

1. Theology Proper: The Doctrine of God

What is Theology Proper?

It is the study of who God is, what He is like, and what He does.

God is one God in three Persons (we will explain the Trinity under Pneumatology). He is spirit (John 4:24¹), eternal (Ps. 90:2²), unchangeable (Mal. 3:6³; James 1:17⁴), all-powerful (Gen. 18:14⁵; Luke 1:37⁶), all-knowing (Ps. 139:1–6⁷; Heb. 4:13⁸), everywhere present (Ps. 139:7–12⁹), perfectly holy (Isa. 6:3¹⁰; Rev. 4:8¹¹), perfectly just (Deut. 32:4¹²), perfectly good and loving (1 John 4:8, 16¹³), and sovereign over everything (Eph. 1:11¹⁴; Dan. 4:35¹⁵).

Other key verses to know:

- Deuteronomy 6:4¹⁶
- Isaiah 45:5–6¹⁷
- Revelation 4:11¹⁸

God knows everything that will happen and has planned it all for His glory and our good (Rom. 8:28¹⁹; Eph. 1:11¹⁴). In Reformed Baptist theology we especially love God's absolute sovereignty and His glory as the center of everything.

¹ John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

² Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

³ Malachi 3:6 For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

⁴ James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

⁵ Genesis 18:14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.

⁶ Luke 1:37 For nothing will be impossible with God.

⁷ Psalm 139:1–6 O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

⁸ Hebrews 4:13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

⁹ Psalm 139:7–12 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

¹⁰ Isaiah 6:3 And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

¹¹ Revelation 4:8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

¹² Deuteronomy 32:4 The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.

¹³ 1 John 4:8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ... 1 John 4:16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

¹⁴ Ephesians 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

¹⁵ Daniel 4:35 All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”

¹⁶ Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

¹⁷ Isaiah 45:5–6 I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.

¹⁸ Revelation 4:11 Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

¹⁹ Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

2. Christology: The Doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ

What is Christology?

It is the study of who Jesus is and what He did to save us.

Jesus is fully God and fully man in one Person forever (John 1:1¹, 14²; Col. 2:9³). The fancy word is the “hypostatic union.” He has two natures (divine and human) but is only one Person.

Jesus is the eternal Son of God who appeared many times in the Old Testament before He was born in Bethlehem. He is the Angel (Messenger) of the LORD who met Hagar (Gen. 16:7–13⁴), wrestled with Jacob (Gen. 32:24–30⁵), appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3:2–6⁶), stood with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire (Dan. 3:25⁷), and spoke as the divine “I AM” before Abraham was born (John 8:58⁸). These appearances are called “Christophanies”—Jesus showing Himself before the incarnation.

He was born of the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:23⁹; Isa. 7:14¹⁰), lived a sinless life (Heb. 4:15¹¹), died on the cross to pay for our sins (Isa. 53:5–6¹²; 1 Pet. 2:24¹³), rose bodily from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3–4¹⁴), ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9–11¹⁵), and is coming back (Rev. 22:20¹⁶).

His work:

- Prophet (He teaches God’s truth – Deut. 18:18¹⁷; Acts 3:22¹⁸)
- Priest (He offered Himself and now prays for us – Heb. 7:25¹⁹; 9:24²⁰)
- King (He rules everything right now – Ps. 110:1²¹; Matt. 28:18²²)

We are saved only by trusting in what Jesus did, not by being good (Eph. 2:8–9²³).

¹ John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

³ Colossians 2:9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

⁴ Genesis 16:7–13 The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness... And he said, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?” ... Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,” for she said, “Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.”

⁵ Genesis 32:24–30 And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day... So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.”

⁶ Exodus 3:2–6 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush... God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” ... “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Daniel 3:25 He answered and said, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.”

⁸ John 8:58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

⁹ Matthew 1:23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

¹⁰ Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

¹¹ Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

¹² Isaiah 53:5–6 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

¹³ 1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

¹⁵ Acts 1:9–11 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

¹⁶ Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

¹⁷ Deuteronomy 18:18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

¹⁸ Acts 3:22 Moses said, “The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.”

¹⁹ Hebrews 7:25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁰ Hebrews 9:24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

²¹ Psalm 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”

²² Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

²³ Ephesians 2:8–9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

3. Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (and a paragraph on the Trinity)

What is Pneumatology?

It is the study of the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a Person, not a force (He can be grieved – Eph. 4:30¹; He speaks – Acts 13:2²). He is fully God (Acts 5:3–4³; 1 Cor. 12:11⁴). He worked in creation (Gen. 1:2⁵), inspired the Bible (2 Pet. 1:21⁶), convicted the world of sin (John 16:8⁷), regenerates dead sinners (John 3:5–8⁸; Titus 3:5⁹), indwells every believer (Rom. 8:9¹⁰), seals us until the last day (Eph. 1:13–14¹¹), and gives gifts for building the church (1 Cor. 12:4–11¹²).

*On the Trinity

There is only one God (Deut. 6:4¹³), yet the Father is God (1 Cor. 8:6¹⁴), the Son is God (John 1:1¹⁵; Titus 2:13¹⁶), and the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3–4³). These three are distinct Persons—the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, the Spirit is not the Father—yet they are the same one and only God, not three gods. The Bible never uses the word “Trinity,” but it teaches it everywhere (Matt. 28:19¹⁷; 2 Cor. 13:14¹⁸). We worship one God in three Persons, co-equal and co-eternal.

¹ Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

² Acts 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

³ Acts 5:3–4 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit ... You have not lied to man but to God.”

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

⁵ Genesis 1:2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

⁶ 2 Peter 1:21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

⁷ John 16:8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

⁸ John 3:5–8 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

⁹ Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰ Romans 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

¹¹ Ephesians 1:13–14 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

¹² 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good... All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apports to each one individually as he wills.

¹³ Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

¹⁵ John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

¹⁶ Titus 2:13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

¹⁷ Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ 2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

4. Anthropology: The Doctrine of Man

(and marriage)

What is Anthropology in theology?

It is the study of what the Bible says about human beings.

God created mankind in His own image (Gen. 1:26–27¹)—that means every human being has great value and is like God in ways animals are not (ability to reason, rule, relate, etc.). Genesis 1:27 says clearly: “male and female he created them.” There are only two sexes, and both reflect God’s image perfectly together. After sin entered (Gen. 3²), every human is born totally affected by sin (Rom. 5:12³; Eph. 2:1–3⁴). We do not always act as badly as we could, but every part of us is twisted by sin, meaning nothing we can do in and of ourselves is good as God defines it.

Biblical marriage:

God invented marriage in Genesis 2:24⁵: one man and one woman become one flesh for life. Jesus repeats this in Matthew 19:4–6⁶ and adds, “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” Marriage pictures Christ and the church (Eph. 5:22–33⁷). God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16⁸), and sexual activity belongs only inside biblical marriage (Heb. 13:4⁹).

¹ Genesis 1:26–27 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

² Genesis 3 (the entire chapter records the fall of Adam and Eve into sin)

³ Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

⁴ Ephesians 2:1–3 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in

the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

⁵ Genesis 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

⁶ Matthew 19:4–6 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

⁷ Ephesians 5:22–33 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord... Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

⁸ Malachi 2:16 “For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”

⁹ Hebrews 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

5. Hamartiology: The Doctrine of Sin

What is Hamartiology?

It is the study of sin.

The Greek word for sin is ἁμαρτία (hamartia) and literally means “missing the mark” of God’s perfect standard. All humans inherit a guilty status from Adam (Rom. 5:12–19¹—federal headship) and a sinful nature (Ps. 51:5²; Jer. 17:9³). We sin because we are sinners by nature, not the other way around. Sin is any lack of conformity to or transgression of God’s law (1 John 3:4⁴). It brings death—physical and spiritual (Rom. 6:23⁵). No one is able to stop sinning perfectly on their own (Rom. 3:10–18⁶, 23⁷).

¹ Romans 5:12–19 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned... For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.

² Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

³ Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

⁴ 1 John 3:4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

⁵ Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

⁶ Romans 3:10–18 as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

⁷ Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

6. Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation

What is Soteriology?

It is the study of how sinners are saved.

All humanity stands condemned because of sin (Rom. 3:23¹; 5:12²). God is holy and just; His wrath abides on the unrighteous (John 3:36³). Sinners are spiritually dead and unable to come to God on their own (Eph. 2:1–3⁴). The only hope is ****justification****—God declaring the sinner righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, received by faith alone (Rom. 3:21–28⁵; 5:1⁶).

This salvation is applied to the elect through the following inseparable blessings, all secured by the work of Christ:

- Effectual Calling – The Holy Spirit inwardly and powerfully calls the elect through the gospel, raising them from spiritual death (John 6:44⁷; Rom. 8:30⁸).
- Conversion – The sinner responds with repentance and faith, both of which are gifts of God (Acts 11:18⁹; Eph. 2:8–9¹⁰).
- Justification – God legally declares the believer righteous, forgiving all sin and crediting Christ's obedience (Rom. 4:5–8¹¹; 5:9¹²).
- Adoption – The justified sinner is brought into God's family as a beloved child and heir with Christ (Rom. 8:15–17¹³; Gal. 4:4–7¹⁴).
- Sanctification – The Holy Spirit progressively conforms the believer to the image of Christ, making them holy in practice (Phil. 2:12–13¹⁵; Rom. 8:29¹⁶).

The doctrines of grace can also be explained through the acronym TULIP:

- Total Depravity – Because of the Fall, every part of man's nature is corrupted by sin. Unregenerate people are spiritually dead, enslaved to sin, hostile to God, and incapable of seeking Him or doing anything spiritually good apart from God's regenerating grace (Gen. 6:5¹⁷; Ps. 51:5¹⁸; Jer. 17:9¹⁹; Rom. 3:10–18²⁰; 8:7–8²¹; Eph. 2:1–3⁴; John 6:44⁷; 1 Cor. 2:14²²).
- Unconditional Election – God chose us before creation, not because He saw we would choose Him (Eph. 1:4–5²³; Rom. 9:11–16²⁴).
- Limited Atonement (or Definite Atonement) – Jesus died especially to save the elect, actually securing their salvation (John 10:11, 15²⁵; Eph. 5:25²⁶; Acts 20:28²⁷).
- Irresistible Grace – When God calls His chosen ones inwardly, they gladly come (John 6:37–39²⁸; Rom. 8:30⁸).
- Preservation of the Saints – Every true believer will persevere to the end by God's keeping them secure and growing them in sanctification (Phil. 1:6²⁹; John 10:28–29³⁰).

Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Eph. 2:8–9¹⁰). Good works are the fruit, not the root, of salvation (Eph. 2:10³¹; James 2:17³²).

¹ Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

- ² Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned
- ³ John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him
- ⁴ Ephesians 2:1–3 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world... by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind
- ⁵ Romans 3:21–28 (key portion) But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe... justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus... so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus
- ⁶ Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
- ⁷ John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day
- ⁸ Romans 8:30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified
- ⁹ Acts 11:18 ...“Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life”
- ¹⁰ Ephesians 2:8–9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast
- ¹¹ Romans 4:5–8 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness... “Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin”
- ¹² Romans 5:9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God
- ¹³ Romans 8:15–17 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ...and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ
- ¹⁴ Galatians 4:4–7 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son... to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons... So you are no longer a slave, but a son...
- ¹⁵ Philippians 2:12–13 ...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure
- ¹⁶ Romans 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...
- ¹⁷ Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually
- ¹⁸ Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me
- ¹⁹ Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?
- ²⁰ Romans 3:10–18 “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God... there is no fear of God before their eyes”
- ²¹ Romans 8:7–8 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God
- ²² 1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned
- ²³ Ephesians 1:4–5 ...he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will
- ²⁴ Romans 9:11–16 ...though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls... So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy

²⁵ John 10:11, 15 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I lay down my life for the sheep

²⁶ Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

²⁷ Acts 20:28 ...the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood

²⁸ John 6:37–39 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out... And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day

²⁹ Philippians 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ

³⁰ John 10:28–29 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand

³¹ Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them

³² James 2:17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead

7. Ecclesiology: The Doctrine of the Church (and Missiology)

What is Ecclesiology?

It is the study of the church.

The church is the gathered assembly of regenerated, baptized believers who meet under the Word and the ordinances (Matt. 18:15–20¹; Acts 2:41–42²). Local churches are led by a plurality of elders (1 Tim. 3:1–7³; Titus 1:5–9⁴; Acts 14:23⁵) and served by deacons (1 Tim. 3:8–13⁶).

Elders (also called pastors or overseers) must be men who meet the character qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1—above reproach, husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, able to teach, not quarrelsome, managing their own household well, etc. Their role is to shepherd the flock, teach sound doctrine, refute error, and oversee the church (1 Pet. 5:1–4⁷; Acts 20:28–31⁸; Heb. 13:17⁹). Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, tested first, husbands of one wife, managing their children and household well (1 Tim. 3:8–13⁶). Their role is to serve the practical needs of the church so the elders can give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1–6¹⁰).

The church also holds the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Only believers should be baptized by immersion (Acts 2:41¹¹; 8:36–38¹²), and the Lord's Supper is for baptized believers who are walking in obedience (1 Cor. 11:17–34¹³).

Missiology (the mission of the church)

Jesus gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20¹⁴: make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them everything He commanded. The church exists to worship God and to proclaim the gospel to every people group until Jesus returns (Matt. 24:14¹⁵; Rev. 5:9–10¹⁶). Missions is not an optional program; it is the reason the church still exists on earth.

¹ Matthew 18:15–20 (key v. 20) For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

² Acts 2:41–42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

³ 1 Timothy 3:1–7 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive... He must not be a recent convert... Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders...

⁴ Titus 1:5–9 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach...

⁵ Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

⁶ 1 Timothy 3:8–13 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience... Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well...

⁷ 1 Peter 5:1–4 So I exhort the elders among you... shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly...

⁸ Acts 20:28–31 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock... Therefore be alert...

⁹ Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

¹⁰ Acts 6:1–6 (key v. 4) But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

¹¹ Acts 2:41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

¹² Acts 8:36–38 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 (key vv. 27–29) Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

¹⁴ Matthew 28:18–20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

¹⁵ Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁶ Revelation 5:9–10 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

8. Bibliology: The Doctrine of the Bible (and reliability)

What is Bibliology?

It is the study of what the Bible is and why we can trust it.

The Bible is God's very words, breathed out by Him (2 Tim. 3:16–17¹; Greek θεόπνευστος = “God-breathed”). It is inerrant (without error in the original manuscripts – Ps. 12:6²; Prov. 30:5³; John 17:17⁴) and infallible (it cannot fail). The 66 books of the Protestant canon are the complete, closed revelation of God (Rev. 22:18–19⁵; Jude 3⁶).

Reliability

We have thousands of Old and New Testament manuscripts—far more than for any other ancient book. We have over 5,800 Greek manuscripts, some dating within decades of the originals. The Old Testament was preserved with extreme care by Jewish scribes and confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls (found 1947) that match our Bibles almost perfectly from 1,000 years earlier. Archaeology keeps confirming the Bible's historical details. We can trust every word.

¹ 2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

² Psalm 12:6 The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.

³ Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

⁴ John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

⁵ Revelation 22:18–19 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

⁶ Jude 3 Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

9. Eschatology: The Doctrine of the Last Things

What is Eschatology?

It is the study of the future and the end of history.

Amillennial view:

- Christ is already reigning now at the Father's right hand (Ps. 110:1¹; Acts 2:32–36²; 1 Cor. 15:25³).
- The “millennium” of Revelation 20 is the current age between Christ's two comings (the saints who died now “reign” with Christ in heaven).
- Satan is already “bound” so that he cannot stop the gospel from going to the nations (Matt. 12:29⁴; Rev. 20:2–3⁵).
- There will be a single return of Christ (no secret rapture before tribulation – Matt. 24:29–31⁶; 1 Thess. 4:16–17⁷).

- At Jesus' return: resurrection of all people, final judgment, new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21–22⁸; 2 Pet. 3:10–13⁹).
- The kingdom has already broken into history, but it will be consummated when Jesus comes back visibly and gloriously.

Other faithful Christians hold the views:

Premillennial: Christ returns before a future literal 1,000-year earthly kingdom also called historic premillennial.

Dispensational Premillennial: Similar to the historical premillennial view with the addition of a rapture of believers somewhere around a 7 year tribulation period.

Postmillennial: A view that the gospel will largely triumph on earth before Christ returns.

We can disagree charitably on the timing and nature of the millennium because all Bible-believing Christians agree on the big, essential truths:

- Jesus will return personally, physically, and visibly (Acts 1:11¹⁰).
- There will be a single bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust (John 5:28–29¹¹).
- Believers will enter eternal life in God's presence forever, while unbelievers will face everlasting conscious punishment (Matt. 25:46¹²; Rev. 20:15¹³).
- God will make a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells (Rev. 21:1–5¹⁴).

Other key verses: John 5:28–29¹¹; Acts 1:11¹⁰; Revelation 20–22⁸.

¹ Psalm 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

² Acts 2:32–36 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing... Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

³ 1 Corinthians 15:25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

⁴ Matthew 12:29 Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.

⁵ Revelation 20:2–3 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended.

⁶ Matthew 24:29–31 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened... Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man... and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds...

⁷ 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...

⁸ Revelation 21–22 (the entire vision of the new heaven and new earth, no more tears, death, or curse)

⁹ 2 Peter 3:10–13 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar... But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁰ Acts 1:11 ...This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

¹¹ John 5:28–29 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

¹² Matthew 25:46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

¹³ Revelation 20:15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

¹⁴ Revelation 21:1–5 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

10. Angelology: The Doctrine of Angels

What is Angelology?

It is the study of angels and demons.

Angels are created spirit beings (Heb. 1:14¹; Ps. 148:2–5²) who serve God and help believers (Heb. 1:14¹; Ps. 91:11³). They do not marry or die (Matt. 22:30⁴). The word "angel" (Hebrew מַלְאָךְ mal'akh; Greek ἄγγελος angelos) means "messenger."

Examples of what angels did when they appeared in Scripture:

- An angel announced the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus to Zechariah and Mary (Luke 1:11–20⁵, 26–38⁶).
- Angels rolled away the stone at Jesus' tomb and announced His resurrection (Matt. 28:2–7⁷).
- Angels ministered to Jesus after the temptation (Matt. 4:11⁸) and strengthened Him in Gethsemane (Luke 22:43⁹).
- Angels freed Peter from prison (Acts 12:7–10¹⁰).

Some angels rebelled with Satan and became demons (2 Pet. 2:4¹¹; Jude 6¹²). Satan is a created angel who fell through pride (Isa. 14:12–15¹³; Ezek. 28:12–17¹⁴, applied). Demons are real, can possess people, but are defeated by Christ (Col. 2:15¹⁵) and cannot separate believers from God's love (Rom. 8:38–39¹⁶). Jesus will one day throw Satan and all fallen angels into the lake of fire forever (Matt. 25:41¹⁷; Rev. 20:10¹⁸).

Two special angels are named: Michael the archangel (Jude 9¹⁹; Rev. 12:7²⁰) and Gabriel the messenger (Luke 1:19, 26²¹).

¹ Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

² Psalm 148:2–5 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts! ... For he commanded and they were created.

³ Psalm 91:11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

⁴ Matthew 22:30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

⁵ Luke 1:11–20 And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense... “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John...”

⁶ Luke 1:26–38 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth... And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ... “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus...”

⁷ Matthew 28:2–7 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it... But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said...”

⁸ Matthew 4:11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

⁹ Luke 22:43 And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

¹⁰ Acts 12:7–10 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands... When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord...

¹¹ 2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment...

¹² Jude 6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.

¹³ Isaiah 14:12–15 How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! ... You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high... I will make myself like the Most High.”

¹⁴ Ezekiel 28:12–17 You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty... till unrighteousness was found in you... Your heart was proud because of your beauty...

¹⁵ Colossians 2:15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

¹⁶ Romans 8:38–39 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹⁷ Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

¹⁸ Revelation 20:10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

¹⁹ Jude 9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”

²⁰ Revelation 12:7 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back.

²¹ Luke 1:19, 26 And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God...” (v.26 repeats Gabriel’s name).