

**Eyewitness accounts:** Many people saw Him after His resurrection  
(1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

**Historical Authorities:** Many ancient documents, even aside from the Bible, claim that Jesus really was raised from the dead.

8. What are the strengths of the evidentialist method? Use the lesson and your own ideas as well.

From the lesson: the evidentialist method researches, discovers and preserves historical, scientific and natural evidences of the truth of Christianity. These facts help to bolster the faith of believers and also support the reasonability of the faith in the eyes of unbelievers. The evidentialist apologist studies academic subjects outside of religion to show that religion can be supported by truths outside of Scripture. Students' own ideas will vary.

9. What are the strengths of the presuppositional method? Use the lesson and your own ideas as well.

From the lesson: The presuppositional method relies on the work of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of Scriptures, following the example of the apostles who shared the Gospel with unbelievers using the Old Testament Scriptures. The presuppositional method draws attention to the matters of the heart, seeking not just to argue proofs, but to evangelize. Students' own answers will vary.

10. Explain how evidential apologetics is set up like a courtroom trial.

In the evidentialist apologetic approach, the apologist is like a prosecuting attorney presenting evidence, arguments and facts to convince the unbeliever that the God of the Bible exists and that the claims of the Bible are true. The unbeliever is like the jury in the courtroom who examines the evidence and considers the prosecution's arguments before giving an unbiased judgment of the case.

11. Explain the ultimate goal of apologetics.

"No matter what apologetic approach one uses, it is important to keep the call of the Gospel central. The difference between apologetic approaches should not be the ends but merely the means. It can be tempting to make a hobby out of apologetic arguments and forget the importance of the Gospel message. However, when interacting with unbelievers, the ultimate goal should always be to confront sin with the cross of Christ. As we learned in earlier lessons, the Bible teaches that God alone can change a person's heart and give someone faith in Christ. God alone can regenerate a sinner and give him/her the gift of faith in the Savior."

12. What do presuppositional and evidentialist apologetics have in common?

Both apologetic approaches seek to speak with unbelievers about the existence of God and the truths of the Bible. Both approaches agree that it is important for Christians to engage unbelievers with subjects of faith. And both approaches seek to share the Gospel with those in darkness. As the lesson pointed out, the difference between presuppositional and evidentialist apologetics is not the goal or the motive, but the method.

13. What are three main parts of apologetics?

**Analysis:** When you speak to an unbeliever, immediately begin analyzing their thought-process.

**God's Holy Word:** Keep in mind, the Bible assumes God's existence from the very first verse to the very last.

**The call to repentance and faith:** Although this could be more specifically labeled evangelism, we should never discuss the existence of God or any other matters of our Christian faith without a call to repentance and faith.

## Digging Deeper

1. Which method of apologetics, of the two listed in this lesson, is more effective in your opinion? Explain which position you prefer and why.

**The students will argue their position on this subject.** Be sure they answer thoughtfully and completely, explaining in detail why they prefer one position over the other, or if they like elements of each approach. **There is no one correct answer.**

2. Recall an apologetic conversation you've had with an unbeliever. Write the main themes from your conversation, and explain where you think you could have changed your approach. If you can't remember a conversation, make one up, using either presuppositional or evidentialist apologetics.

**Each student will respond differently to this question,** as they will have their own unique experience talking with unbelievers. Be sensitive and encouraging in your response to them.

3. Read Acts 17:16-33 and explain Paul's apologetic method. Also see the following verses: Acts 22:1-22, 25:16, 1 Corinthians 9:3, Philippians 1:7, 17 and 1 Peter 3:15.

Paul apologizes for his faith in these verses. He does so by giving a plea, defense or speech in defense of his faith. It could be said that Paul uses a more presuppositionalist approach since he doesn't present evidence to convince the unbeliever of the truths he may not have initially been willing to accept; he simply presupposes, or assumes, God's existence.

**4. IN-DEPTH LESSON 10 ESSAY:** Evaluate Van Til's "proposal."

**Students will evaluate Van Til's proposal differently. Be sensitive and encouraging in your response.**

## Challenge Questions: Read and Respond

In his book, *The Defense of the Faith*, Cornelius Van Til (1895-1987) speaks of the state of unbelieving people's hearts and minds.

“Of course, when we thus stress Paul's teaching that all men do not have a mere capacity for but are in actual possession of the knowledge of God, we have at once to add Paul's further instruction to the effect that all men, due to the sin within them, always and in all relationships seek to “suppress” this knowledge of God (Rom. 1:18, *American Standard Version*). The natural man is such a one as constantly throws water on a fire he cannot quench. He has yielded to the temptation of Satan, and has become his bondservant. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve in paradise he sought to make them believe that man's self-consciousness was ultimate rather than derivative and God-dependent. He argued, as it were, that it was of the nature of self-consciousness to make itself the final reference point of all predication. He argued, as it were, that God had no control over all that might come forth in the process of time.”<sup>1</sup>

1. What does it mean that all men possess a knowledge of God? How does this knowledge affect your approach to apologetics?

As Romans teaches, all people whether regenerated or lost in sin, have an innate knowledge of God. That is, deep down inside all people know that there is an omnipotent God in the heavens. In order to continue in their rebellion toward God, people suppress this truth.

While proofs, arguments and evidences are helpful, ultimately people need to be confronted with their sin and unbelief. Unbelievers may not know about God's names and His commandments, but they truly know there is a God, and when they hear the Gospel of the Bible, it strikes their souls, ringing true. In their sin, they will seek to reject this truth. That is why as Christian apologists we should always pray when speaking to unbelievers. We pray that the Holy Spirit would move in their hearts, and we pray that they would not harden their hearts to the conviction of sin that certainly comes when the Word is preached.

In evangelism and apologetics, it is common to hear the term “seeker” referring to those who are supposedly searching for God. Herman Bavinck wrote of the struggle in the hearts of people who do not know God. Read the following extended quote, and answer the questions that follow.

“The conclusion, therefore, is that of Augustine, who said that the heart of man was created for God and that it cannot find rest until it rests in his Father's heart. Hence all men are really seeking after God, as Augustine also declared, but they do not all seek Him in the right way, nor at the right place. They seek Him down below, and He is up above. They seek Him afar, and He is nearby. They seek Him in money, in property, in fame, in power, and in passion; and He is to be found in the high and the holy places, and with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit (Isa. 57:15). But they do seek Him, if haply they might feel after and find Him (Acts 17:27). They seek Him and at the same time they flee Him. They have no interest in a knowledge of His ways, and yet they cannot do without Him. They feel themselves attracted to God and at the same time repelled by Him.

<sup>1</sup> Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1955), 92.

In this, as Pascal so profoundly pointed out, consists the greatness and the miserableness of man. He longs for truth and is false by nature. He yearns for rest and throws himself from one diversion upon another. He pants for a permanent and eternal bliss and seizes on the pleasures of the moment. He seeks for God and loses himself in the creature. He is born son of the house and he feeds on the husks of the swine in a strange land. He forsakes the fountain of living waters and hews out broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13). He is a hungry man who dreams that he is eating, and when he awakes finds that his soul is empty; and he is like a thirsty man who dreams that he is drinking, and when he awakes finds that he is faint and that his soul has appetite (Isa. 29:8).

Science cannot explain this contradiction in man. It reckons only with his greatness and not with his misery, or only with his misery and not with his greatness. It exalts him too high, or it depresses him too far, for science does not know of his Divine origin, nor of his profound fall. But the Scriptures know of both, and they shed their light over man and over mankind; and the contradictions are reconciled, the mists are cleared, and the hidden things are revealed. Man is an enigma whose solution can be found only in God.”<sup>2</sup>

2. After reading this quote, explain in what sense are all people “seekers.” In what sense are there no true “seekers”? Explain how this influences your apologetic efforts.

As Bavinck (and Augustine before him) points out, all people inherently know that there is a missing place in their souls. They are restless, searching, unhappy, aching for some missing piece. They long for eternal rest, internal peace and some kind of transcendent purpose. They even search for some one or something to worship because all people were made to worship a higher being. And yet, no one truly seeks after God as Romans 3:11 tells us, “there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.” Though all people search for fulfillment to their spiritual souls, they reject the righteous God of the Bible, choosing instead to be their own gods. Without the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people, we would all reject Jesus Christ, though we long for Him. Because of our sinful hearts, we would rather search in misery than submit to Him.

In apologetics, we must recognize that we speak to men and women who do long for God. There is a natural vacuum in their hearts that was meant to be filled with a living relationship with the Heavenly Father. However, we would be naïve to think the sinful nature doesn’t repulse the Gospel message. As much as each non-Christian would like peace with God is as much as he/she abhors the thought of submitting to the Holy God. Again, this is why prayer is so important. Only in prayer are we reminded that we are but tools used by the Holy Spirit to spread the message He applies to hearts. No matter how perfect our logical presentation, no matter how carefully we explain the truth of the Word, only God can turn a person’s heart and mind toward Him.

---

<sup>2</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1956) 22-23.

## Definitions

---

Apologetics: Defending the Christian faith.

## What I Confess

---

1. I believe that I must always be ready to give an answer for my hope in the Gospel. In doing so, I will seek to be like Christ: meek, humble and loving.
2. My defense of God and His Word is rooted in Scripture. My reason and intellect are gifts from God to be used for His glory.
3. When I speak to unbelievers, I will do so with love, praying for them, that they may come to a saving knowledge of Christ.
4. As I converse with unbelievers, I will tell them that they are sinners, as God's Word declares, and that the only way of salvation is through repentance and faith in Christ.
5. I praise God that I do have hope, that I can be sure of my salvation and that Christ is Lord. I thank Him for showing Himself to me in such a way that I can see that the heavens declare His glory.

## IN-DEPTH LESSON TEN

---

My proposal, therefore, for a consistently Christian methodology of apologetics is this:

1. That we use the same principle in apologetics that we use in theology: the self-attesting, self-explanatory Christ of Scripture.
2. That we no longer make an appeal to “common notions” which Christian and non-Christian agree on, but to the “common ground” which they actually have because man and his world are what Scripture says they are.
3. That we appeal to man as man, God’s image. We do so only if we set the non-Christian principle of the rational autonomy of man against the Christian principle of the dependence of man’s knowledge on God’s knowledge as revealed in the person and by the Spirit of Christ.
4. That we claim, therefore, that Christianity alone is reasonable for men to hold. It is wholly irrational to hold any other position than that of Christianity. Christianity alone does not slay reason on the altar of “chance.”
5. That we argue, therefore, by “presupposition.” The Christian, as did Tertullian, must contest the very principles of his opponent’s position. The only “proof” of the Christian position is that unless its truth is presupposed there is no possibility of “proving” anything at all. The actual state of affairs as preached by Christianity is the necessary foundation of “proof” itself.
6. That we preach with the understanding that the acceptance of the Christ of Scripture by sinners who, being alienated from God, seek to flee His face, comes about when the Holy Spirit, in the presence of inescapably clear evidence, open their eyes so that they see things as they truly are.
7. That we present the message and evidence for the Christian position as clearly as possible, knowing that because man is what the Christian says he is, the non-Christian will be able to understand in an intellectual sense the issues involved. In so doing, we shall, to a large extent, be telling him what he “already knows” but seeks to suppress. This “reminding” process provides a fertile ground for the Holy Spirit, who in sovereign grace may grant the non-Christian repentance so that he may know Him who is life eternal.

-Cornelius Van Til, from *My Credo*.

## Appendix 1: Dictionary of Biblical and Theological Terms

### A

**Adiaphora** – Matters of conduct which are neither sinful nor righteous in themselves but which become legitimate or illegitimate in the Christian life according to circumstances.

**Adoption** – The act of God’s love whereby He takes saved sinners into His family and bestows all the rights of sonship upon them as children of God (Galatians 4:5 and Ephesians 1:5).

**Adoration** – The act of reverently reflecting upon God’s many perfections and giving loving praise to Him for His own sake.

**Annihilationism** – A false teaching that the unsaved wicked will not suffer eternal punishment in hell but will finally cease to be as if they had never lived.

**Anthropology** – The study of humanity or the doctrine of humanity.

**Anti-Christ** – One who is against Christ. Just before Christ returns there will probably arise one individual who will concentrate in his life all imaginable evil against Christ (1 John 2:18, 22 and 4:3).

**Antithesis** – The absolute dichotomy between light and dark, good and evil.

**Apocrypha** – Those religious books which are not included in the Holy Bible because they were not inspired by God the Holy Spirit.

**Apologetics** – The science of the defense of the Christian faith.

**Apologetics, Evidential** – The apologetic method that attempts to prove God’s existence, Jesus’ resurrection and the Bible’s authority by proof or evidence.

**Apologetics, Presuppositional** – Defending the faith with the understanding that all people operate out of certain presuppositions and that if their presuppositions are not taken from Scripture they will lead to destruction.

**Apostasy** – A falling away from the truth of God as revealed in the Bible, in words and deeds by one person, a church or a nation (Luke 8:13).

**Arminianism** – A system of doctrine which regards God’s actions as somewhat limited by and dependent upon the free actions of man. This system derives its name from a Dutch theologian named Jacobus Arminius.

**Assurance** – The conviction that a person is presently saved by grace and will surely enter into heaven, which a believer may attain as he rightly uses the means of grace and knows the witness of the Holy Spirit in his heart (Romans 8:16).

**Atonement** – The satisfaction of God’s justice made by Jesus Christ, which was necessary for the forgiveness of sinners (Exodus 29:36 and 30:10, Romans 5:10-11 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

**Atonement, Definite** – Christ’s definite work of salvation which included a specific number of sinners (John 10:11 and 17:11 and Ephesians 5:25). Definite Atonement is also called Limited Atonement or Particular Redemption.

**Atonement, Substitutionary** – see **Satisfaction of Christ**.

**Atonement, Vicarious** – see **Satisfaction of Christ**.

**Attributes of God, Communicable** – Those qualities of which we find some resemblance in humans. These include knowledge, wisdom, goodness, love, holiness and righteousness, along with several other characteristics that God has revealed in His Word.

**Attributes of God, Incommunicable** – Attributes which humans do not “share” with God, because they are unique to Him alone.

## B

**Baptism** – A sign and seal of the washing away of sins through the blood of Christ. Baptism is one of the two sacraments of the Christian church, which shows us in picture form the washing away of sins by Christ's blood.

**Baptism, Believers' (credobaptism)** – The position that baptism is to be administered only to adult believers.

**Baptism, Infant (paedobaptism)** – The position that baptism is to be administered not only to believers, but also the children of believers.

**Bible, The** – God's infallible and inspired written Word. The Old and New Testament, containing sixty-six books, are God's Word and He is the author of them. The word "Bible" means book.

## C

**Calvinism** – The system of truth which acknowledges the absolute sovereignty of God and man's total dependence on God for every part of his life, faith and salvation. It is consistent Biblical Christianity which received its basic expression in the writings of the Genevan Reformer, John Calvin (16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.).

**Calvinism, Five Points of** – Five interrelated Biblical truths explained in the *Canons of Dort*, an early 17<sup>th</sup> Century Christian doctrinal work. These five truths are: 1. Unconditional election; 2. Limited or definite atonement; 3. Total depravity; 4. Irresistible grace; 5. Perseverance of the saints. These five truths form an answer to five erroneous beliefs held by Arminians.

**Canon of Scripture** – The list of the books of the Bible that are recognized as inspired by God the Holy Spirit.

**Catholic Church** – Typically lower-case, the universal world-wide church of God as distinguished from any special congregation or denomination. When the word *Roman* is used it refers to a special organization of churches under the control of a Pope who lives in Vatican City, an autonomous country within Rome.

**Christology** – The Doctrine or study of Jesus Christ.

**Church, Universal** – The community of believers made up of people from all nations since the beginning of the world (Genesis 26:3-4, Isaiah 59:21, 1 Corinthians 11:26 and Revelation 5:9). These are God's children for whom Jesus died, and through His Spirit and Word gathers, protects and preserves for Himself (Matthew 16:18, John 10:28-30 and Ephesians 1:3-14). This community of believers is united by faith and called the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12).

**Congregation** – A group of Christ-confessing sinners of like faith gathered in one place for the purpose of worship (Hebrews 12:23).

**Conversion** – The sinner's turning from sin to God, which is the effect of regeneration and which includes repentance and faith (Psalm 51:13, Matthew 18:3, John 6:44, Acts 3:19 and Philippians 2:13).

**Covenant of Grace** – The partnership God establishes with His people to carry out His kind, gracious purposes (Hebrews 8:8-13).

**Creation** – The act of God's will by which He made all things good for the praise and glory of His name (Genesis 1-2).

## D

**Deity of Christ** – The truth that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the only true God, one in Whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

**Depravity, Total** – The truth that the unsaved sinner is corrupted by sin in every part of his/her personality and completely unable and unwilling to do any good that is pleasing to God (Romans 3:9-20).

**Divine Decrees** – God's eternal purpose in which He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass (Job

28:26, Psalm 2:7 and 148:6, Jeremiah 13:25, Lamentations 2:17 and Romans 1:32). All of God's decrees form the counsel of His will.

**Doctrine** – A principle, teaching, instruction or truth.

## E

**Ecclesiology** – The doctrine or study of the church.

**Election** – God's unconditional and sovereign choice of certain people in Christ unto final salvation (1 Peter 1:2).

**Eschatology** – The Biblical teaching concerning the last things. These teachings include such matters as the state of man after death, the return of Christ, the signs announcing His second coming, the resurrection, the judgment and eternal life.

**Eternity of God** – The perfection of God by which He lives independent of all the limitations of time and succession of moments (Psalm 90:2 and 102:12 and Ephesians 3:21).

**Exaltation of Christ** – The life of Jesus Christ that He now lives as having been rewarded by God for His perfect work (Philippians 2:9-11). It consists of His resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His sitting at the right hand of God and His return at the end of time.

**Excommunication** – The final step in Christian discipline in which the unrepentant church member is solemnly excluded from the fellowship of the church until such a time as he turns from his sins.

## F

**Faith, Historical** – A mere agreement with the truths of the Bible as a matter of historical fact without personal trust in God and Jesus Christ for salvation.

**Faith, Temporary** – A faith which resembles true faith but that does not proceed from a new-born life and which withers and disappears under the pressures of sin and persecution.

**Faith, True** – “Not only a knowledge and conviction that everything God reveals in His Word is true; it is also a deep-rooted assurance, created in me by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, that, out of sheer grace earned for us by Christ, not only others, but I too, have had my sins forgiven, have been made forever right with God and have been granted salvation” (*Heidelberg Catechism*, Answer 21).

**Fall of Man** – The act which took place when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden and that plunged mankind from the situation of perfection and joy into sin and misery (Genesis 3).

**Foreordination** – God's determination from all eternity of everything that takes place in time (Acts 4:28, Romans 8:29-30 and 1 Corinthians 2:7).

**Forgiveness of Sins** – The act of God by which the sinner's guilt is no longer charged to him and he is thus released from paying the penalty of sins (Psalm 130:4, Matthew 26:28, Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14). It is also called *pardon* (Isaiah 55:7).

## G

**Glorification** – The final stage of salvation of God's elect at which time they are taken to heaven in the moment of death and receive a new body and a new universe when Christ comes again (Romans 8:28-30).

**Good Works** – Those acts of man which proceed from a true faith, according to the law of God and which are dedicated to God's glory (Ephesians 2:1-10 and Titus 3:1-8).

**Gospel** – The good news of salvation which God provides for sinners in the work of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:21, Mark 1:1 and Romans 1:16-17).

**Grace of God** – The goodness and favor of God that He gives to those people who are not entitled to it and who deserve His wrath and punishment because of sin.

**Grace, Common** – A kind of grace or favor that God gives to all without distinction and that includes

positive things for this life such as discovering truth, the restraint of sin, experiencing God's blessings and doing external good things, but does not include salvation.

**Grace, Special** – That unmerited favor that God gives only to the elect and that brings about their salvation.

## H

**Heaven** – This refers to: 1. The celestial world (Genesis 1:1); 2. That place where God's presence and glory are concentrated (Revelation 4); 3. The future home of the saved (2 Corinthians 5:1).

**Hell** – The place of eternal punishment prepared particularly for Satan and his angels where all unsaved sinners will be banished from the blessed presence of God (Revelation 20:13-14).

**Heresy** – An unbiblical doctrine contrary to the accepted creeds or doctrinal standards of a church that, if left unchallenged, would eventually destroy the witness of the church to God's truth.

**Heretic** – A person who holds to and propagates a heresy.

**Holiness of God** – God's awful majesty and His infinite and absolute separation from all that is sinful (Isaiah 6:1-8 and Revelation 4).

**Hope** – The believer's eager expectation of final glory and joy in a recreated universe which shall be given to him when Christ returns (Romans 8:24 and 15:13 and 1 Peter 1:3-13).

**Humiliation of Christ** – The position which Christ took under the law of God at the time of His birth. While in this position, He experienced the wrath of God, the miseries of life and final banishment from this life in His death and burial. This position ended for Jesus at the time of His resurrection from the dead (Philippians 2:6-8).

## I

**Image of God** – Created in God's image, humans are distinguished from all other creatures and stand supreme as the head and crown of the entire creation (Genesis 9:6, Psalm 8 and James 3:9).

**Immanence of God** – That perfection of God by which He is everywhere present in the created world. It is also called the omnipresence of God (Psalm 136).

**Immutable** – An incommunicable attribute of God that means that He is unchangeable (Malachi 3:6).

**Imputation** – The act of a judge by which something is reckoned over unto one's account or laid to the charge or credit of someone (see Romans 5). What is reckoned or charged forms the basis for a declaration by the judge either until acquittal or condemnation (Romans 4:8 KJV). The Bible speaks of three major imputations:

Of Adam's sin to the whole human race;

Of the elect's sin to Jesus Christ;

Of Christ's righteousness to the believing sinner.

**Incarnation** – The act of God the Son in taking unto Himself a complete human nature, body and soul, to win salvation for sinners (Matthew 1:23).

**Independence of God** – That perfection by which God is perfectly sufficient to Himself and in no way whatsoever dependent on anyone or anything (Psalm 33:11 and 115:3 and Romans 11:33-34).

**Infallibility of Scripture** – The Biblical teaching that the Bible is absolutely trustworthy and free from all errors (Psalm 12:6 and Proverbs 30:5).

**Infinity of God** – An incommunicable attribute of God that means He is completely boundless, without any limits of space and time (Job 11:7-11, Psalm 90:2 and Isaiah 66:1).

**Iniquity** – A word for sin which includes the ideas of perverseness, wickedness and the absence of justice (Psalm 25:11 and 38:18 and Isaiah 53:6).

**Inspiration of the Bible** – The act of God, the Holy Spirit, by which He influenced the writers of the Bible books to write the exact words and thoughts that God intended them to write (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

**Intercession of Christ** – The work of the exalted Savior in heaven whereby He pleads the cause of each and every true child of God (Hebrews 7:25).

**Invisible Church** – The church as God sees it, the elect of God from every nation.

## J

**Justification** – An act of God, the Judge, in which He graciously forgives sins and declares us perfectly innocent in His righteousness. This declaration is based on the perfect righteousness of Christ which is reckoned or imputed to the believer's life. This blessing can only be received in the way of faith (Romans 3-5 and Galatians 2:16-21).

## K

**Keys of the Kingdom** – The authority of church government and discipline that Christ, the head and King of the church, has given to the lawfully elected officers of His church (Matthew 16:16 and 18:15-20 and John 20:22-23).

**Kingdom of God** – The rulership of God established in and acknowledged by the hearts of the regenerated sinner that is partly realized in this age but shall reach its full realization when Christ comes a second time (Mark 1:15 and 4:26, Luke 6:20 and 17:21, John 3:3-5, Romans 14:17, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Hebrews 12:28 and Revelation 1:6).

## L

**Legalism** – The erroneous theory that one can become right with God by obeying His Law (Galatians 2:16). This error is seen clearly in the lives of the Pharisees who thought their obedience was acceptable to God.

**Liberty, Christian** – The freedom of the saved sinner from the wrath of God, the guilt of sin, the curse of the law and the power of sin (Galatians 5:1, 16-26).

**Longsuffering of God** – That perfection of God by which He patiently bears with the evil in spite of their long-continued disobedience (Exodus 34:6, Psalm 86:15, Romans 2:4 and 1 Timothy 1:16).

**Lord's Supper, The** – One of the two sacraments of the Christian church that is the Gospel in picture form. The bread and wine show us Christ's body and blood poured out for the forgiveness of our sins. In the Supper, we spiritually partake of Christ's body and blood, which strengthens our faith in Him.

**Love of God** – That perfection of God that moves Him to give Himself in fellowship to sinners in Jesus Christ (Psalm 51:1, 86:15 and 136:26, Romans 5:8 and 8:39, Ephesians 2:4 and 1 John 4).

## M

**Means of Grace** – The ordinary means that Christ Jesus uses to bring the blessings of salvation into sinners' lives. Christ uses especially the Word, the sacraments and prayer to apply effectively His work in the lives of the elect.

**Mediator** – One who stands between two parties who are at odds. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between the offended God and the offending sinner (1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 9:15 and 12:24).

**Mercy of God** – That perfection of God by which He acts to take pity on the miserable sinner and relieve his/her distress (2 Samuel 24:14, Psalm 25:6, Matthew 9:13 and Romans 9:18).

**Merit** – That which is earned. Merit is in contrast with grace, which cannot be earned by man's work (Romans 4:4-8 and Galatians 3:2-5). Christ merited salvation and graciously gives salvation to whom He will.

**Messiah** – A Hebrew word meaning "anointed." An anointed person was set apart to perform a certain work. Christ is the Greek term meaning the same thing (Matthew 1:17 and Luke 2:11). Jesus Christ was anointed to be the perfect prophet, priest and king.

**Millennium** – The thousand year period spoken of in Revelation 20:1-10. During this period, Christ reigns and Satan is kept in check. We believe this thousand year period to refer figuratively to the time between Christ's ascension into heaven and His final return at the end of time.

**Miracle** – A special event in the physical world caused by the direct activity of God that points beyond itself to the saving work of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (1 Chronicles 16:12, Psalm 77:14, John 10:25 and Hebrews 2:4). Jesus also warned of false prophets performing miracles (Mark 13:22).

## N

**Natures of Christ** – Refers to the mystery of Jesus who is both perfectly human and perfectly divine.

## O

**Obedience of Christ** – The work of Jesus Christ in which He took care of the guilt of sin and met the penal requirements of God's law. This is often called Christ's *passive* obedience. Christ also perfectly fulfilled the demands of God's law. This is often called Christ's *active* obedience. This two-fold obedience is the ground for forgiveness of sins.

**Omnipotence** – An incommunicable attribute of God which means all-powerful.

**Original Guilt** – The liability of punishment that was Adam's because of his first sin and which is reckoned or imputed by God to all members of the human race.

**Original Sin** – The first sin of Adam that became the root out of which all the sin and misery of the world has come (see Romans 5).

## P

**Parousia** – Jesus' arrival, or return to earth (Matthew 24:30, Acts 1:11 and 1 Thessalonians 1:10).

**Perfectionism** – The teaching that it is possible for a Christian, in this life, to reach a position where he no longer commits any sin.

**Perseverance of the Saints** – The Biblical teaching that the regenerated sinner can neither totally nor finally fall away from salvation but shall be preserved by the abiding grace of God (John 10:28 and 17:12 and Hebrews 7:25).

**Prayer** – The most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us. When we pray in Jesus' name, we draw near to God and He draws near to us.

**Predestination** – God's eternal determination of the final end of every individual among angels and men (Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:5, 11).

**Probationary Command** – The commandment which God gave to Adam and Eve in Paradise, not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good or evil, in which God tested our first parents with respect to their obedience to God (Genesis 2:17).

**Prolegomena** – Means "to say before." In theology, prolegomena deals with important topics that must be covered before one begins studying the basic truths of the Christian faith.

**Propitiation** – The removing of God's displeasure and wrath by Jesus Christ as He fully satisfied the justice and holiness of God. Christ is the propitiation for our sins (Romans 3:25 and 1 John 2:2 KJV).

**Proto-evangelium** – The first Gospel, Genesis 3:15.

**Providence** – The everywhere-present activity of God whereby He preserves the whole order of creation and governs all things and events unto their appointed end (Job 12:23, Psalm 103:19 and 104:21, 28, Matthew 5:45 and Ephesians 1:11).

## R

**Reconciliation** – The root idea is to change thoroughly from one position to another. By virtue of Christ's perfect work, the elect are removed from a position of estrangement and alienation into a position of friendship and companionship with God (Romans 5:11).

**Redemption** – God’s work of meeting all the requirements for the salvation of sinners by which God freed the elect sinner from the bondage of sin (Romans 3:24 and 8:23, Ephesians 1:7 and Hebrews 9:12).

**Reformed Theology** – The presentation of Biblical truths in a manner which highlights the sovereignty of God, the perfect work of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. The name “Reformed” comes from the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation, when people were called back to the truths of the historic Christian faith.

**Regeneration** – The act of God the Holy Spirit by which He makes the spiritually dead sinner alive (Psalm 42:1-2, John 3:3, 1 Corinthians 2:14-15, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Ephesians 1:18 and 2:3). It is also called the *new birth* (1 Peter 1:3).

**Repentance** – When a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin and understanding of the mercy of God in Christ, sorrows, grieves and hates his sin and turns from it to Christ (Psalm 51:1-7, Joel 2:12, Acts 2:37-38 and 11:18 and Romans 6:1-11).

**Reprobation** – God’s sovereign act of passing by certain sinners not chosen to salvation and His righteous condemnation of such sinners to endure the just rewards of their sins (Romans 9:10-22; see also Romans 1:28 and Titus 1:16 KJV).

**Revelation** – God’s activity by which He makes truth known to men (Luke 2:32). See **General and Special Revelation**.

**Revelation, General** – God’s action of communicating truth to man through the created world of nature, the history of man and man’s own conscience (Psalm 19:1-6).

**Revelation, Special** – God’s action of communicating truth to some men in and through the Scriptures (Psalm 19:7-10).

**Righteousness of God** – That perfection of God by which He as the Holy One acts in perfect harmony with His Law (Psalm 36:6, 48:10 and 119:142, Romans 1:17 and 3:22). It is also called the *Justice* of God by which He rewards good and punishes evil.

## S

**Sacrament** – A holy, religious ceremony instituted by Christ in which the grace of God in Christ and the blessings of the covenant of grace are pictured, sealed and applied to believers who respond in faith and loyalty to God. The New Testament church observes the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

**Sanctification** – The work of God whereby the saved sinner is refashioned in the whole man after the ways of God so that he dies more and more to sin and lives unto righteousness (John 17:17, Acts 20:32, 1 Corinthians 1:2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

**Satan** – The enemy of God and His people. He is the Christian’s adversary (1 Peter 5:8).

**Satisfaction of Christ** – Christ’s act of sacrificing Himself in order to meet the demands of God’s justice in the place of each one of the elect (John 10:11, 15 and 1 John 3:16). It is also called the *Vicarious Atonement* and *Substitutionary Atonement*.

**Self-existence of God** – The incommunicable attribute of God that means that He exists in Himself and does not depend upon anyone or anything (Exodus 3:14).

**Sin** – Breaking God’s Law in any way (1 John 3:4). See also **Transgression** or **Iniquity**.

**Soteriology** – The study or doctrine of salvation.

**Sovereignty of God** – That perfection of God’s absolute authority over His created universe by which He does everything for His own glory according to the counsel of His will (Genesis 15:2, Deuteronomy 3:24, Psalm 68:20, Isaiah 40:10 and Acts 4:24).

**Systematic Theology** – The presentation of the truths of Scripture in an orderly arrangement.

## T

**Temptation** – The enticement of a person by Satan, the sinful world or the sinful nature of man to commit sin by offering some seeming advantage to the person being tempted (Matthew 6:13, 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 1 Timothy 6:9).

**Testimony of the Holy Spirit** – The work of God in which He opens a person’s mind to the evidences in the Bible which point to its divine authority.

**Theology** – The study of God.

**Total Depravity** – Humans by nature are corrupt, perverse and sinful throughout. Every part of human nature is full of sin (Romans 3:10-12). Radical Corruption is another term for this.

**Transgression** – A word meaning sin that describes the act as a stepping over the line laid down in God’s law (Psalm 32:1, 32:5 and 51:1-3, Romans 4:7 and Ephesians 2:1-5).

**Trinity** – The Biblical teaching that one God exists in three separate persons—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are the same in substance and equal in glory.

**Truth** – That which is in harmony with God’s nature and revelation (Psalm 25:5 and 31:5, John 3:21 and 8:32).

## V

**Visible Church** – The church on earth as man sees it. The visible church includes true believers and those who are not children of God (Matthew 13:24-30).

## W

**Worldview** – The general perspective from which a person sees and interprets all things. It also includes the group of beliefs about life and the universe held by a person.

**Wrath of God** – God’s perfectly-righteous anger at sin and His act of inflicting deserved punishments upon guilty sinners (2 Chronicles 19:2, Psalm 7:11 and 69:24, Romans 1:18 and 9:22).

## **Appendix 2: Ancient Christian Creeds**

### **The Apostle's Creed**

(4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic [universal] Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. AMEN.

### **The Nicene Creed**

(4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### **Athanasian Creed**

(5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

Whoever will be saved shall, above all else,  
hold the catholic faith.

Which faith, except everyone keeps whole and undefiled,  
without doubt he will perish eternally.

And the catholic faith is this,  
that we worship one God in three persons  
and three persons in one God,  
neither confusing the persons  
nor dividing the substance.

For there is one person of the Father,

another of the Son,  
and another of the Holy Spirit.  
But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one:  
the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit.

The Father uncreated,  
the Son uncreated,  
and the Holy Spirit uncreated.  
The Father incomprehensible,  
the Son incomprehensible,  
and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.

The Father eternal,  
the Son eternal,  
and the Holy Spirit eternal.

And yet there are not three eternal  
but one eternal.

As there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles  
but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is almighty,  
the Son almighty,  
and the Holy Spirit almighty.

And yet they are not three almighties  
but one almighty.

So the Father is God,  
the Son is God,  
and the Holy Spirit is God.

And yet they are not three gods;  
but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord,  
the Son Lord,  
and the Holy Spirit Lord.

And yet they are not three lords  
but one Lord.

For as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every person by himself  
to be both God and Lord,

So we cannot by the catholic faith  
say that there are three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created;  
but begotten.

The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten  
but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers;  
one Son, not three Sons;  
one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

And in this trinity none is before or after another;  
none is greater or less than another;

But the whole three persons  
are coeternal together and coequal,

so that in all things, as is aforesaid,  
 the Unity in Trinity  
 and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped..  
 He, therefore, that will be saved is compelled thus to think of the Trinity.  
 Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation  
 that he also believe faithfully the incarnation  
 of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 For the right faith is  
 that we believe and confess  
 that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,  
 is God and man;  
 God of the substance of the Father,  
 begotten before the worlds;  
 and man of the substance of his mother,  
 born in the world;  
 Perfect God and perfect man,  
 of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.  
 Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead  
 and inferior to the Father as touching his manhood;  
 Who, although he is God and man,  
 yet he is not two but one Christ.  
 One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh  
 but by taking the manhood into God;  
 One altogether,  
 not by confusion of substance  
 but by unity of person.  
 For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man,  
 so God and man is one Christ;  
 Who suffered for our salvation,  
 descended into hell,  
 rose again the third day from the dead.  
 He ascended into heaven;  
 he sits at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty,  
 from whence he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
 At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies  
 and will give an account of their own works.  
 And they that have done good will go into life everlasting;  
 and they that have done evil,  
 into everlasting fire.  
 This is the catholic faith which,  
 except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

# Notes