
Theology 1: God's Greatness in Word, Person, and Creation

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I. PROLEGOMENON

A. WHAT IS SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Theology is a compound of the Greek words θεος (God) and λογος (word, saying, discourse). It is a “word about God,” or, specifically, “the study of God.” The word “systematic” is from the Greek word συνιστημι means “to organize.” Therefore, systematic theology, as mentioned above, is the organization of the biblical data related to the study of God.

Systematic Theology differs from other theological endeavors:

Dogmatic Theology is theology studied from the confessional views of a particular church (such as the Book of Concord in Lutheranism).

Biblical Theology examines the chronological and historical developments of specific doctrines, such as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch.

Historical Theology traces the historical development of the church's understanding of various doctrines, such as the Reformational understanding of the doctrine of justification, or the church's understanding of the doctrine of baptism (as sketched through the history of Christian thought).

Practical Theology is pastoral in nature and looks at doctrine as it relates to Christian living. Counseling, or church growth, are examples of Practical Theology.

1. NORMAL DIVISIONS OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

- 1) Prolegomena
- 2) Theology Proper (including Angelology)
- 3) Anthropology (including Hamartiology)
- 4) Soteriology (including Christology and Pneumatology)
- 5) Ecclesiology
- 6) Eschatology

B. ISSUES OF EPISTEMOLOGY

1. WHAT ARE SOME LIMITATIONS?

a. WE ARE THE FINITE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE INFINITE

“Finitum non capax infiniti.” We are the lesser trying to appreciate the Greater. There limitations that are simply the difference between the human trying to comprehend the Divine. These aren’t derived from sin, per se. Theology is one area where “we look up,” so to speak. Contrast this to other areas of knowledge where we are operating in keeping with the mandate of Genesis 1:26 where we “look down” as the greater over the lesser.

b. THE LIMITATIONS OF HUMAN REASONING

Our human reasoning tends to be circular and analogous. We make the mistake of creating God in our image! We make the mistake of extrapolating our presuppositions into unbiblical doctrines (Genesis 1:26 - “If I am created in God’s image and likeness, then God must be like me and I am part of God and I am God”).

c. OUR PERSPECTIVE IS ONE-SIDED

We are not God; we are outside observers. Our knowledge and capability for knowledge is limited.

d. HUMAN LANGUAGE IS LIMITED

We are limited in our attempts to describe God (Romans 11:33!). Theological terms such as “substance” - “person” - “eternity” - “holiness” may fall short of the lofty standards they are trying to reach.

(1) DOES THIS MEAN THAT LANGUAGE IS INADEQUATE?

There’s a difference between limited and inadequate. (some would say that language is inadequate, and therefore, attempts at knowledge are futile).

e. WE WHO LIVE IN THE PHYSICAL ARE DELVING INTO THE METAPHYSICAL

Much of this is beyond our full (or even partial!) comprehension, such as the concept of “infinity” or the doctrine of the Trinity.

f. INCOMPLETE KNOWLEDGE

Our knowledge is incomplete this side of eternity (Note 1 Corinthians 13:9-13).

g. WE ARE DEALING WITH MYSTERIES

(a) WHAT IS A MYSTERY?

See Colossians 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3. From the Gk. μυστηριον. “Something once hidden now revealed.” Also, something not fully comprehended or understood.

(b) TWO KINDS OF MYSTERIES

i. NECESSARY MYSTERIES

These are mysteries that fall into the realm of antinomy; things that are simply beyond our comprehension as finite human beings (Deuteronomy 29:29; Romans 11:33). This is not to say that we can’t attempt to understand, in part, these mysteries, or to uphold them as necessary truth (as in the doctrine of the Trinity).

ii. ACCIDENTAL MYSTERIES

Some mysteries are a result of insufficient data. We simply don’t know all of the needed information to form a complete conclusion. Examples would be the opening chapters in Genesis which serve their purpose but don’t give us all the information we may want.

h. THE PROBLEM OF DEPRAVITY

Outlined in Romans chapter 3; Ephesians chapter 2; 1 Corinthians chapter 2.

2. CAN WE OPERATE WITHOUT PRESUPPOSITIONS?

No one is a tabula rasa! We all have presuppositions. Note how this relates to our worldview (the rubric through which we see the world and operate).

a. WHAT IS THE PRESUPPOSITION OF THE ATHEIST?

b. WHAT IS THE PRESUPPOSITION OF THE AGNOSTIC?

c. WHAT ARE SOME PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIAN?

(1) God Exists - But many believe God exists (Deists; Other Religions)

(2) God Has Revealed Himself - Many believe this (New Age)

(3) God can be Known - Many Believe This (Cults)

(4) God Has Revealed Himself Through the Bible - Some cults believe this.

(5) The Bible Is Inspired and Inerrant (thus is top priority)

(6) The Bible Is Objective, Propositional, and Can be Truly Interpreted/Understood

(a) Exegesis is Essential

(b) Revelation is Progressive

(c) Scripture Interprets Scripture (Analogia Fide)

(7) We Still Have to Deal With Depravity

(8) We Need the Work of the Holy Spirit in Regeneration and Illumination

3. CAN WE KNOW WITH CERTAINTY?

We live in a time where there is a crisis of knowledge and, therefore, a culture of epistemological agnosticism.

4. WHERE DOES A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD COME FROM?

a. NICODEMUS IN JOHN 3

“Nicodemus [in John 3] said ‘we know.’ Then he began to rehearse the things he knew (or thought he knew) and with which he wanted to begin the discussion: 1) that Jesus was continuing to do many miracles; 2) that these miracles were intended to authenticate him as a teacher sent from God; 3) Jesus was one to whom he should listen. Unfortunately, for Nicodemus, Jesus replied that such an approach to knowledge was wrong and that Nicodemus could therefore know nothing until he had first experienced an inward, spiritual transformation.” [James M. Boice, Foundations of the Christian Faith, 19]

Matthew 13:11 And He answered and said to them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

1 Corinthians 2:9-16 9 but just as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.” 10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he

himself is appraised by no man.¹⁶ For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

5. POSTMODERNISM'S APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE

This is important because we now have post-modern churches. The seeker movement and the emerging church movement (neo-liberalism).

The way we think in this nation (and around the world) has changed. For example:

In 1892 our the US Supreme Court stated that: "Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind. . . . in this sense and to this extent our civilizations and our institutions are emphatically Christian." (1892 Supreme Court Ruling, 16 pages with 87 precedents cited) [Cited in "America's Godly Heritage" cassette message by David Barton of Wallbuilders, 1992]

For the most part, our founding fathers understood something that has become lost to us: That absolute truth must be grounded in an absolute source. God is the author of absolute truth and He has communicated that to men in His Word.

What about ethics? What about standards for what's right or wrong; good or evil? Philosophically, this has been addressed in different ways: Situational Ethics; Subjective Individual Ethics; Governmental Ethics; Cultural Ethics; Theistic Ethics; Atheistic Ethics; Evolutionary Ethics.

It comes down to the issue of absolutes versus non-absolutes.

Here's the Crux of the Issue - Where is truth found (including ethics/right and wrong/morality). There are two options: 1) Man (reason); 2) God (revelation).

By and Large our culture is led by the former not the latter. Concept of finding meaning in human reason grounded in man not God act. has its origin in the Enlightenment (the Age of Reason), and continues today under the heading of Post-Modernism.

a. WHAT IS "POST-MODERNISM?"

Post-Modernism followed a time in history known as Modernism. Before Modernism was Ethical Theism (the belief that ethics/morals had their existence in God not man). Ethical Theism gave way to Modernism back in the Renaissance period (1300-1600).

So we have Ethical Theism==> Modernism ==> Post-Modernism.

(1) MODERNISM COVERS FOUR CATEGORIES OF HISTORY:

(a) THE RENAISSANCE

Began in Italy in the 1300s and spread over next two centuries throughout Europe lasting into the 17th century. The Renaissance was charact. by great strides in literature, art, and architecture. It was also marked by a shift in human thought. In contrast to the middle ages where the focus of art, literature, and philosophy was glorifying God, Renaissance artists and thinkers exalted man and his abilities. This is seen, for example, in the art, music, and literature of the day. Art and music always reflect the worldview of a given culture, as is evident today with the art, music, literature, and media of nihilism and hedonism.

This shift in thinking gave birth to humanism which stressed human dignity and ability, and placed man at center of all things (rather than God). God as the source of truth, morality, and meaning began to slowly wane. *However, there were virtually no atheists during this period* [What is Secular Humanism? J. Hitchcock, 25]

(b) ENLIGHTENMENT

Began in 1600s and lasted through the 1700s. While the Renaissance mind acknowledged God, many Enlightenment thinkers (such as Voltaire and Descarte) claimed that if God existed at all, He didn't have any part in the world (Atheism and Agnostic Deism). Man had to depend on self and reason, not God, to get him through life. Right and wrong were grounded in human reason, not God. Deism rose in popularity during this time.

(c) INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Covered the 1700s & 1800s. This was an explosive period of human productivity and advances in machinery and early technology. One author writes that:

“The inventions, innovations, and improvements of the Industrial Age fueled more than factory furnaces; they stoked the fires of human confidence. The progress that men and women saw all around them encouraged them to look to themselves for hope and guidance. Man no longer felt the need to look upward (to God); he need only look inward (to himself).” [McDowell, The New Tolerance, 35]

(d) DARWINISM

In 1859 Charles Darwin published his “Origin of the Species” which postulated that single-celled organisms evolved into invertebrates which evolved into fish, which evolved into amphibians, which evolved into reptiles, which evolved into mammals, which evolved into primates, which evolved into man. Darwin's theories presented an alternative to a theistic understanding of where man came from.

The last "gap" was filled and the "God of the Gaps" was no longer needed. However, recent advances in science has widened the gap once again (note the intelligent design movement).

(2) ALL OF THIS LED TO A MAJOR SHIFT IN THINKING -

From Ethical Theism (and God-centered rationality) to Humanism and a man-centered rationality. Man has become god and thus he determines his own destiny and what is right or wrong, good or evil. This is a direct fulfillment of Romans 1:18-32.

(3) BETWEEN 1960 TO 1990 POSTMODERNISM EMERGED AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENA SPURRED ON BY THE INFORMATION AGE

Post Modernism has much in common with Modernism, but has greatly elaborated on the entire concept of “truth.”

(a) KEY TENETS:

- i. TRUTH GENERALLY DOES NOT EXIST IN ANY OBJECTIVE SENSE**
- ii. TRUTH IS CREATED AND CONDITIONED BY CULTURE**
- iii. WHAT IS TRUE IS ONLY TRUE FOR THAT GIVEN CULTURE OR COMMUNITY**
- iv. ABSOLUTE TRUTH IS NOTHING MORE THAN A TOOL TO JUSTIFY POWER**

This is why we have the abject intolerance of Christians and Christianity, in short, "Christophobia."

v. TOLERANCE, NOT TRUTH, IS THE GREATEST VIRTUE

Tolerance, not truth, is the greatest virtue (tolerance is defined as accepting the fact that all views and practices are equally valid and therefore, must be participated in, not just endured)

This view is grounded in the assumption that “What I do and What I believe = What I am as a Person”

This is why a criticism of homosexuality as a practice it's taken as slandering the person. This is partly the philosophy of so-called "hate crimes." Therefore, there's no hating the sin and loving the sinner. In reality, it isn't "tolerance" (to put up with), but "acceptance" (affirmation) that post-moderns desire.

Josh McDowell, in his book, The New Tolerance writes:

“In a post-modern society—a society that regards all values, beliefs, lifestyles, and truth claims as equally valid—there can be only one universal virtue: tolerance. And if tolerance is the cardinal virtue, the sole absolute, then there can be only one evil: intolerance.” [page 43]

Dr. Frederick W. Hill, a school administrator, said:

“It is the mission of public schools not to tolerate intolerances.”

Leslie Armour, philosophy professor at the University of Ottawa chimes in as well:

“Our idea is that to be a virtuous citizen is to be one who tolerates everything except intolerance.”

*** TOLERANCE DEFINES AND GUIDES TRUTH**

Therefore, any truth that is deemed intolerant may be revised (historical revisionism) or censored. As such, the policing of a free-exchange of ideas on college campuses and the silencing of Christians is permissible, even laudable.

This is why it is acceptable to censure Christians. This is why it's okay for Temple University, for example, to sponsor the blasphemous play "Corpus Christi," while at same time forbidding a play that portrays the historical reality about Jesus.

This is why it's acceptable for Andres Serrano to place a crucifix in a jar of urine and have it applauded as “art,” but to take a symbol representing "diversity" and do the same thing would not be tolerated.

This is why it's okay for Stanford University, sometime around 2002, to openly refuse to hire a football coach (Nebraska's Ron Brown) solely on the basis of his being a Christian. Brown himself said afterward, “If I'd been discriminated against for being black they would never have told me that. They had no problem telling me it was because of my Christian beliefs.” [cited in David Limbaugh, Persecution]

It's permissible to be intolerant of Christians and Christianity because, for the post-modern, “*tolerance defines and guides truth.*” Therefore, any truth claims, people or philosophies that are deemed intolerant may be revised, censored or discriminated against.

As Francis Schaeffer has written:

“If there is no absolute moral standard, then one cannot say in a final sense that anything is right or wrong. By absolute we mean that which always applies [to all people], that which provides a final or ultimate standard. There must be an absolute if there are to be morals, and there must be an absolute if there are to be real values. If there is no absolute beyond man's ideas, then there is no final appeal to judge between individuals and groups whose moral judgements conflict. We are merely left with conflicting opinions.” [Dr. Francis Schaeffer, cited in Josh McDowell, The New Tolerance 55-56]

6. CHRISTIANITY'S APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE

a. GOD AND TRUTH

David Wells, in writing about the first Apostles and Prophets who stewarded the truth of Christ:

“They had a certainty about the existence, character, and purposes of God—a certainty about his truth—that seems to have faded in the bright light of the modern world. They were convinced that God’s revelation, of which they were the vehicles and custodians, was true. True in an absolute sense. It was not merely true to them; it was not merely true in their time; it was not true approximately. What God has given was true universally, absolutely, and enduringly.” [cited in Josh McDowell, *The New Tolerance*, 34]

For Christians it's all about objective, absolute truth. Christians believe in a God of truth (Isaiah 65:16) and the book of truth (Daniel 10:21). They believe in the Spirit of truth (John 16:13) and in Jesus who said "I am the way and the truth" (John 14:6), and who also said that God’s Word is truth (John 17:17).

Furthermore,

- Jesus taught the way of God in truth (Matthew 22:16).
- In His very nature, Christ is “full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14).
- Those who worship God must do so in “spirit and truth” (John 4:24).
- Freedom comes by knowing the truth (John 8:32).
- The gospel of our salvation is called a “message of truth” (Ephesians 1:13) and a “word of truth” (Colossians 1:5).
- The church is called “the pillar and support of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:15).
- Believers are to “walk in truth” (3 John 1:4).

To look at it the other way, from the perspective of those who are lost, according to Romans chapter one: to stand condemned before a holy God is to have “suppressed the truth” (1:18) and to “exchange the truth of God for a lie,” thus “worshiping and serving the creature rather than the Creator” (1:25). Sounds like our Post-Modern culture today!

b. CHRISTIANITY AND KNOWLEDGE (JOHN 17:3; HOSEA 4:6)

(1) THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

(a) TO KNOW AS IN TO BE AWARE

I am aware that the United State was involved in a war in Vietnam.

(b) TO KNOW AS IN TO KNOW ABOUT

I am a history teacher and I specialize in the Vietnam War.

(c) TO KNOW WITH EXPERIENCE

I am a Marine who fought in the Vietnam War. Note the nuance of the Hebrew word *yada* (as in Genesis 4:1) and the Greek counterpart, "γινωσκω" (as in Matthew 1:25 and also Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:29; 11:1; 1 Peter 1:20).

But when we talk about knowing God in this regard we are talking about a full-fledged experiential knowledge where the objective truth about Him reaches us in our subjective experience.

Or to look at it another way:

Some are aware of God or a god (Acts 17:23)

Some know about God (James 2:19)

The priority is to truly know Him (John 17:3; Philippians 3:8). As Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:12 - "I know whom I have believed . . . "

There is a parallel to "Knowledge" "Assent" and "Trust". Christianity is more than a body of facts, even though the facts are essential. True knowledge transcends those facts.

(2) WHERE DO WE GET TRUE KNOWLEDGE?

According to John Calvin, the key to knowledge of God is a knowledge of ourselves. How true this is. How many lie in darkness because they do not know themselves and are not honest about the condition of their own heart?

What do we mean by "knowing God?" How do we know God? What about our sin and depravity? Whose fault is it? Ours or God's?

There was a clock tower atop Thomas K. Beecher's church and the clock never had the correct time. Thomas Beecher hated deception in any form, so he had a sign mounted beneath the clock that read, "Don't blame my hands, the trouble lies deeper." [cited in Roy Laurin, *Colossians*, 89]

Can anyone know God on their own (Romans 3:11)? This was a central debate in the 16th century Reformation. A debate between the "Thomists" (and Aquinas' natural theology) and reformers such as Luther and Calvin who stood on the Bible and the teaching of Augustine.

Is man okay, but a product of his environment (Pelagianism); Is man sick; he can get up off of his sick-bed and receive the grace of God (Semi-Pelagianism); or is man totally dead (Augustinianism).

Man is totally dead as seen in the Story of Ephesians 2:1-10.

Note also John 6:35-71. There are three impossibilities in this passage (vv. 44 and 65, 37a, 37b). Note verses 66-68 and the only source of truth and meaning as affirmed by Peter.

C. AUTHORITY

1. IN ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The One Roman Catholic Church

➡ *Tradition, History, Creeds, Scripture*



2. IN EXPERIENTIALISM

Subjective, Personal Experience

➡ *Scripture*

➡ *The Church (including Tradition/History/Creeds)*

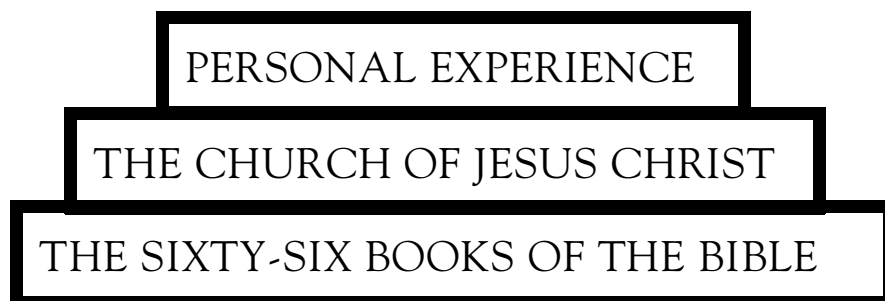


3. REFORMATION ORTHODOXY

Scripture (Sola Scriptura)

➡ *The Church (including Tradition/History/Creeds)*

➡ *Personal Experience*



II. REVELATION

A. GENERAL (UNIVERSAL or PRELAPSARIAN) REVELATION

1. DEFINITION

a. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "REVELATION?"

Revelation is the process and product of God making Himself known to His creation, especially to mankind. It answers the question, "What can we know about God and His will for us?"

b. WHAT IS GENERAL REVELATION

General revelation is just that: general. It is general in that it reaches all men and encompasses the entire world.

2. RECIPIENTS

All men who have the capacity to reason and understand (not imbeciles or young children).

3. MEANS (VEHICLES)

a. CREATION (PSALM 19; ROMANS 1)

Note in Romans 1 that all men are accountable to this revelation; those who reject it do so because they have suppressed it. The word "suppressed" pictures a large spring (like a coil spring on a car) that is consciously "pushed down"). 1:18 - "wrath" = οργη. God's wrath is a passionate wrath. 1:22.

Note that "creation" includes that of man. Psalm 139:14 ("fearfully and wonderfully made"). Not only a miracle of the function of the body, but also how humans stand apart from the rest of the creation (cf. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-20; 9:2).

Genesis 1:26-28 26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 2:18-20 18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and

whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.²⁰ And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

Genesis 9:2 “And the fear of you and the terror of you shall be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.

(1) NOTE THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR GOD

Cause and Effect. Every effect has a cause (does this apply to God? God is not an "effect" - He is the uncaused cause).

Cause

Effect

Option 1 Nothing -----> Creation

Option 2 Something Eternal -----> Creation

- a. Eternal matter
- b. Eternal chance
- c. Eternal God

b. HISTORY

Note various acts of providence in history. One of the greatest is the providence of God in the history of Israel. From the Exodus from Egypt through the divided kingdom (northern kingdom of Israel taken by Assyria in 722 BC and the southern kingdom of Judah taken by Babylon in 586 BC).

God said the people would be in captivity (in Babylon) for 70 years after which they would be restored. What happens? The Persian King Cyrus overthrows Babylon in 539 and, in keeping with his practice, he allows the displaced Jews to return to their homeland a year later. 50,000 of them return under Zerubbabel.

Then, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD (predicted by Jesus in Matthew 24). Afterward, the land basically lays desolate for nearly 2,000 years. It was under the control of the Turkish Ottomans under Islam. Later, the British take control of the area and In 1917 Lord Balfour of Britain declares that the land be given to the Jews for resettlement.

WW II - 6 million killed by Nazi Germany. The people once again became a nation in 1948.

6 day war of 1967 when an undermanned Israel Army defeats Egypt, Syria and Jordan and ancient Jerusalem falls into Jewish hands for the first time in modern history.

c. CONSCIENCE (ROMANS 2:14-15)

Romans 2:14-15 14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

4. BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

a. WHAT SORTS OF THINGS CAN BE LEARNED FROM GENERAL REVELATION?

From Romans 1-2 and from Psalm 19?

b. WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS OF GENERAL REVELATION?

- Demonstrates God's existence and attributes.
- Shows that man is accountable to God.
- Shows that all men can grasp some truth about God (Acts 17:22 ff.).
- Morality is written on the hearts of men (Romans 2).
- Explains the universal religious nature in man.

c. WHAT ARE SOME LIMITATIONS OF GENERAL REVELATION?

- It is partial.
- It cannot tell the complete picture about God.
- It cannot save, although it does condemn (all men suppress the truth by virtue of their depravity, thus the fault lies with them, not with God).
- Men will misinterpret it (such as with evolution; animism; polytheism; dualism; creation/creature worship).

B. SPECIAL (PARTICULAR OR POSTLAPSARIAN) REVELATION

1. DEFINITION

Special revelation has the ability to communicate specific concepts and ideas to man from God. It does not come to all men, but only those who have access to it by God's grace and purpose.

2. RECIPIENT (TWO LEVELS)

a. ALL WHO ARE EXPOSED TO IT (HEAR OR EXPERIENCE IT)

The General Call.

Romans 10:14-17 How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

b. THE ELECT WHO HAVE “EARS TO HEAR”

The Special Call.

Matthew 22:14 "For many are called [G.C.], but few are chosen [S.C]."

ACT 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

3. MEANS (VEHICLES)

a. THE LOT (PROVERBS 16:33; ACTS 1:21-26)

Note Haman cast lots to determine when to go forward with his plan to exterminate the Jews (Esther 9:24). Some think that the disciples in Acts were in error to cast lots for Matthias and that Paul was to be the 12th Apostle, the one to replace Judas.

Casting lots was temporary. It was used by God (commanded of Aaron in Leviticus 16:8). Interestingly, casting lots was practiced by John Wesley (George Whitefield warned him against this in his letter to him).

b. THE URIM AND THUMMIM (EX. 28:30; NUM. 27:21; DEUT. 33:8; 1 SAM. 28:6; EZRA 2:63)

The High Priest wore a breastplate of material with material folded in half forming a pouch. It was covered with 12 precious stones, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. In it was kept the Urim and Thummim, possibly two stones (one black and the other white) which were used to determine God's will.

c. DREAMS (GEN. 20:3-6, 31:11-13, 24:40-41; MATT. 2:22)

Note the many testimonies in Islam of dreams that involve Jesus Christ. These dreams would be of an extra-ordinary kind and not to be confused with our normal process of dreaming.

d. VISIONS (ISA. 6; ACTS 18:9)

In dreams the emphasis seems to be on what is heard, while in visions it is on what is seen. Extreme caution must be used in attributing dreams and visions to God today (2 Corinthians 11:14).

e. THEOPHANIES AND CHRISTOPHANIES (GEN. 16:7-14; EXO. 3:2; JOSH.5:15)

Associated with the "Angel of the Lord" in the O.T. See below.

f. ANGELS (DAN. 9:20-21; LUKE 2:10-11; REV. 1:1)

Daniel 9:20-22 Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God,²¹ while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering.²² And he gave me instruction and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding.

g. THROUGH PROPHETS (2 SAM. 23:2; EPH. 3:5)

h. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

The Angel of the LORD is a manifestation of YHWH--likely an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ. The Angel of the LORD frequently appears in the Old Testament, identifies himself with God, exercises the prerogatives of God, speaks as God, yet is distinct from God (Genesis 16:7-12; Exodus 3:2; Judges 2:1-4, 6:11-24, 13:3-22; Zechariah 1:12, 3:1, 12:8). The Angel of the LORD ceases to appear after the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

i. JESUS CHRIST (JOHN 1:14; HEBREWS 1:2)

j. THE BIBLE

This is the pinnacle of God's revelation - To be covered in Bibliology.

4. BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

a. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SPECIAL REVELATION?

- It has a view toward the salvation of God's people.
- It is selective and specific.
- It is personal.
- It is propositional and can be written down.
- It is specifically authoritative.
- It alone is theopneustos (God-breathed, 2 Timothy 3:16).

5. THE SUPREMACY OF THE BIBLE AS A MEANS OF REVELATION

a. FIVE REASONS

- 1) It has been given by way of inspiration and inerrancy (contrary to modern-day supposed revelations) –2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21.
- 2) It alone is authoritative –Acts 17:11; Galatians 1:8-9.
- 3) It is the only revelation we have that has been miraculously preserved for us – Matthew. 5:18; John 17:17.
- 4) It is eternal –Isaiah 40:8; cf. 1 Peter 1:24-26.
- 5) It brings conviction, salvation and growth in godliness –Colossians 3:16; Hebrew 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

III. BIBLIOLOGY

A. THE CANON

1. MEANING OF CANON

"Canonicity" (canon) to the ancient Greeks originally meant a "rod," "ruler," "staff," or a "unit of measure." Canonicity refers to the group of books acknowledged by the church as the rule of faith and practice.

2. CANONIZATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

This was accomplished by God through the Kingdom of Israel. God's providence is always at work in history (concurrence) and this includes the process of recognizing what Scriptures are inspired.

a. SEPTUAGINT

Began in the third century BC in Alexandria, Egypt. The name Septuagint comes from the Greek word for 'seventy' and refers to the seventy-two Jewish translators brought to Egypt by Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BC). Proof that the entire O.T. was completed and accepted no later than the 2nd c. BC.

Also Jewish Council of Jamnia (post 70 AD) which questioned and affirmed the canonicity of Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; The Song of Solomon; and Esther.

3. CANONIZATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

a. ISSUES THAT AROSE

1. Spurious writings (forgeries).
2. Heretics such as Marcion. Marcion was excommunicated in 144 AD and tried to unite his followers into a rival movement. The movement lasted over two centuries. Characteristics: radical discontinuity between OT and NT; God of OT and Christ in NT (The OT God was an inferior being who created and ruled over the world). The Apostle Paul was Marcion's hero. His canon: 10 letters of Paul (not including the Pastoral Epistles) and Luke. He basically rejected the OT.
3. Edict of Diocletian (303 AD) which sought to destroy the writings of the Christians.

The church reacted (typical of why we make statements, creeds, etc.). Athanasius (367) gives a record of the same 27 books we have. Also Jerome and Augustine.

b. ACCEPTANCE BY THE CHURCHES

(1) SOME CRITERIA:

- Was it written by an apostle or a close associate? (note Mark with Peter's witness and the writer to Hebrews with Paul's).
- Was it accepted by the churches of Jesus Christ? Was it already recognized and in use?
- Was it consistent with the truth of the Gospel? Did it resonate with the *analogia fidei*?
- Was it authoritative? Did it resound with a "thus saith the Lord?"
- Was it dynamic (life changing)?

c. COUNCIL AT CARTHAGE (397)

4. WHAT ABOUT THE APOCRYPHA?

a. WHAT IS THE APOCRYPHA? (FROM "APOKRUPHOS" - "HIDDEN")

(1) JEWISH

Wisdom of Solomon (30 BC); Ecclesiasticus (32 BC); Tobit (200 BC); 1-2 Esdras (150 BC/100 AD); 1-2 Maccabees (100 BC); Judith (150 AD); Baruch (100 AD); The Letter of Jeremiah (200 BC); Additions to Esther (130 BC); The Prayer of Azariah (100 BC); Bel and the Dragon, or Daniel 14 (100 BC); The Prayer of Manasseh (150 BC).

These were never put on par with the OT Scriptures by the Jews (Jewish Palestinian Canon excludes them). Christ never quoted from them. They were never accepted by the church as being on par with the canon of Scripture (cf. Luther's preface). The Apocrypha was often placed with Scripture (LXX; Jerome's Latin Vulgate; Luther's German Bible; 1611 KJV). However, it was not equated with the Scripture and was usually placed between the OT and NT as a separate section.

Jerome wrote: "Anything outside of these [39 books] must be placed within the Apocrypha."

Luther wrote: "...books which are not held equal to the sacred Scriptures and nevertheless are useful and good to read."

1648 Westminster Confession says of the Apocrypha: "...not being of divine inspiration, are not part of the canon of Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the church of God..."

With the exception of Tobit, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, and Part of Baruch and I Maccabees, the Apocrypha was written in Greek long after the Hebrew OT canon was completed.

Interestingly, these books themselves, from first to last, bear testimony to the assertion of the Jewish historian Josephus (*Against Apion*, 1.8) that "the exact succession of the prophets" had been broken after the close of the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament. Nowhere in them is found the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord," which occurs so frequently in the Old Testament. Accordingly, the Palestinian

Jews never accepted these Apocryphal books as canonical, their canon being essentially the same as what the Protestant Old Testament is today (see Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.41; *Babylonian Talmud*, Yomah 9b, Sota 48b, Sanhedrin 11a). Nor did Jesus or the New Testament writers ever cite from these books. When Paul declared then that the Jews possessed "the oracles of God" (*Romans* 3:2), he was implicitly excluding the Apocrypha from those "oracles."

According to Gleason L. Archer, Jr., the Septuagint—the pre-Christian Alexandrian Jewish translation of the Hebrew Old Testament—was the only ancient version which included in one manuscript tradition or another the books of the Apocrypha. This has led some scholars to speak of an "Alexandrian Canon" which held equal authority among Jews along with the "Palestinian Canon." But, writes Archer, while Philo of Alexandria "quotes frequently from the canonical books of the 'Palestinian Canon,' he never once quotes from any of the apocryphal books." Furthermore, Aquila's Greek version, even though it did not contain the Apocrypha, was accepted by Alexandrian Jews in the second century AD. Jerome explained the presence of the Apocrypha in the Alexandrian version by saying that the Alexandrian Jews included in their edition of the Old Testament both the canonical books and the books which were "ecclesiastical" (that is, considered valuable though not inspired). While it is true that the Septuagint served as the Greek "Bible" of the early church and of the apostles in their mission to the Gentiles, there is no evidence, as I just said, that a New Testament writer cites from any of the Apocryphal books.

These books abound in historical, geographical, and chronological inaccuracies and anachronism. Consider just two of the more apparent inaccuracies:

It is said in *Tobit* 1:4-5 that the division of the kingdom under Jereboam I, which occurred in 931 BC, occurred when Tobit was a "young man." But Tobit is also said to be a young Israelite captive living in Nineveh under Shalmaneser in the late eight century BC. This would make him a "young man" almost 200 years old at the time of the Assyrian Captivity and he lived into the reign of Esarhaddon (680-668 BC). But according to *Tobit* 14:11 he died when he was 158 years old (according to the Latin text, he died when he was 102).

Judith 1:1 declares Nebuchadnezzar reigned over the Assyrians at Nineveh at the time that Arphaxad reigned over the Medes in Ecbatana. But Nebuchadnezzar did not reign over the Assyrians at Nineveh; he was the second king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire reigning at Babylon. Arphaxad is unknown.

They also teach doctrines which are at variance with the inspired Scriptures. For example, 2 *Maccabees* 12:43-45 teaches the efficacy of prayers and offerings for the dead. *Ecclesiasticus* 3:30 teaches that almsgiving makes atonement for sin and justifies cruelty to slaves (33:26, 28). The *Wisdom of Solomon* teaches the doctrine of emanation (7:25) and the Platonic doctrine of the pre-existence of souls (8:18-20).

Accordingly, the Dutch Bible published by Jacob von Liesveldt at Antwerp (1526) placed the Apocryphal books after Malachi and identified the section as "the books which are not in the canon, that is to say, which one does not find among the Jews in the Hebrew."

The six-volume Swiss-German Bible (1527-1529) placed the Apocryphal books in the fifth volume, the title page of which volume reads: "These are the books which are not reckoned as biblical by the ancients, nor are found among the Hebrews." Concerned to return to the sole authority of inspired, inerrant Scripture, Martin Luther in his German translation of the Bible (1534) placed the Apocryphal books once again between the Old and New Testaments with the title: "Apocrypha, that is, books which are not held equal to the sacred Scriptures and nevertheless are useful and good to read." Miles Coverdale's English translation of the Bible (1535) put them in the same position with the title: "Apocrypha. The books and treatises which among the fathers of old are not reckoned to be of like authority with the other books of the Bible, neither are they found in the Canon of the Old Testament." The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England (1562) state concerning the Apocrypha: "And the other books (as Jerome saith) the Church doth read for example of life, and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine." And the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1648) declares: "The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings" (I.3).

Then, because of its views on Tradition Rome also rejects most of the great attributes of Scripture that Protestantism holds in high esteem, namely, Scripture's canonicity, its necessity, its self-attestation, its sufficiency, its perspicuity, and its finality. So historic Protestantism and Roman Catholicism do not share the same Bible, either extensively or intensively. For Protestantism the Bible alone (*sola Scriptura*) is self-validating and absolutely authoritative in all matters of faith and practice; for Roman Catholicism its enlarged Bible (and this applies to any given statement in it) has only the authority and meaning the Roman Church has determined to give to it. ["Why Does Rome Teach What It Does About Justification and Salvation?" by Robert L. Reymond, Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at Knox Theological Seminary, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida]

(2) CHRISTIAN

Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas; Epistle to the Corinthians; 2nd Epistle of Clement; Shepherd of Hermas; Didache: The Teaching of the Twelve; Apococalypse of Peter; The Acts of Paul and Thecla; The Epistle to the Laodiceans; Gospel According to the Hebrews; Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians; Seven Epistles of Ignatious [plus more]. These date anywhere from the 1st to the 4th centuries.

(3) WHAT ABOUT THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH?

The Roman Catholic Church officially recognized the Jewish Apocrypha as Holy Scripture at Council of Trent in the 16th c (with the exception of the Prayer of Manasseh and 1-2 Esdras). Trent "anathematized" anyone who "does not accept these entire books, with all of their parts . . ." This was confirmed by Vatican I in 1870.

B. HIGHER AND LOWER CRITICISM

1. HIGHER (OR HISTORICAL) CRITICISM DEFINED

The scholarly discipline dealing with the origin of the text, including questions of authorship, circumstances of the writing, date of writing, destination, literary structure and contents of the Scriptures.

a. GOOD AND BAD USES

(1) JEDP THEORY - (handout)

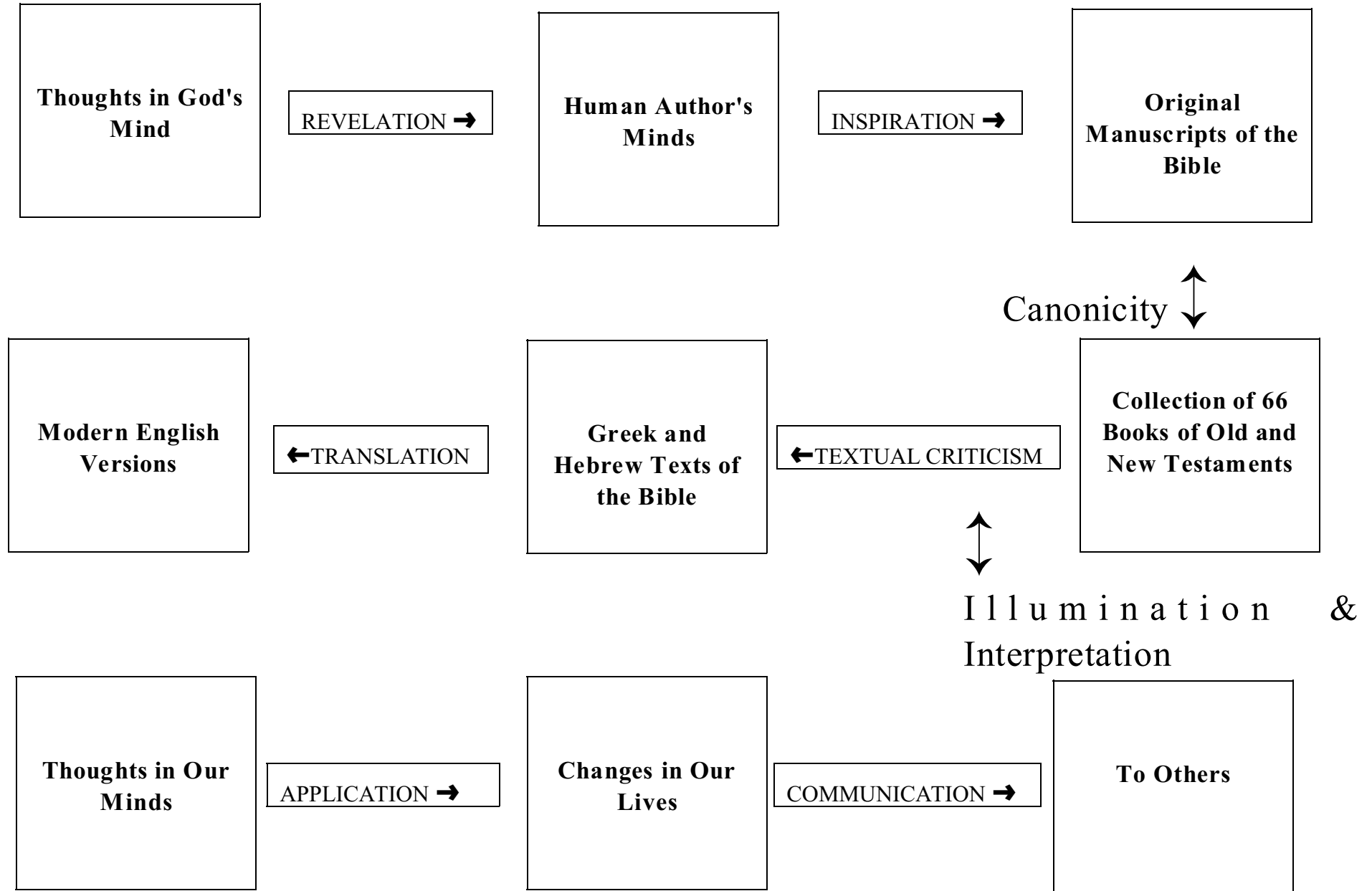
2. LOWER (TEXTUAL) CRITICISM

The scholarly discipline dealing with the authenticity of the Bible text through a detailed and careful study of the existing MSS. This study is often referred to as "textual criticism" which seeks to discover the most accurate rendering of the original autographs.

C. HOW THE BIBLE CAME TO US (CHART)

How The Bible Came To Us

*Adapted from The Ryrie Study Bible



D. INSPIRATION

1. ISSUES

a. HOW MUCH SHOULD WE USE SCRIPTURE TO VALIDATE ITSELF?

Is the Bible self-authenticating? This is the position of Fideists. Or is the Bible worthy of belief because it can be empirically demonstrated as being true (Empiracists)? I believe it is foundationally self-authenticating. It is the Word of God regardless of whether I can "prove it" to another person.

Is this "circular reasoning?" Do we operate as presuppositionalists or evidentialists? The Bible needs to be our starting point for all knowledge.

b. IS INSPIRATION UNIFORM? ARE THERE DEGREES OF INSPIRATION?

Note the different translations of 2 Timothy 3:16 (ASV vs. NASB).

"All Scripture inspired by God is profitable . . . " (ASV). (πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος). The word "is" must be supplied. Should it be supplied once or twice?

Are genealogies as inspired as John 3:16? Some portions of scripture have greater doctrinal weight, but that doesn't negate the fact that all Scripture is equally inspired. It's like being partially dead or a little bit pregnant. The Bible is either inspired or it isn't!

c. WHAT ABOUT THE BIBLE'S USE OF OUTSIDE SOURCES?

Cf. Luke 1:1; Jude quotes Enoch; Paul quotes an Athenian poet.

Does this mean the Bible approves of the source of that the source is inspired?

The Bible's quote does not validate the source, or make the source inspired; but the quote in the Bible is part of the inspired text.

All of the Bible is accurately recorded, but not everything recorded in the Bible is true.

Job 42:7-8 **And it came about after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has.⁸ "Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."**

Genesis 3:4 ("you will not die!")

d. ARE ORAL QUOTATIONS INSPIRED?

Luke's quotation of Stephen's sermon. Are quotes exhaustive or abridged? Sermon on the Mount? Jesus' language (apparently Aramaic).

e. WHAT IS INSPIRED? AUTHOR, WRITING, BOTH?

(1) WHAT ABOUT 1 CORINTHIANS 7?

6 But this I say by way of concession, not of command. | 10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband | 12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away. | 25 Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. | 40 But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

Paul is saying that there exists no written or oral tradition of Jesus on this matter as it related to marriage. (Cf. Matthew 5:32, 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18).

f. DOES INSPIRATION APPLY TO BOTH OT AND NT?

Issue: Passages such as 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21 are clearly looking back to the OT.

Is the New Testament Inspired? Did the NT author and the 1st c. church consider their writings inspired?

Biblical Evidence:

1 Timothy 5:18 For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," (Deut. 25:4) and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." (Luke 10:7)

2 Peter 3:16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

g. ABOUT DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS?

Sometimes the same accounts are worded differently. Note the Beatitudes. Note that Jesus spoke Aramaic, yet His words are recorded in Greek.

Other considerations:

The NT writings were endeared every bit as much as the OT.

Colossians 4:16 **And when this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter {that is coming} from Laodicea.**

1 Thessalonians 5:27 **I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.**

2 Timothy 4:2 **preach the word; be ready in season {and} out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.**

The preaching and teaching of the first c. church centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Even though they used the OT in preaching Him, the Gospel is NT revelation and that revelation was preserved in our 27 books of the NT.

2. KINDS OF INSPIRATION

a. NATURAL INSPIRATION (A REMARKABLE BUT HUMAN BOOK)

b. DYNAMIC INSPIRATION

c. MORAL OR SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION

d. PERSONAL ENCOUNTER INSPIRATION

e. DEGREE INSPIRATION

e. DICTATION

f. INCARNATIONAL SUPERINTENDENCE

(1) VERBAL, PLENARY INSPIRATION

(a) DEFINED

Verbal = words, plenary = all the words, inspiration = “God-breathed” (θεοπνευστος).

"God so superintended the human authors of Scripture that without negating their individuality, personal interests, or literary style, they recorded His divinely revealed truth without error, without excess, and without omission in the words of the original manuscripts."

The criticism that “men wrote the bible” is a half-truth!

(b) DEFENDED

i. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

θεοπνευστος - not so much inspired (inward) but exhaled (breathed out)

ii. 2 PETER 1:20-21

“Moved” (φέρω) = to be borne or carried along (cf. Acts 27:15,17 where it's used of a ship being "driven along" by the winds).

Not a matter of one's own interpretation.

According to the Roman Catholic church this verse supports their belief that the church holds the keys to interpretation. However, verse 20 has to be contrasted with verse 21. The interpretation in mind here is that of the prophet's own prophecy. In other words, inspired prophecies come from God, not men.

iii. CF. MATTHEW 19:4-5 WITH GENESIS 2:24

Jesus quotes words not directly attributed to God, and equates them with what God "said:"

Matthew 19:4-5 4 And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, ‘For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh’?

Also note

Acts 1:16 “Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. [this is a quote of Psalm 69 and 109]

Acts 2:16-17 - that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel is equated to what "God declares."

iv. CHRIST CLAIMED SCRIPTURE’S AUTHORITY

Matthew 4 (his temptation, 3x "it is written").

Matthew 22:23-33 - Sadducees question Jesus about the Resurrection and Levirate marriage.

Note that the Sadducees believed in the primary authority of the Pentateuch and denied the existence of angels, spirits, an afterlife, and resurrection from the dead.

Compare verses 29, and 31-32 (a quote from Exodus 3:6 showing them from their own "canon" that there is life after death).

John 10:35 - Jesus said that "the Scripture cannot be broken".

John 8:58 (ἐγώ εἰμι - goes back to Exodus 3).

*** JESUS' TEACHING CENTERED ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE OT**

Luke 4:16-21 - 16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. 17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, [quoting Isaiah 61] 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are downtrodden, 19 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." 20 And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. 21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

*** UNTIL HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS AWAY**

Compare Jesus' use of the phrase "until heaven and earth pass away" or "Heaven and earth will pass away" and you can see that Jesus considered His words/teaching to be on the same level as the OT.

Twice he uses this phrase in reference to the OT (may be different records of the same account)==>

Matthew 5:18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.

Luke 16:17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.

Twice he uses in in reference to His words==>

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.

Matthew 13:31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

v. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:13 AND GALATIANS 3:16

1 Corinthians supports the fact that inspiration extends to the words, not merely the thoughts of Scripture:

1 Corinthians 2:10-13 10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things

freely given to us by God,¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

Galatians 3:16 supports the smallest nuances of the Bible are inspired:

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.

(c) OTHER ISSUES

- Some material came directly from God (such as the Ten Commandments).
- Some material was dictated (Jeremiah 30:2; Revelation 3:14).
- Some material was researched (Luke 1:1-4).
- Sometimes an amanuensis was used (Romans 16:22).
- The personality, interest, and ability of the author shines through (Luke as a doctor; Paul as a sports fan who uses sports analogies; the differences in the Greek used).

E. INERRANCY

1. DEFINED

"as a product of supernatural inspiration the information affirmed by the sentences of the original autographs of the sixty-six canonical books of the Bible is true."¹

The issue is one of truth. Relates to the very sentences, words, nuances of words. Some things that the Bible records are not true, though they are truly recorded (lies of Satan).

2. DEFENDED

a. PHILOSOPHICALLY

The inerrancy of Scripture is a by-product of inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16) and the character of God. If God is a God of truth and, if he is omnipotent, then he is able to keep his word free from error and preserved for us today.

(1) SYLLOGISM:

- 1) God Cannot Err
- 2) The Bible is God's Word
- 3) The Bible Cannot Err

b. BIBLICALLY

(1) JESUS IN MATTHEW 4:1-11

Plenary "every word" + "propositional." - "It is written" not "it speaks to me thus."

(2) JESUS IN MATTHEW 5:18

"Law and Prophets" = OT in entirety. (Not a "jot or tittle" shall pass from the law until it is accomplished). Referred to the Hebrew language where a jot was the Hebrew yod (y), and a tittle was a small mark that differentiated different letters of the alphabet, such as the difference between a resh and a dalet, or a koph and a bet.

Cf. in English t/difference between LOVE GLOVE LIVE (jot); or Fun, Pun, Run, Bun (tittle).

Jesus often appealed to the authority of the OT Scripture (10% of Jesus' words refer to the OT).

¹Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce Demarest, Integrative Theology.

(3) JESUS ACKNOWLEDGED AS TRUE SOME OF THE MOST ATTACKED ACCOUNTS OF THE OT

- 1) Jesus quoted Moses by name 16 times and affirmed Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.
- 2) Jesus affirmed the validity of Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:3-5; Mark 10:6-8).
- 3) Jesus confirmed the historicity of the flood (Matthew 24:38-39).
- 4) Jesus affirmed the historicity of Sodom, Lot and his wife (Matthew 10:15; Luke 17:28).
- 5) Jesus affirmed the historicity of Jonah (Matthew 12:40).
- 6) Jesus quotes from Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 (John 12:38-40). Both of these quotes he attributes to Isaiah (contra to liberal views of a deutero or tritero Isaiah).
- 7) Jesus affirmed the historicity of the prophets and figures such as Isaiah (Matthew 12:17); Elijah (Matthew 17:11-12); Daniel (Matthew 24:15); Abel (Matthew 23:35); Zechariah (Matthew 23:35); Moses (Matthew 8:4; John 5:46); Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Matthew 8:11; John 8:39); David (Matthew 22:45).

He didn't simply allude to these accounts, he historically verified them!

(4) APOSTOLIC TEACHING

Same arguments for the inspiration of the Bible apply here. Go back to passages such as the Psalms in the OT (119); 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Galatians 3:16. High view of prophecy (quotes in Acts, for example). Use of the OT (vigorously quoted by Paul, Peter, author of Hebrews).

c. HISTORICALLY

Through the first sixteen centuries, the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible was not questioned.

Augustine (d. 430) - "The most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books. That is to say that the men by whom the Scripture has been given to us and committed to writing put down in these books anything false. If you once admit into such a high sanctuary of authority one false statement, there will not be left a single sentence of these books, which, if appearing to anyone difficult in practice or hard to believe, may not by the same fatal rule be explained away as a statement in which intentionally, the author declared what was not true." [cited in Ryrie, Basic Theology, 81].

Thomas Aquinas (1224-74) "Nothing false can underlie the literal sense of Scripture." [Ibid]

Luther - "The Scriptures have never erred" [ibid]

Wesley - "Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible there may well be a thousand. If there is one falsehood in that Book it did not come from the God of truth." [Ibid]

The inerrancy of the Bible was not questioned until modern times, following the liberal biblical criticism of the 19th-20th c. the origin of which came from Germany.

Today, even some evangelicals (Fuller Seminary) prefer the term "infallible" to "inerrant." However, there is a difference and I'm convinced that we must uphold inerrancy.

3. ISSUES

a. WHAT IF THE BIBLE CONTAINS A FEW ERRORS?

What if the Bible contains “some” errors (matters of science or history)?

“The Bible is infallible, as I define that term, but not inerrant. That is, there are historical and scientific errors in the Bible, but I have found none on matters of faith and practice” [Stephen T. Davis, The Debate about the Bible, 115]

Davis’ statement is telling . . . How can we be sure that it is errant on other issues (heaven, hell, God, salvation, etc.)"

According to Charles Ryrie, doctrinal matters that may be affected by denying inerrancy include:

- 1) A denial or reinterpretation of the historical account of Adam and the fall.
- 2) A denial or reinterpretation of the account of Jonah.
- 3) A denial or reinterpretation of miracles in both testaments.
- 4) A denial or reinterpretation of Moses authoring the Pentateuch.
- 5) A belief in deuterio or tritio Isaiah authorship (redactors).
- 6) Embracing liberation theology (sin is societal and salvation is from political oppression).

Practical matters:

- 1) Compromise on adultery; homosexuality; divorce and remarriage.
- 2) Cultural reinterpretation of complementarianism (Paul was a chauvinist).
- 3) Interpretation of the Bible through the lens of modern psychology or post-modernism.

Inerrancy has historically been a slippery slope. Westminster Seminary was formed by godly men (such as Warfield and Machen) who were concerned about the liberalism of Princeton. Now, Westminster Seminary is on shaky ground! Rarely is the law of theological entropy reversed (but note the recent revival of Southern Seminary and the SBC).

b. WHY IS INERRANCY LIMITED TO THE ORIGINAL MSS?

c. WHAT ABOUT SCIENCE?

“The Bible is not a science text book. However, it is inerrant when it speaks on matters that may pertain to science.”

The Bible describes phenomenon in terms of human observation, not scientific experimentation (such as a sunrise, the moon as a lesser light, etc.).

d. ARE CLAIMS OF ERRORS IN THE BIBLE VALID?

These are generally interpretational issues related to the realm of hermeneutics, not issues of error. Those who contend the Bible contains errors usually bring forth examples that can easily be solved hermeneutically or textually (number issues).

Note the use of approximations and round numbers

Different viewpoints of the same account (such as the thief on the cross).

Also there is sometimes needed more information (such as in the case of the Hittites, or Moses as a without an alphabet).

e. WHAT ABOUT TRANSLATIONS? KJV ONLYISM, ETC?

4. THE CHICAGO STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY

F. AUTHORITY AND SUFFICIENCY - SOLA SCRIPTURA

The Scriptures are the all-sufficient and final authority for the faith and practice of the individual believer and for the local church. This authority is an inherent authority, not subject to any ecclesiastical body, as established by the fact that the Bible is divinely inspired (2 Timothy 3:16).

The "Formal Principle" of the Reformation: Sola Scriptura (cf. the "Material Principle" of the Reformation: Sola Fide).

1. SOLA SCRIPTURA DEFINED

a. WHAT SOLA SCRIPTURA IS NOT

- (1) Sola Scriptura is not a claim that the Bible contains all knowledge
- (2) Sola Scriptura is not a claim that the Bible is an exhaustive catalog of all religious knowledge (John 21:25)

"The Bible actually denies that it is the complete rule of faith. John tells us that not everything concerning Christ's work is in Scripture (John 21:25), and Paul says that much Christian teaching is to be found in the tradition that is handed down by word of mouth (2 Timothy 2:2)." [Roman Catholic apologist Karl Keating]

Note that Keating's point is illogical in that he equates John's statement with a denial of the fact that the Bible is a complete rule of faith, and therefore sufficient. Again, the misconception that unless something is exhaustive, it is not sufficient. Clearly this is not the case, as Deuteronomy 29:29 makes clear.

(3) Sola Scriptura is not a denial of the church's authority to teach God's truth

Church versus Scripture is not an either/or dichotomy. The church does have authority (1 Timothy 3:15), but that authority is secondary to that of Christ and the Scriptures. The church is not the final arbiter of truth. Authority exists. But authority isn't monolithic in that there are levels of authority (cf. political authority; husband/wife relationships; authority of elders).

(4) Sola Scriptura is not a denial that the Word of God has, at times, been spoken

(5) Sola Scriptura does not entail the rejection of every kind or form of "tradition"

(a) Note the early creeds as having authority, albeit secondary to the Bible

(6) Sola Scriptura is not a denial of the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding and enlightening the Church (2 Timothy 2:7)

b. WHAT SOLA SCRIPTURA IS

The canonical Scriptures are alone sufficient to serve as the *regula fidei* or the infallible rule of faith for the believer and the church

Relates to the twin issues of authority and sufficiency

- i. The Scriptures are sufficient to lead one to salvation
- ii. The Scriptures are sufficient to guide one in sanctification
- iii. The Scriptures are the final authority for the believer and the church

Luther - "I am bound by conscience by the Word of God."

Therefore, the believer and the church is not bound by that which is not explicit or implicit in the Bible.

Therefore, all traditions and practices are subservient to the authority of Scripture.

"The Bible claims to be the sole and sufficient infallible rule of faith for the Christian Church. The Scriptures are not in need of any supplement: their authority comes from their nature as God-breathed revelation; their authority is not dependent upon man, church, or council. The Scriptures are self-consistent, self-interpreting, and self-authenticating. The Christian Church looks to the Scriptures as the only infallible and sufficient rule of faith, and the Church is always subject to the Word, and is constantly reformed thereby." [James White, The Roman Catholic Controversy, 60]

(1) WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF 1647

4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

6. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and the government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

7. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

9. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture, is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it may be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly. [The 1647 Westminster Confession of Faith, 1:4-9]

(2) BASIL OF CAESAREA (330-379)

Basil of Caesarea (330-379) in response to dissenters who claimed their own authority and customs over those that Basil recognized:

"If custom is to be taken in proof of what is right, then it is certainly competent for me to put forward on my side the custom which obtains here. If they reject this, we are clearly not bound to follow them. Therefore, let God-inspired Scripture decide between us; and on whichever side

be found doctrines in harmony with the word of God, in favor of that side will be case the vote of truth."

2. SOLA SCRIPTURA DEFENDED

a. 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17

Some object that Paul is speaking about the O.T. alone. Therefore, this passage is not relevant. But, keep in mind that Paul is talking about the origin and essential nature of the Scripture and not the extent of it (canon). What Paul says is by extension equally true for both O.T. and N.T. The N.T. is also "God-breathed", and adequate. There is no ontological difference between the NATURE of the N.T. as against the O.T.

Do other groups, such as Rome, teach that there are other doctrines and practices that must be observed in order to fulfill the promises of verse 17?

b. THE PASSAGES AND PROPOSITIONS OF INSPIRATION ALSO APPLY

We further defend Sola Scriptura on the basis of the passages we've already looked at in defending the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.

2 Peter 1:20-21; Psalm 119

Christ claimed and used the authority of Scripture t/o his ministry:

* Matthew 4 - his temptation, "it is written"

* Jesus' use of the phrase "until heaven and earth pass away" or "Heaven and earth will pass away"

Matthew 5:18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.

Luke 16:17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.

He doesn't mean the human traditions of the Jews; these he condemned (Matthew 15:1-9)

1 Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, 2 "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 And He answered and said to them, "And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 "For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.' 5 "But you say, 'Whoever shall say to his father or mother, "Anything of mine you might have been helped by has

been 1 given to God,” 6 he is not to honor his father 1 or his mother.’ And thus you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7 “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 8 ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 9 ‘But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’”

3. SOLA SCRIPTURA CONTRASTED

a. DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

(1) THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW

(a) SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

Cf. the claim that the Roman Catholic Church is needed to give definitive interpretations of Scripture

(8) "This tradition, which comes from the apostles, develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. . . Through the same tradition the Church's full canon of the sacred books is known, and the sacred writings themselves are more profoundly understood and unceasingly made active in her. . . (9) Hence there exists a close connection and communication between Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit. To the successors of the apostles, Sacred Tradition hands on in its full purity God's word, which was entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Thus, led by the light of the Spirit of truth, these successors can in their preaching preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently, it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything that has been revealed. Therefore both Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence. (10) Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit o the word of God, which is committed to the Church. . . . The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. . . . "

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" November 18, 1965]

[Vatican II Document, "Dei Verbum -

Here we have the problem of circular reasoning: The Bible (and Christianity) is what it is because Rome says so.

(b) TRIPARTITE VIEW OF AUTHORITY

1) Bible; 2) Tradition; 3) Magisterium (the teaching office)

(c) TWO DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS

i. PARTIM-PARTIM VIEW

Part of God's revelation is in the Bible and part is in Tradition. In order to have sufficient Christian knowledge, one must have both. This is like possessing a key and a lock. Both are needful counterparts for each other.

ii. MATERIAL SUFFICIENCY VIEW

All of divine revelation is contained entirely in Scripture and entirely in tradition. So, all of Catholic doctrine is assumed to at least be implicit in the Bible.

Partim-Partim View	Material Sufficiency View
Oral tradition is a separate and different revelation	Oral tradition does not contain other revelation
Oral tradition is necessary, inspired revelation	Oral tradition is necessary for the proper interpretation of the Bible
The Bible itself is materially insufficient	The Bible itself is materially sufficient
<i>* Adapted from James White, <u>The Roman Catholic Controversy</u>, page 80</i>	

The modern Roman Catholic view has moved even further in embracing tradition as the ultimate, final authority to where now, tradition has superceded the Bible as a source for truth. This is quite evident in the modern doctrines that Rome has embraced (immaculate conception of Mary, 1850; definition of the infallibility of t/Pope, 1870; bodily assumption of Mary, 1950).

Rome has been slowly moving from TWO authorities (Bible & church) to ONE (the church). It is becoming "sola ecclessia" and whatever the Magisterium of the church upholds yesterday, today, even tomorrow, is the final authority, the Bible notwithstanding.

Much of this is based on an assumption that the Bible gets its authority from the Roman Catholic Church. However, the Bible doesn't get it's authority from any church. It is authoritative regardless. It gets its authority from the fact that it is God's inspired Word. It's authority is God Himself. How can any church be in a higher authority than God?

(2) THE ERROR OF SOLŌ SCRIPTURA

This error is common among evangelicals today and is often confused with the Reformation's return to sola scriptura. Solō Scriptura makes the individual reader the final authority as it relates to the interpretation of Scripture. So the private judgement of one person is greater than the corporate judgment of the universal church.

Those who hold to Solō Scriptura says things like, "Forget what the church teaches; forget the early church creeds; Forget what the leaders of the church teach and preach. That's irrelevant; you read the Bible for yourself and interpret for yourself as if those other things don't even exist."

This is not the biblical or the reformation position (this is not Sola Scriptura). We aren't all rugged individualists who come to the Bible as a tabula rasa, a blank slate, to get out of it whatever we think is right regardless of what the sound scholarship of the church has upheld.

Unique, recent, novel interpretations of major doctrines are dangerous! "Solō scriptura" has been the rallying cry for all sorts of abhorrent teaching. Theological liberals of the past two centuries have used it to exalt human reasoning over the authority of accepted Christian doctrine.

The Liberal Universalist churchman A.B. Grosh said that "The Bible is our only acknowledged creed book" and used his statement to support his heretical teachings; doctrines that the church has rejected throughout its history. [quote from After Darkness, Light R.C. Sproul, Jr. Gen Ed., p. 39]

Another liberal theologian, Simon Howard argued that men should "lay aside all attachment to human systems, all partiality to names, councils and churches, and honestly inquire 'what saith the Scriptures.'"

Unitarian Noah Worcester declared that Christians would reject the Trinity if they would simply study the Bible apart from the creeds of the church.

Liberal preacher Charles Beecher denounced what he called "creed power" and called for "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." [above quotes, ibid]

This view, one that totally disconnects the Bible from any church authority, has been the folly of heretics and wackos. We see that today in evangelicalism. It's evident whenever someone says, "This is what the Bible means to me and I don't care what the church has taught through history."

It's even evident in scholarly circles with new-found doctrines such as the "Openness of God." – a unique evangelical contribution to heresy that denies the historically accepted and defined doctrine of God's omniscience. Or, the so-called "New Perspective on Paul."

New and improved might be a good thing for laundry detergent; it's a dangerous contribution to understanding what the Bible teaches!

(3) SOLA SCRIPTURA: THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN VIEW

Holds that the Bible is God's inspired record of the oral traditions and teaching of the church. Tradition has authority in as much as it is reflected in the Bible. In other words, the Apostles taught in substance what we see in the N.T. before it was written. Once it was written that doctrine, that Gospel tradition has been preserved for us as inspired and inerrant truth.

Therefore, the Bible and the historical tradition behind the Bible are the same. There's no substantial difference between what the Apostles taught (Acts 2:42) and what we have in our Bibles. This is the historic Christian position.

This is not to say that there were no traditions outside of Scripture. The crux of the matter is that all we need for salvation and sanctification is given in Scripture and Scripture alone. Those traditions are not in conflict with Scripture and are not essential to the faith. Yet, Rome denies this and makes it's ongoing extra-biblical and even contra-biblical revelation (such as the bodily assumption of Mary, which was unknown until 1950).

What about the development of doctrine? Some would argue that doctrine has developed beyond the Bible. Note the definitions of the early church creeds on Christ's two natures and the Trinity. There is a difference, however, between clarifying Biblical doctrine and developing new doctrine. Protestant orthodoxy affirms the former while Catholicism practices the later. In doing so, Rome moves away from sound doctrine.

The ecumenical creeds do have their place and carry authority. Creeds such as the Nicene Creed of 325 AD (Is Jesus, as God, equal with the Father?); Constantinople in 381 (upheld Nicea and also clarified the deity of the Holy Spirit); Chalcedon in 451 (what does it mean that Jesus is fully human and fully God); Council of Orange in 529 (dealt with the issue of human depravity and sided with Augustine over the heretic Pelagius).

But the only reason they have authority is because they reflect and support the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Apostles as found in the Scriptures.

The church does have authority. The church has the authority to proclaim, teach, and preach God's Word. The church has authority in maintaining the purity of the doctrines of that Word (2 Timothy 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:15).

The church has authority to defend and define doctrine; it doesn't have the authority to create new doctrine. The doctrine we define and defend is the doctrine of the Bible, of Christ, of the Apostles, of the first century church.

This is why men such as Luther and Calvin weren't inventing something new. They based their belief on Scripture, but they also appealed to the authority of the early CH and men such as Augustine. Why? Because the Reformers knew that they weren't inventing something new. No, they were returning to something that had been established in the and taught by Scripture. (See, for example, Calvin's plea in the preface to his Institutes which was written to the King.)

Here is another reason why you can't take the Bible and throw away the church. The have been joined together. If you think you can be a perfectly obedient Christian and reject the local church, sitting at home reading your Bible, you are sadly mistaken. In fact, you are in grave error.

Today the problem within American Evangelicalism isn't as much with the authority part as it is with sufficiency. Most all evangelical churches uphold the authority of the Bible. Unfortunately, for most it's written on church doctrinal statements safely tucked away somewhere in By-Laws that no one bothers to read. When you look at the practice of the church you find that what they do contradicts what they say they believe. In other words, if you believe the Bible is perfectly sufficient, then you are going to teach and follow it. Unfortunately, too many churches focus on human ingenuity, marketing and entertainment – and neglect what the Bible teaches in whole or in part. As I've often said, "The paperwork is the last thing to change."

4. THE ISSUE OF CONTINUED REVELATION

God is a living God and there is certainly a subjective element in His relationship to the individual believer. However, caution must be exercised in making statements such as "God speaks today." Absolute authoritative revelation ceased with the completed canon of the Bible. The 27 books of the New Testament were written either by an apostle, or a close associate of an apostle.

Hence, the New Testament has apostolic authority behind it. In light of this, the statements Jesus made in John 14:25 and 16:13-15 must be understood in their context. Jesus was not speaking to all believers but to the twelve in the upper room. Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would guide them in all truth found its fulfillment in the verbal plenary inspiration of the New Testament (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Jude 3). Therefore, when the apostolic community died off, the God-ordained means for continued biblical revelation ceased.

G. ILLUMINATION

Because man is finite and sinful, he needs the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit to give him the sense of Scripture (1 Corinthians 2:14). This, however, does not mean that unregenerate man cannot understand on a simple cognitive level the meaning of Scripture, as this would indicate that an understanding of Scripture comes through mystical experience and not sound exegesis. Perhaps we could say that the central purpose of illumination relates to the application of Scripture, not its logical meaning. That is, apart from illumination, unregenerate man may know what Scripture says, but not what it personally means (1 Corinthians 2:18ff.).²

²Unregenerate man might understand the message but not its divine author or authority.

IV. THE NATURE AND WORKS OF GOD

A. THE NATURE AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

1. NON-ORTHODOX APPROACHES

a. ATHEISM

(1) DEFINED

(2) A RECENT PHENOMENON

Atheism as a movement is a recent phenomenon (very rare before the Enlightenment). Became much more common following the fourth period of modernism: Darwinism.

(a) IS ON THE RISE TODAY IN EUROPE AND N. AMERICA

Note popular acceptance among the "social elite."

(3) IN ANTIQUITY, THE WORD "ATHEIST" HAD A MUCH DIFFERENT MEANING

In the first and second centuries, the Christians were called "atheists" (and persecuted) because they didn't believe in the many gods of Greco-Roman society. Belief in Jesus Christ would be perfectly acceptable so long as one didn't believe ONLY in Jesus Christ!

(1) THREE TYPES OF ATHEISM

(a) DOGMATIC ATHEISM

i. PSALM 14:1 TYPE OF ATHEISM

The dogmatic Atheist defines "god" according to his own whims and expectations, and then he determines that such a god could not exist. Example: Those who say God doesn't exist because of evil and suffering in the world (this actually assumes God!) or due to no acceptable scientific evidence.

(b) VIRTUAL ATHEISM

Affirms an abstract "god principle" in the universe, such as nebulous "new age" beliefs. Defines god in such a way as to make him either totally immanent or totally transcendent (examples: deism and pantheism).

(c) PRACTICAL ATHEISM

How most people who claim to believe in God actually live. God is "out of sight and out of mind." Hence, this is living as if there were no God.

The believer must not live this way. His attitude must be that of the Psalmist in Psalm 139:

O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. 2 Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up; Thou dost understand my thought from afar. 3 Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, And art intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, Thou dost know it all. 5 Thou hast enclosed me behind and before, And laid Thy hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it. 7 Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there.

(2) THE LOGICAL PROBLEM WITH ATHEISM: ONE CANNOT PROVE A UNIVERSAL NEGATIVE

(3) ROMANS CHAPTER ONE AND ATHEISM (PRACTICAL ATHEISM IN ROMANS 1:21 AND VIRTUAL AND DOGMATIC ATHEISM IN ROMANS 1:28-30)

b. AGNOSTICISM

(1) DEFINED

(2) "AGNOSTIC FLEAS"

c. SKEPTICISM

Related to Agnosticism. The skeptic suspends judgement of God's existence in favor of absolute (usually scientific) proof.

(1) THE PROBLEMS WITH EMPIRICISM

Cannot explain the laws of logic, universals, absolutes, and even the scientific method itself.

(2) A CLOSED OR OPEN UNIVERSE?

This is a worldview issue.

d. DEISM

(1) DEFINED

God totally transcendent; clock-maker. Ramifications? Anti-supernaturalism (no miracles, virgin birth, death of Christ, etc. What about prayer?).

e. PANTHEISM

(1) DEFINED

In Pantheism, everything in creation is either directly “god” or an emanation of him.

f. PANENTHEISM

(1) DEFINED

The soul or spirit of each man is god.

g. POLYTHEISM

(1) DEFINED

h. DUALISM

(1) TWO TYPES

Materialistic (matter vs. spirit) and Theistic (God vs. Satan).

i. ANIMISM

(1) DEFINED

American Indian and culture worship; fetishes, etc.

2. ORTHODOX APPROACH - TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF GOD

a. THE POSSIBILITY AND SOURCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

(1) THE CENTRAL ISSUE IN PHILOSOPHY AS WELL AS THEOLOGY

(2) HOW DOES THE CHRISTIAN KNOW TRUTH?

(3) TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE:

(a) COGNITIVE OR INTUITIVE

Romans 1:18 - "men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness;"

Romans 1:21 "they knew God".

(b) TRUE SAVING KNOWLEDGE

John 17:3; John 3:1 ff.

b. NAMES OF GOD

(1) INTRODUCTION: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

(a) SIGNIFICANCE OF ONE'S NAME IN ANTIQUITY

Do you know what your name means? In ancient times, people "named" in keeping w/experience or expectations.

(b) BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

i. ADAM AND EVE IN GENESIS 4:25

And Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him."

(i) SETH MEANS "APPOINTED ONE"

ii. JACOB AND ESAU IN GENESIS 25:25-25

Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau.

. . . his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob . . ."

(i) ESAU / EDOM MEANS "RED" AND JACOB MEANS "HEEL GRABBER" OR "DECEIVER"

iii. TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

(i) THE CHILDREN OF LEAH (FIRST FOUR TRIBES)

Note how many times Leah named her children in keeping with circumstances or expectations in Genesis 29:32-35.

31 Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.³² And Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me."

Reuben means "behold a son."

33 Then she conceived again and bore a son and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this *son* also." So she named him Simeon.

Simeon means "hearing."

34 And she conceived again and bore a son and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore he was named Levi.

Levi means "attachement."

35 And she conceived again and bore a son and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she named him Judah.

Judah means "praise."

(ii) THE TWO CHILDREN OF BILHAH (RACHEL MAID)

*** GENESIS 30:4-8**

Dan means "justice;" Naphtali means "wrestling."

(iii) THE TWO CHILDREN OF ZILPAH (LEAH'S MAID)

*** GENESIS 30:9-13**

Gad means "fortunate;" Asher means "happy."

(iv) TWO MORE TRIBES THROUGH LEAH

*** GENESIS 30:17-21**

Issachar meaning "reward" and Zebulun meaning "dwelling." Also, Dinah (not a tribe) meaning "one who judges."

(v) TRIBES ELEVEN AND TWELVE THROUGH RACHEL

*** GENESIS 30:22-24; 35:18**

Joseph which means "may God add," and Benjamin. Benjamin was originally named "Ben-oni" meaning "son of my sorrow," but his name was later changed by Jacob to Benjamin (son of honor or of my right hand).

iv. MOSES IN EXODUS 2:10

And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, "Because I drew him out of the water." ("one who draws out")

v. NABAL IN 1 SAMUEL 25:25

"Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent.

vi. A 'NO NAME' (JOB 30:8)

"Fools, even those without a name, They were scourged from the land.

vii. JESUS (JOSHUA) IN MATTHEW 1:21

(2) THE USE OF "NAME" IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

(a) THE WORD *ονομα* IS FOUND IN 59 VERSES

It's used 37 times in the NASB where it's translated by the singular English word "name." Of these, 31 times, the word is used of the name of Jesus/Lord. It's used twice of God/Father (15:14,17). There are 4 other uses as in 4:7; 13:6; 13:8; 19:13.

(b) FIRST FIVE CHAPTERS OF ACTS

i. PETER'S SERMON ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST (2:21 QUOTING JOEL 2:32)

"And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

ii. IN RESPONSE TO THOSE CONVICTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (2:38)

And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

iii. PETER TO THE LAME BEGGAR AT THE TEMPLE GATE IN 3:6

But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene-- walk!"

iv. PETER TO THOSE WHO HAD WITNESSED THE HEALING OF THE LAME BEGGAR (3:16)

"And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

v. THE JEWISH RULERS AFTER HAVING ARRESTED PETER AND JOHN FOR PREACHING (4:7)

And when they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"

vi. PETER'S REPLY TO THE JEWISH RULERS (4:10, 12)

let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health.

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

vii. THE DECISION OF THE JEWISH RULERS (4:17-18)

"But in order that it may not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any man in this name." And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

viii. BEFORE THE SAME JEWISH LEADERS IN CHAPTER FIVE

5:28 "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

5:40 And they took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and then released them.

ix. THE RESPONSE OF THE DISCIPLES IN 5:41

So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.

(3) OLD TESTAMENT NAMES (TITLES) OF GOD

**** QUESTION: "WHAT IF YOU HAD MANY NAMES AND EACH ONE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT YOU?"**

**** THE NAME OF GOD IS SACRED**

The Bible emphasizes the honor due God's name.

Isaiah 42:8 "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images."

**** THE DECALOGUE PROHIBITS TAKING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN**

Exodus 20:7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain."

John Calvin on the Third Commandment

From Calvin's Institutes

Worship

The purpose of this commandment is: God wills that we hallow the majesty of his name. Therefore, it means in brief that we are not to profane his name by treating it contemptuously and irreverently. To this prohibition duly corresponds the commandment that we should be zealous and careful to honor his name with godly reverence. Therefore we ought to be so disposed in mind and speech that we neither think nor say anything concerning God and his mysteries, without reverence and much soberness that in estimating his works we conceive nothing but what is honorable to him.

Calvin's Three Points of Observation

We must, in my opinion, diligently observe the three following points: First, whatever our mind conceives of God, whatever our tongue utters, should savor of his excellence, match the loftiness of his sacred name, and lastly, serve to glorify his greatness. Secondly, we should not rashly or perversely abuse his Holy Word and worshipful mysteries either for the sake of our own ambition, or greed, or amusement; but, as they bear the dignity of his name imprinted upon them, they should ever be honored and prized among us. Finally, we should not defame or detract from his works, as miserable men are wont abusively to cry out against him; but whatever we recognize as done by him we should speak of with praise of his wisdom, righteousness, and goodness. That is what it means to hallow God's name.

I would add that we take God's name in vain and thus violate the Third Commandment when we:

- Trivialize God;
- Misrepresent who He is in His Nature or Work, such as to deny one or more of His attributes or His ontological nature as a Triunity;
- Act in such a way that God's name is dishonored (Romans 2:24).

(a) YHWH (LORD)

i. THE “TETRAGRAMMATON” (USED 6823 TIMES IN 5790 VERSES)

ii. THE ORIGIN APPEARS TO BE EXODUS 3:15

Apparently comes from the verb *haya* (to be) in the “Qal stem. Possibly “He causes” (Hiphil). Never definite.

This is the personal, covenantal name of God. Especially significant in the covenant formulas such as in Genesis 17 (Abrahamic); Exodus 20 (Mosaic); 2 Samuel 7 (Davidic); Jeremiah 31 (New).

Note diff. between YHWH (LORD) and Adonai (Lord / lord).

LXX translates with the noun *κύριος*. Note where *κύριος* is used in sense of YHWH for Christ in the NT (E.g. Romans 10:9 ff.; Philippians 2:9-11).

iii. WHAT ABOUT “JEHOVAH?” (HANDOUTS)

Hebrew was originally written without vowels. The Masoretic scholars added vowel points around the 7th c. AD (some say anywhere from 1st c. AD to 11th c.) due to fact Hebrew was becoming a dead language.

iv. FORMS OF YHWH

(i) YHWH OF SABAOth (OF HOSTS)

Translated in the LXX by *κρατω* (power). Hosts, therefore, may refer to angelic beings (1 Kings 22:19). Or, possibly to creation/stars/planets (Gen. 2:1), power (James 5:4), armies (Josh. 5:14-15).

(ii) YHWH YIRAH (LORD WHO PROVIDES)

The root idea may be “one who sees.” God will see and provide. Note the usage in Genesis 22:14. Here we have “The Angel of YHWH” who is the Second Person of the Trinity. Jesus Christ is our provision for our sin.

(iii) YHWH RAPHAH (YHWH YOUR HEALER)

Exodus 15:26 And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer."

Psalms 41:4 As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me; Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee."

* WHAT KIND OF HEALING? IS THERE PHYSICAL HEALING IN THE ATONEMENT? SEE 1 PETER 2:24

1. Note the way Peter phrases it: **He bore our sin IN His body ON the cross . . .**

a. Theologically

When Christ died for us there was both a propitiation and an expiation. To propitiate is to satisfy. Propitiation means that God's wrath against sin was satisfied in the offering of Christ. God poured out His wrath against Him rather than on we who believe. Result for us is expiation, our guilt is removed. God views us through the lens of the cross. He sees us as righteous, not because of what we have done, but solely because of what was done for us.

2. Note the specific reason

. . . so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness . . .

He died so that we may live. This is the paradox of Christianity: We find life through death, we live through dying ourselves. We have died with Christ and our lives are hidden with Him in the heavenly places!

There are two perspectives to this. There's an eternal perspective as well as temporal one. Jesus Christ died so that we might live eternally. That's the eternal perspective. But He also died and rose again so that we may live righteously in this physical life. That's the temporal perspective.

How shall we who have died to sin still live in it? (Paul, Romans 6:2)

He who has died is freed from sin (6:7).

Even so, consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to righteousness (6:11).

We are positionally dead to sin and alive to righteousness. What we are in position we are to be in practice. That gives us the power and strength to endure affliction. To suffer well and thus give God glory through our afflictions.

We can be satisfied in suffering because Christ died for us! He died & rose again not only so that our sins are forgiven for eternity, imputed righteousness, but also that we may live in the power of His might, imparted righteousness.

3. What about the curious statement at the end of the verse?

for by His wound you have been healed.

a. Word "wound" / μῶλωψ is actually in the singular

Literally "wound" not "wounds." Some Bibles note this in the margin. The reason it's singular is probably as a figure of speech known as a metonymy.

A metonymy is the use of one word for another, such as "blood" being a metonymy for "life." When Christ poured out his blood he poured out his life, because, as the OT says, the life of all flesh is in the blood. So what we have here is a metonymy for "death." The word "wound" standing for the singular "death."

Many within the Word of Faith movement believe that this refers to physical healing. For example, one writer boldly declares:

"When Jesus bore our sins, He also bore our diseases. The Cross pronounced a double cure for the ills of mankind. The church of Jesus Christ has been made just as free from sickness as it has been made free from sin." [Gloria Copeland, God's Will for your Healing, 34]

Some even claim that when God imputed sin to Christ on the cross, He also imputed sickness. He made him sin and sickness so that we could be freed not only from sin, but also all illnesses, all diseases now in this life.

Is that what Peter has in mind? Peter is referring to Isaiah 53:

Isaiah 53:1-5 **1 Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? 2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. 3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.**

The emphasis of Isaiah 53 is on our sin and the fact that we need healing from our depravity. That's evident throughout the passage.

Verse 5: . . . He was pierced through for our transgressions . . . crushed for our iniquities;

Verse 6: (We are likened to straying sheep stubbornly going our own way.) - . . . the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

Verse 8: He took the due stroke that His people deserved for their transgression.

Verse 10: He rendered Himself as a guilt offering.

Verse 11: He will bear their iniquities.

Verse 12: [He] was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many . . .

The primary emphasis of Isaiah 53 is that we need spiritual healing, not physical healing. We are condemned in our sin and need One who is truly able to deliver us, one who will take God's wrath in our stead. We need spiritual salvation.

Note that Christ was made sin, not sickness! He wasn't stricken with a deadly plague on the cross, he was stricken with our sin. He forgave us our sins, not our illnesses. We've seen that we are subject to all sorts of temporal effects that sin bring on a fallen world: sickness, disease, accidents, death. But we are not subject to the eternal effects of sin: condemnation (Romans 8:1).

Remember, Peter writes from this side of the cross. Isaiah wrote in anticipation, Peter writes in fulfillment. So, when he writes: ". . . by His wound you have been healed . . ." He uses the verb ἰομαι, a word not limited to physical healing.

- A word that's used of being healed from demonic possession in Luke 9:42.
- A word that's used in Matthew 13:15 of spiritual healing or salvation.
- A word used in Hebrews 12:13 of the spiritual healing that is needed by hurting members of the body.

This is a broad term. One lexicon states that the word is often used figuratively of deliverance from ills of many kinds.

In 1 Peter 2:24, the form of the word is a culminative aorist passive. It's a past-tense with perfective force. Hence the translation "You have been healed." Your healing was effected in the past, on the cross. The results of that past act are with you in the present (the basic idea of a perfect tense).

When the Spirit of God had Peter pen the words, . . . by His wound you have been healed. - the emphasis was that this past event continues with me and is relevant for me now. In that sense, it encapsulates the meaning of the two previous statements, pulling them together.

- **He who bore our sin in His body on the cross,** (Salvation)

- **so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness;** (Sanctification)
- **for by His wound you have been healed.** (Both salvation and sanctification, and perhaps, glorification)

Entire context of this verse is healing (deliverance) from sin.

What about Matthew chapter 8?

8:16-17 **And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases."**

That sounds like a complete refutation of all that I said to this point.

There are a couple of different ways to look at this. First of all, the emphasis in Matthew is not on imputation of sin. Matthew uses a word that means, "to take away," not to personally bear. Jesus did not bear the sickness of Peter's mother in law, he didn't take remove it from her and receive it himself. No, he took it away. In fact, the atonement had not yet been accomplished. It would be a few years later that Jesus would pay for the sin of the world through his death and resurrection.

As one scholar observes:

"There is absolutely no effectual relationship between what Christ did in Capernaum and his atonement on the cross at Calvary. Rather, Matthew employed a normal illustrative use of the Old Testament. He found a point of continuity between Isaiah 53 and Christ's healing ministry at Capernaum. . . . Matthew 8 is a preview of the coming eternal kingdom that will be free of sin and sickness. . . . To suggest that there is now no sickness because Christ cared for physical affliction at Calvary is like suggesting that there is now no sin because Christ bore our sins at Calvary." [Richard Mayhue, The Healing Promise, 123]

Secondly, Matthew is using the Isaiah passage to address a different issue altogether. Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4 - **Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried . . .**

Peter quotes Isaiah 53:5 - **But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.**

Matthew was right in quoting Isaiah 53:4 as a fulfillment of Jesus' ministry in casting out demons and healing those who had physical ailments, whether sickness, disease, or a handicap such as blindness. Jesus was a man of sorrows, he was acquainted with grief. He came to identify with those who were hurting and suffering, as a direct result of living in a fallen world. This was fulfilled in Jesus' earthly ministry.

Peter quotes Isaiah 53:5 with something else in mind: the fact that we, as sheep have all gone astray, but the Shepherd has come to give his life for His sheep (that's 53:5).

Is there healing in the atonement? The answer depends on how you frame the question. If you mean by that, it is not God's will that any Christian suffer from any sort of physical malady, the answer is, "no." If you mean that Christ's death guarantees our ultimate healing one day, then the answer is, "Yes."

The sense in which there is healing within the atoning work of Christ is this: Our sins have been forgiven. We will yet die. The totality of our bodies will one day be fully restored. Yet, we will in this life experience sickness.

Think of the profundity of that statement: . . . **By His wound you were healed.** He bled, He suffered, He died. You derive a healing benefit from someone else's wound.

Think of those who are the recipient of another's organ. What would it be like to need a new liver. You will die if you don't get a donor. But, the donor may likely be someone who suffered a tragedy that you might live. And the day comes that you get a phone call: A donor has been found and the liver is being flown to your hospital. The donor is a sixteen year old girl who died when a drunk driver crossed the center line and hit her head on. How do you feel?

Yes, it must be a strange thing to get life through another's death. To receive the sunshine of Providence while another, through tragedy, receives rain.

Think of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He was much more than an organ donor. He was a life-giver. Not just temporal life, but eternal. Everyone who successfully is spared physical death through an organ donation will eventually face death once again. That donation of life only delays the inevitable.

Christ's death and resurrection doesn't delay the inevitable, it conquers it!

You were wounded, you were dead in your sin. He was perfect, he was alive. The one who was perfect and sinless took your sin, the one who was whole took your wound that you could be the righteousness of God in Him, so that you could live. The cure for sin is found in death. Two words that are almost contradictory (cure/death).

(iv) YHWH NISSI (YHWH MY BANNER)

*** HEBREW WORD נִסִּי MEANS "A STANDARD"**

Used of a rallying point (E.g. "meet us at the pole"). In the OT it is usually associated with gathered troops for war.

Exodus 17:14-16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial, and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar, and named it The LORD is My Banner; 16 and he said, "The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."

Jeremiah 51:27 Lift up a signal in the land, Blow a trumpet among the nations! Consecrate the nations against her, Summon against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz; Appoint a marshal against her, Bring up the horses like bristly locusts.

Note that when a standard was raised toward a city, it was a sign for its inhabitants to flee for safety:

Jeremiah 4:6 6 "Lift up a standard toward Zion! Seek refuge, do not stand still, For I am bringing evil from the north, And great destruction."

Comfort for the believer:

Psalms 60:4 Thou hast given a banner to those who fear Thee, That it may be displayed because of the truth.

Note Romans 8:37 - "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

(v) YHWH QADASH (YHWH OUR HOLINESS)

*** MEANING "HOLY, SANCTIFIED, PURE"**

Leviticus 20:8 'And you shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

Isaiah 6:3 And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

(vi) YHWH ROHI (YHWH IS MY SHEPHERD)

*** PSALM 23**

(vii) YHWH TSIDKENU (YHWH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS)

*** MESSIANIC IMPLICATIONS (JEREMIAH 23:5-6)**

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'"

*** NOTE ALSO MELCHIZEDEK THE PRIEST OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS (GENESIS 14; HEBREWS 7)**

A type of Christ, or perhaps a Christophany.

(viii) YHWH SHALOM (YHWH OUR PEACE)

*** MEANING "COMPLETE, WHOLE, HEALTHY"**

The Hebrew word transcends our English word "peace" which is usually thought of as "no conflict."

Judges 6:24 **Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.**

Note again Melchizedek the "priest of Salem."

(ix) YHWH SHAMMAH (YHWH IS THERE)

Ezekiel 48:35 **"The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, 'The LORD is there.'"**

Note Matthew 1:23 (Jesus as "Emmanuel"). He is YHWH Shammah.

(b) ELOHIM (SOMETIMES "EL" OR "ELOH")

The meaning is "God" (or "god"). The etymology is uncertain. "El" may refer to "strong" or "the strong One." Variety of uses, such as: 1) Judges (Exo. 22:8); 2) Mighty men (Genesis 23:6); 3) Angels (Psalm 8:5, cf. LXX and Hebrews 2). Elohim is plural which allows for the Trinity and or a plural of majesty.

i. FORMS OF EL / ELOHIM

(i) EL SHADDAI (GOD ALMIGHTY)

Could also mean "God the over-powerer" or "God our fortress" or "God the nourisher". Job uses this title over 30 times.

Genesis 17:1 **Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.**

Exodus 6:3 **and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD , I did not make Myself known to them.**

(ii) EL OLAM (EVERLASTING GOD)

Genesis 21:33 And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD , the Everlasting God.

(iii) EL ELYON (MOST HIGH GOD)

*** THE FIRST OCCURRENCE IS IN GENESIS 14**

Genesis 14:18-20,22 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand. "And he gave him a tenth of all. 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,

*** EMPHASIS ON GOD’S TRANSCENDENCE**

Psalms 47:2 For the LORD Most High is to be feared, A great King over all the earth.

Psalms 83:18 That they may know that Thou alone, whose name is the LORD, Art the Most High over all the earth.

*** THIS “MOST HIGH GOD” IS ALSO IMMANENT**

Psalms 91:1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psalms 91:9 For you have made the LORD, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place.

Note how over-emphasizing either immanence or transcendence results in perversions as it relates to God's person and work.

(iv) EL QODASH (GOD THE HOLY ONE)

Joshua 24:19 Then Joshua said to the people, "You will not be able to serve the LORD , for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins.

(v) EL QANNO (JEALOUS GOD)

*** DEFINED**

Hebrew word for “jealous” does not have the negative connotation that our English word has. The Hebrew word is related to another word that means “zeal.” As it relates to God, this is his holy jealousy that arises when men spurn his rightful authority over their lives by following other gods or idols.

*** FOUND IN TWO PLACES IN THE OT**

Joshua 24:19 (used with El Qodash above) and Nahum 1:2:

A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies.

(vi) EL ELOHE ISRAEL (GOD OF ISRAEL)

Genesis 33:20 Then he erected there an altar, and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

(vii) EL ROI (GOD WHO SEES)

*** USED BY HAGAR TO THE ANGEL OF THE LORD IN GENESIS 16:13**

Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "Thou art a God who sees"; for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?"

(viii) EL GADOT WAW NORA (GOD GREAT AND TERRIBLE)

Deuteronomy 7:21 "You shall not dread them, for the LORD your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God.

(ix) EL CHANUN WAW RACHUM (GOD GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL)

*** NOTE THE USE OF THIS NAME IN CONNECTION WITH JONAH'S MISSION TO THE NINEVITES (JONAH 4:2)**

And he prayed to the LORD and said, "Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore, in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.

(x) EL NEEMAN (FAITHFUL GOD)

Comes from the Hebrew "amen" meaning "trustworthy," or "sturdy." A word that was used of architectural supports.

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

(xi) EL CHAI (LIVING GOD)

Joshua 3:10 And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite.

1 Samuel 17:26 Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?"

(xii) EL GIBBOR (GOD OUR HERO)

*** GIBBOR = "HERO," "MIGHTY," "WARRIOR"**

Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Deuteronomy 10:17 "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe."

(c) ADON / ADONAI

Adon is singular; *Adonai* plural. The meaning is "Lord" or "lord." Can mean "ruler," judge," master," or "God." When used in conjunction with YHWH it is translated "Lord God" (Joshua 7:7-8). (Interestingly, the NASB translates "adonai" God and "YHWH" God.)

(d) OTHER NAMES AND COMBINATIONS

Some of these are moving more into the realm of descriptions rather than names.

i. HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL (ISA. 1:4)

ii. ROCK (1 SAM. 2:2), FORTRESS (2 SAM 22:33), SHIELD (PSA 3:3), STRENGTH (EXO 15:2)

iii. KING, JUDGE (GEN. 18:25; PSA. 16:10)

iv. MAKER (JOB 35:10)

v. REDEEMER (PSA. 18:14; DAN 2:47)

*** HEBREW *GOEL* CARRIES THE IDEA OF JUSTICE**

*** COMPARE THE “KINSMAN REDEEMER” IN RUTH AND THE
PARALLEL TO THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST**

- 1) The kinsman redeemer had to be a blood relative (Christ is our blood relative, Romans 1:3; Hebrews 2:14).
- 2) The kinsman redeemer had to be willing to pay the price (Christ was willing to lay down his life for his sheep, John 10:15-18).
- 3) The kinsman redeemer had to be able to pay the price (Christ, as God, is able to save forever, Hebrews 10:4ff.).

Ruth is a Gentile in the Genealogy of Christ (David's great-grandmother).

(3) NEW TESTAMENT NAMES (TITLES) FOR GOD

(a) THEOS (GOD)

Parallel to the Hebrew Elohim. Used of false deities in Acts 14:11 (gods); 28:6 (Paul); 19:37 (Diana).

(b) THEOTES (GODHEAD, DEITY)

Used in Colossians 2:9. The emphasis seems to be on the essence of God.

(c) THEIOTES (DIVINE NATURE)

Used in Romans 1:20. The emphasis seems to be on the attributes of God.

(d) THEIOS (DIVINE/PROVIDENTIAL NATURE)

Used in 2 Peter 1:3-4 and Acts 17:29. The emphasis seems to be on the providential provision of God.

(e) KURIOS (LORD, GOD, MASTER)

Parallels Adonai in OT. Can refer to: 1) God (Matthew 3:3, 4:7); 2) Messiah (Luke 2:11); 3) A ruler (Mark 2:28; Luke 10:21); 4) Master (John 6:68; Luke 9:54); 5) Title of respect such as "Sir" (John 12:21).

(f) PATER (FATHER)

This word "Father" is used of God in the OT (Heb. “ab”) 2 Sam. 7:14; Psalm 89:26. However, the concept of God as Father is remote until the NT (Matthew 6:9; Ephesians 3:14; Colossians 3:17; Titus 1:4). Note also James 1:17 (“The Father of Lights”). This word is specific to the First Person of the Trinity.

(g) NAMES/TITLES IN REVELATION

i. ALPHA AND OMEGA (1:8; 21:6; 22:13) - CF. ISAIAH 41:4

Interestingly, in the Gk. text, the alpha is written out ($\alpha\lambda\phi\alpha$), but the omega isn't (not " $\omicron\mu\epsilon\gamma\alpha$ "), but rather " ω ". An insight into the fact that history isn't yet consummated?

ii. BEGINNING AND END (21:6)

Lit. $\alpha\rho\chi\eta$ and $\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ meaning "starter and "ultimate ends or purpose."

iii. FIRST AND LAST (22:13)

(h) OTHERS

i. DESPOT / RULER (LUKE 2:29; 2 PETER 2:1; REV. 4:10)

ii. POTENTATE (1 TIM. 6:15)

iii. MAJESTY (HEBREWS 1:3)

(3) TOWARD A DEFINITION

"[God] is a self-existent, self-conscious, personal being, which is the origin of all things, and which transcends the entire creation, but is at the same time immanent in every part of it." [Berkhof]

"God is the infinite and perfect spirit in whom all things have their source, support, and end." [A. Strong]

"God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." [Westminster Shorter Catechism]

c. THE ATTRIBUTES OR PERFECTIONS OF GOD

(1) DIFFERENT APPROACHES

(a) ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES OF ESSENCE VS. RELATIVE ATTRIBUTES OF RELATIONSHIP

Absolute = what God is within Himself; Relative = what God is in relationship to his creatures. Compare omnipotence (what he is in himself) vs. faithfulness (how he relates to others).

(b) IMMANENT VS. TRANSITIVE

Immanent = What God is in Himself; Transitive = His actions or works in keeping with who He is.

(c) COMMUNICABLE VS. NON-COMMUNICABLE

(d) GREATNESS + GOODNESS + NEAR-FARNESS + THREE-IN-ONENESS (M. Erickson)

(e) MORAL VS. AMORAL (NATURAL)

Moral = "Holy" Amoral = "Omnipotent."

(f) PERSONALITY + GREATNESS + GOODNESS

**(2) USING PERSONALITY + GREATNESS + GOODNESS MOTIF
(NOTING COMMUNICABLE OR NON-COMMUNICABLE)**

(a) ATTRIBUTES OF PERSONNESS (PERSONALITY)

Defined: "Intellect, emotion, and will. A 'you, me, he' awareness. The ability to reason through things, persons and events."

i. LIVING

(i) MEANING

God is a "living God" (1 Timothy 4:10; Joshua 3:10; Daniel 6:26). Active, alive with purpose. Intellectual and eternally living (versus a biological definition of living).

Often used in contrast to dead idols (and Israel's idolatry) in the OT (Isaiah 41:21-29, 44:6-20, 45:11-12, 20-25, 48:3-13).

God is completely self-sustaining. He's not subject to laws of entropy (he will never run out). Inherent in meaning of YHWH.

Acts 17:24-25 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things;

(ii) APPLICATION

He is the Living God in contrast to dead idols. Only a living God can grant life, temporal and eternal (Acts 17:24-25; 1 John 5:11).

ii. INTELLIGENCE (INTELLECT)

Note the three facets of personality: Intellect, Emotion, Will.

(i) MEANING

God has absolute intelligence; complete knowledge with perfect wisdom.

1 Samuel 2:3 the LORD is a God of knowledge, And with Him actions are weighed.

Isaiah 11:1-2 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Proverbs 3:19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens.

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

It is complete and perfect knowledge of all things at all times. God doesn't 'grow' in his knowledge (contra process theology).

(ii) APPLICATION

Where do universal laws of logic come from? Are they universal? God 'knows' and God sees. God's acts are always right because he knows best.

iii. PURPOSIVE

(i) MEANING

Intellect with purpose, not intellect alone. God is not acting and reacting on the basis of instinct or in response to some "surprises." God has perfect ends in mind. God is "teleological."

He is infinite—never thwarted in his purposes. They are always efficacious.

Isaiah 14:24-27 The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, "Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand, to break Assyria in My land, and I will trample him on My mountains. Then his yoke will be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulder. "This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. "For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?"

Isaiah 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ' My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';
Ephesians 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,
Ephesians 3:11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

(ii) APPLICATION

God can and will do according to His pleasure and our good in our lives. Romans 8:28-30. He is working all of history to his desired ends. We can be optimistic (note the pessimism that plagues some people and eschatological systems).

iv. ACTIVE

(i) MEANING

God act with ability. He can reason through His purposes and accomplish them. He is a God who is at work. He is immanent. Contra Deism.

Psalm 92:4-5 For Thou, O LORD hast made me glad by what Thou hast done, I will sing for joy at the works of Thy hands. How great are Thy works, O LORD! Thy thoughts are very deep.

God's creation and His redemptive activity are the high-points of his activity:

Revelation 4:11 "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created."

Revelation 5:9 And they *sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Note how God's purposiveness and activity work together. Purpose without activity would be impotent and activity without purpose would be chaotic.

(ii) APPLICATION

God is at work in our lives (Ephesians 3:20). God is personally at work (contra fatalism).

v. FREE

Freedom, as it relates to one's condition, is one of the most cherished conditions known to man. We desire to be free.

Freedom in this case relates to God's ability to act - His "Freedom of will" (Intellect; Emotion; Will). How do we define freedom? Is God free to lie? Is God free to make a rock so heavy He cannot lift it? Is he free to make a square circle?

(i) MEANING

God is able to act according to his nature without any constraint. He can act consistently and freely with his nature. He is truly free. It is a self-determined freedom totally unhindered by outside forces. Why is it that men demand freedom of will for themselves but deny it of God?

Daniel 4:35 (Lesson learned by Nebuchadnezzar) "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?'"

Psalms 115:1-9 1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Thy name give glory Because of Thy lovingkindness, because of Thy truth. 2 Why should the nations say, "Where, now, is their God?" 3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. 4 Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands. 5 They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; 6 They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; 7 They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. 8 Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them. 9 O Israel, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.

(ii) APPLICATION

God is free to make promises and he will keep them. His promises and actions are freely consistent with his nature (as opposed to ours which is encumbered by sin).

He can also free us as one who knows what true freedom is. John 8:32,36.

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

vi. SELF-CONSCIOUS (AWARENESS)

(i) MEANING

"To know self perfectly and completely and eternally." "I AM" (Psalm 139 as an example). God is completely aware of all he does and all he is. He knows the ends from the beginning and has perfect motives in keeping with his character.

(ii) APPLICATION

We are often oblivious to our own motives. Calvin said that our best deeds and motives are tainted by our sin. (“search me oh God and see if there be any wicked way in me...”).

vii. EMOTION

(i) MEANING

“To possess attributes of feeling and emotion.” A person must intellect, emotion, and will. God’s emotions are never reactionary, vindictive, or sinful. Never rash.

Hosea 11:8 *How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart is turned over within Me, All My compassions are kindled.*

Judges 10:16 *So they put away the foreign gods from among them, and served the LORD; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer.*

Psalms 78:40 *How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness, And grieved Him in the desert!*
Cf. Ephesians 4:30 (Psalm 78:40 and Ephesians 4:30 cite the emotion of grief which can only spring out of love.)

What about Psalm 5:5; Malachi 1:3; and Romans 9:13?

(ii) APPLICATION

We are not simply God’s “objects” or his “play-things.” He knows our frame and is merciful. He’s not an impersonal robot, or some sort of neutral force in the universe. He cares and we can have a true Father-child relationship with him that is intimate and not sterile.

What about emotional responses such as laughter? Humor? Did Jesus laugh? The disciples? Does God have a sense of humor?

viii. SPIRIT

(i) MEANING

God is not a physical being. He’s not corporeal or material in form as in Mormonism. John 4:24. Jesus reveals the invisible God.

Colossians 1:15 *And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.*

John 1:18 *No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

(ii) APPLICATION

Our worship is to be spiritual, not fleshly. This counters idolatry. Spiritual worship is the purest form of worship and is always acceptable (John 4:24).

ix. ONENESS

(i) MEANING

See Deuteronomy 6:4 (Shema) - Israel's confession of faith. Three meanings: 1) God is one in that he's not composite; 2) God is one in that he is unique; 3) God is one in that he is the only God.

Hebrew "Echad" is a plurality of one (class of students; rain). God's oneness does not violate his Threeness and vice versa (Trinity).

(ii) APPLICATION

This disallows any kind of dualism or polytheism. It is a unique oneness (Contra monism; pantheism; panentheism). God is never at odds within himself as if the Trinity could be confused.

God's oneness shows itself in the exclusive worship to be given him alone and in the one way of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5).

x. MORAL

(i) MEANING

God is perfectly righteous. He is moral in His person. It is a "rightness." An absolute, perfectly true righteousness.

God's moral nature isn't programmed or influenced by outside forces, like a person's conscience. It is perfect within itself.

(ii) APPLICATION

Where do universal, immaterial laws of morality come from? Note the process of "civilization" (to make civil). Dilemma of Socrates in light of the Sophists (Socrates knew that morality could only come from truth, absolute truth, and that the nihilism of the Sophists would result in the destruction of society).

God always judges correctly. He never compromises and He is always right. When we struggle with questions of life, or right and wrong, we can rest in the fact that our moral compass may not be perfect, but God's is.

xi. SUMMARY - THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRUTH “GOD IS PERSON”

God is not impersonal or uncaring. He’s not a force, like electricity, or some sort of an impersonal cosmic conglomeration. He is personal, can dialogue. Has intellect, emotion, will.

(b) ATTRIBUTES OF GREATNESS (NON-COMMUNICABLE)

i. SELF-EXISTENT

(i) MEANING

God is absolutely and perfectly independent. He does not depend on anything or anyone other than Himself for his existence and happiness. He simply is. He’s perfectly complete and perfectly happy in Himself. Cf. Exodus 3:14 (YHWH).

(ii) APPLICATION

God is faithful and trustworthy to the absolute end. He will never get tired or run out of energy (like the sun). Eternal life in Him will be just that.

ii. ETERNAL

(i) MEANING

God has no beginning or ending (cf. “everlasting” which implies a beginning but no ending, such as in “everlasting life”).

God cannot be measured by time. Time is a creation of the creator (Hebrews 1:10-12).

Psalm 90:1-2 (A Prayer of Moses the man of God.) Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, Or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

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

(ii) APPLICATION

He is great and transcends the temporal (temporal “gods”). He stands outside of time (time is a creation). God simply is.

iii. IMMUTABLE

This attribute is sometimes referred to as “constancy.”

(i) MEANING

God does not change. Nothing in His being, nature, character, will, plan, substance, Word, sovereignty, attributes will ever or can ever change.

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

1 Samuel 15:29 "And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."

Isaiah 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.

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

Yet, he is not “rigid” or “inflexible” in the sense that we think of unchangeableness (such as people who won't adjust).

What about “God Repenting?”

Genesis 6:5-7 5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 And the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; [*for it repenteth me that I have made them*, KJV] for I am sorry that I have made them." [NASB]

Exodus 32:8-14 8 "They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it, and have sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!'" 9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people. 10 "Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them, and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation." 11 Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD why doth Thine anger burn against Thy people whom Thou hast brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 "Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Thy burning anger and change Thy mind about doing harm to Thy people. 13 "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants to whom Thou didst swear by Thyself, and didst say to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" 14 [*The LORD repented of the evil which He thought to do unto his people*, KJV] So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people. [NASB]

1 Samuel 15:7-11, 17- 29, 33-34 7 So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 And he captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. 10 Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, 11 *[It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be King, KJV]* "I regret that I have made Saul king, [NASB] for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night.

17 And Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel, 18 and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.' 19 "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" 20 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 "But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." 22 And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king." 24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. 25 "Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD." 26 But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." 27 And as Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28 So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you. 29 *[And so, the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for He is not a man that He should repent, KJV]* "And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind." [NASB]

33 But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal. 34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. *[And the LORD repented that He had made Saul King, KJV]* And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel. [NASB]

Jonah 3:10 When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, *[then God repented of the evil He said He would do unto them, KJV]* then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it. [NASB]

Comparing 1 Samuel 15:29 with these passages may lead one to conclude the Bible is contradicting itself and God isn't immutable. What is the solution? Really a translation issue. 15:29 is best

translated that God will not "change his mind." The other passages use the Hebrew verb *nacham* (נחם) which means "to relented" or "to be grieved."

A primitive root; properly to sigh, that is, breathe strongly; by implication to be sorry, that is, (in a favorable sense) to pity, console or (reflexively) rue; or (unfavorably) to avenge (oneself): - comfort (self), ease [one's self], repent (-er, -ing, self). [Strong's Hebrew Dictionary]

This is not God changing his character in any way, or even changing His mind. This is God acting according to His character: to reward good and punish evil. Much like his dealings with the Ninevites through Jonah.

"Unchangeable God must change in His dealings with changeable man, in order that He remain unchangeable in His character." [John MacArthur]

(ii) APPLICATION

God never changes in His character. He will always be faithful and merciful and loving. He will never "change his mind" about us. People may do so; God won't.

iv. OMNIPRESENT

(i) MEANING

God is everywhere in His totality. He is not divided or fragmented but is everywhere in total. Not to be confused with pantheism or panentheism.

Classic Passage: Psalm 139. Cf. Hebrews 13:5.

(ii) APPLICATION

We cannot escape His presence. This is good when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23) or when we especially need Him (Matthew 18:15-20; 28:20), but what about when we are in sin? Do we really realize that our sin is committed before His face? Cf. Genesis 3.

v. OMNISCIENT

(i) MEANING

God knows all things, past, present, and future. He knows all things in what for Him is an eternal "now."

Hebrews 4:13 *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

His omniscience extends to:

1. The Material World

Psalms 147:4 He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them.

2. The Animal World

Matthew 10:29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

3. The Spiritual World

Job 26:6 "Naked is Sheol before Him And Abaddon has no covering.

4. All things perfectly and at once

Matthew 11:21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

What about the Open Theism? Handouts

Open Theism defined as "The future is partly open." God does not exhaustively know the future free acts of men because these events do not yet exist to be known.

This is motivated as a way to deal with the problem of evil. But it flies in the face of who God is!

God is perfect in knowledge:

Job 37:16 "Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, The wonders of one perfect in knowledge,
Psalms 147:5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.

God knows all things:

1 John 3:20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

God's complete knowledge of past, present and future is what distinguishes him from idols and false gods:

Isaiah 42:8-9 "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images. "Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you."

Isaiah 46:9-10 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

God knows things that have not yet happened:

1. Our words:

Psalm 139:4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, Thou dost know it all.

2. The length of our lives:

Psalm 139:16 Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Thy book they were all written, The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.

3. Who would or would not believe the Gospel:

John 6:64 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

4. The future random and free acts of men: 1 Samuel 10:2-9; Luke 22:1-13.

5. Things ex nihilo

Romans 4:17 (as it is written, "A father of many nations have I made you") in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

6. Things attributed to "chance:"

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

(ii) APPLICATION

God knows best; He cares and His plan is always best for us because He knows the end from the beginning. He also knows us and our hearts better than we know ourselves ("search me and know me, see if there by any wicked way in me").

vi. OMNIPOTENCE

(i) MEANING

God is all-powerful. He is able (Genesis 17:1 - God appeared to Abram when he was 99 years old and said, "I am God Almighty . . . " / El Shaddai).

JER 32:17 'Ah Lord God! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee,
JER 32:27 "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"

God cannot deny or contradict his own nature, so the fact that He cannot lie, steal, sin, make a rock so heavy that he cannot move it, etc. do not apply. He doesn't deal in the realm of absurdity. This is because God is the standard and author of logic. Logic reflects the character of God. Therefore, God cannot act illogical for this would be contrary to his nature (square circles, etc.).

Often God's power and wisdom are linked together in Scripture (Jeremiah 10:12-13). Why?

God's omnipotence is never exhausted (contra 2d law of thermodynamics).

In the OT the greatest symbol of God's power was the Exodus (not to belittle the creation). In the NT it was the resurrection of Christ (not to belittle the recreation and eternal state).

(ii) APPLICATION

He is able (Ephesians 3:20). God keeps his promises by His own power (Jeremiah 32:27). Contra dualism, He is the only potentate.

Numbers 11:23 And the LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD'S power limited? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not."

Job 42:2 "I know that Thou canst do all things, And that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted.

vii. PERFECT

(i) MEANING

God is unlimited in His excellence; He is without flaw, complete, whole, total—perfect in all His attributes; not lacking or wanting in anything. God does not grow better with age, contra process theology.

Hebrew word most commonly used of this attribute is “tammim”; the Grk is τέλος.

Matthew 5:48 “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

(ii) APPLICATION

God is perfect in His will, plan, and gifts (James 1:17,25). There is no flaw in His being.

viii. INFINITE

(i) MEANING

God is immeasurable and without limit. The Hebrew concept has the idea of “no numbers” or “innumerable.” God is like the time line with no end. It is an infinity wholly without limits.

Psalm 147:5 **Great is our Lord, and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.**

Revelation 21:6 **And He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.”¹**

(ii) APPLICATION

In Hebrews 7:25:

Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Word “forever” is $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ ($\pi\alpha\nu$ = all; $\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ = ends). God is able to save to the ultimate end (infinity).

ix. INCOMPREHENSIBLE

(i) MEANING

God is unfathomable. It is impossible to fully comprehend Him and His ways. Romans 11:33.

Job 5:9 **Who does great and unsearchable things, Wonders without number.**

Job 11:7 **"Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?**

Psalm 145:3 **Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable.**

Sometimes people say, “when we get to heaven we will know all things like God knows them.” Is that really true?

Incomprehensible does not mean unintelligible. We can know all that God wills us to know and all that we need to know. Some things are beyond us (what Calvin referred to as a labyrinth which we would do well not to enter).

(ii) APPLICATION

This should lead us to greater worship. God is an exhaustible topic of study and contemplation. We can never master this field of study. In fact, the more we know the less we know and the more in awe we become.

x. TRANSCENDENT

(i) MEANING

God is beyond the limits of ordinary experience. He is beyond the universe and stands apart from it.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 6:1 In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.

Psalms 113:5 Who is like the LORD our God, Who is enthroned on high,

Yet, this is not to be equated with Deism. His transcendence is coupled with His immanence. He is also the God who is there; He is approachable and available.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite."

Psalms 113:6-7 Who humbles Himself to behold The things that are in heaven and in the earth? He raises the poor from the dust, And lifts the needy from the ash heap,

(ii) APPLICATION

Worship! God is the one who initiates fellowship with us. He can handle our problems.

xi. IMMANENT

(i) MEANING

God operates and exists in the realm of our own existence. He is near.

Jeremiah 23:24 "Can a man hide himself in hiding places, So I do not see him?" declares the LORD. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD.

It is an existence that is yet self-existence (contra pantheism).

(ii) APPLICATION

God is always near. He knows and He sees (Genesis 16:13; Psalm 23:4; Philippians 4:5b,13).

xii. SOVEREIGNTY

(i) MEANING

God is the absolute all-powerful One who is in complete control of everything at all times.

Daniel 4:35 "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?'

Psalms 33:10-11 The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.

Psalms 115:3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

Isaiah 14:24-27 The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, "Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand, to break Assyria in My land, and I will trample him on My mountains. Then his yoke will be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulder. "This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. "For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?"

Isaiah 46:10-11 Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.

God is sovereign over evil and the sinful acts of men (Acts 4:27-28).

Romans 9:19-20 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

(ii) APPLICATION

Since God is in control, nothing can thwart His will. Therefore, Romans 8:28 is of great comfort to us. Nothing can happen to us apart from His permission and will.

xiii. IMPASSIBILITY

(i) MEANING

From ἀπαθής. This attribute may have two meanings: 1) God cannot be injured or damaged. 2) God cannot be hurt by pain. This is not to be confused with the fact that God can be grieved. However, this grief does not damage Him in any way.

(ii) APPLICATION

God cannot ever be less than He is. He will not ever become "damaged goods."

xiv. UNTEMPTABLE

(i) MEANING

God cannot be tempted by evil. He is ἀπείραστος (James 1:13). What about the temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4; Hebrews 4:15)?

(ii) APPLICATION

Note James 1:12-14.

xv. IMPECCABLE

(i) MEANING

Unable to sin (cf. “peccable”). This is an issue in Christology.

(ii) APPLICATION

It is impossible for God to sin. If God could sin then he would be less than who He is. He would cease to be and so would we (Acts 17:28).

xvi. OTHER TERMS

(i) ASEITY

In orthodox usage it means “of oneself” or “self-existent.” However, it is also a term used of pagan gods who have a self-existence that may be self-terminated.

(ii) IMMENSITY

Immeasurable in relationship to space (Isaiah 66:1).

(iii) GLORY

May be the sum total of all of God’s attributes (Exodus 33:15; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Luke 2:9-14).

(iv) MAJESTY

Loftiness, greatness, highness. Worthy of worship and respect. Hebrews 1:3; 2 Peter 1:17.

(v) WITHOUT FLUX

(vi) INVISIBLE

More than invisible in the sense of seeing. God is immeasurable and cannot be detected or encompassed by our senses. He is spirit.

(c) ATTRIBUTES OF GOODNESS (COMMUNICABLE)

i. HOLY

(i) MEANING

Separate, unique holiness. Undefined by anything evil. In Hebrew. it is *Qodesh*; in Grk. it's ἅγιος. The Anglo-Saxon term encompasses the ideas of “whole,” or “healthy.”

Two ideas: 1) A non-communicable holiness shared among the Godhead alone. Isaiah 6.
2) A communicable holiness that we are to partake in. 1 Peter 1:16 (cf. Leviticus 11:44).

Can it be said that this is God's foremost attribute?

“The word ‘holy’ is the little boat in which we reap the world’s end in the ocean of language. The possibilities of language to describe God come to an end they spill over into a vast void of silence. Holiness carries us to the brink, and from there on all our experience of God is wordless. . . . Every time you try to define the word ‘holy,’ you simply wind up by saying this, ‘God is holy means, God is God.’ . . . God is one of a kind, *sui juneris*, in a class by Himself, and in that sense he is utterly holy, separate. . . God is glorious! The glory of God, very simply, is the manifestation of His holiness. God’s holiness is His incomparable perfection in Himself, His glory is the display of that Holiness for His creatures and the members of the Trinity to behold. God is glorious means that God has gone public with his Holiness. His glory is the open revelation of His secret holiness (Lev. 10:3). When God displays holiness what we see is glory, because His glory is the visible manifestation of His holiness and his holiness is the invisible essence of His glory. Holiness is concealed glory. Glory is revealed holiness.” [John Piper, “Going Hard After the Holy God,” Cassette Message on Philippians 3:2-16, Jan. 8, 1984 a.m., © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

(ii) APPLICATION

Holiness is not only what requires that we be saved, it is what has secured our salvation at the cross (Matthew 4:4 ff.; Hebrews 4:15b).

Holiness and the cross (imputed righteousness of Christ).

ii. TRUE

(i) MEANING

God is a God of truth. He conforms to reality and believing in Him and what He says is morally, intellectually, and perfectly right.

Greek word ἀληθεια has the idea of being unhidden or transparent.

Three ideas:

1) Genuine: God is the “real thing.” He’s the true God.

John 17:3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.**

2) God is a God of truth (everything about Him is true).

John 3:33 **He who has received His witness has set his seal to this, that God is true.**

3) Truthful: God communicates and acts in truth.

Psalm 89:14 **Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before Thee.**

Note the progression above.

(ii) APPLICATION

God’s universe (reality - the real reality) is grounded in truth. We are to worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24). He will keep his promises; He is never deceitful.

iii. LOVE (GOD IS LOVE, 1 JOHN 4:8)

(i) MEANING

This is a difficult word to define. Webster’s defines it as a “strong affection for another arising out of kinship or relational ties.”

Better: “to whole-heartedly seek and desire the best for another person, often with emotional ties.” To give yourself to another unconditionally.

Different terms. Most of us are familiar with the fact that the Greeks had some four different words for "love." Much has been said these words, making some "inferior" some "superior" (a misrepresentation). I think there is a subtle difference. But as far as the ancient Greeks were concerned, there was:

- $\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$ (Love of possession).

Often a passionate/emotional/sexual type of love. The Greeks had a pagan god of love by that very name " $\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$." $\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$ was also used to define the "ecstasy" pagan religionists sought with their gods. This word is not used in the NT as the word came to be used of a humanistic love foreign to the NT.

- σποργη (Love of affection).

Used of parent's love for their children, a people's love for their ruler, and even a dog's love for his master. σποργη not used in NT except in a compound word form.

- φιλος (Love of fondness, brotherly love or friendship).

Used of love for a friend or relative. The related word, φιλημα, meant "kiss" as in a kiss of friendship. By the way, this word IS used of our love for God and God's love for us. Further, αγαπαω and φιλεω are used synonymously of the Father's love for the Son in John 3:35 and 5:20.

- αγαπη (overstatement to say this is superior to φιλος/εω).

In secular Greek, the use of αγαπη is vague. At times it was used as a general synonym for the other Greek words; at other times it appears to be a word that was avoided, because in some circles it was viewed as an unselfish devotion thought to be a sign of weakness.

The concept of love in the NT centers on the needs of the object being loved, not on the needs of the one loving. And it's willing to pay whatever price is necessary to meet those needs.

Does God love all equally? What about the elect? Does God love Hitler as much as he loves Luther?

(ii) APPLICATION

Love in the family and in the church (John 13:35). Romans 13 says love fulfills the law? What does this mean? Augustine: "Love and do as you please."

iv. RIGHTEOUS

v. FAITHFUL

God is always faithful. Issue of loyalty.

vii. MERCIFUL

vii. GRACE

viii. OTHER TERMS

(i) BENEVOLENCE

(ii) LOVINGKINDNESS (Heb. *Hessed*)

(iii) KINDNESS

(iv) PATIENT

(v) HATE

(vi) FELIX CULPA (HAPPY FAULT)

ix. TWO OTHER THOUGHTS

(i) CHRISTLIKENESS AS AN ATTRIBUTE

Jesus reveals God (John 1:8, 14:9; 2 Corinthians 4:6). We are to imitate God according to Ephesians 5:1. How do we do this? By imitating Christ (1 Peter 2:21).

(ii) THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD PARALLEL HIS NAMES

**(ii) EVERY ATTRIBUTE OF GOD WAS DEMONSTRATED ON
THE CROSS**

d. THE TRIUNITY OF GOD

(1) WHAT IS THE TRINITY?

Word “Trinity” from Latin *trinitas* meaning “threeness” [Packer, 40].

(2) DOES IT MATTER THAT THE WORD TRINITY IS NOT IN THE BIBLE?

People who claim that the word’s not in the Bible . . . Question is, “Is it biblical?” False teachers make a living out of taking biblical terminology and twisting it to mean something quite unbiblical.

I can take a biblical word and use it unbiblically (fulness) or I can take a word that’s not used in t/Bible and use it biblically. Word “Lordship” isn’t in the Bible, yet I believe that when applied to JC it’s a biblical term. Many such words, including t/Trinity.

While t/Trinity conveys a biblical concept, a more accurate word is “Triunity” which encompasses both ideas of oneness and threeness.

(3) IS WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE TRINITY IMPORTANT?

We’re talking about a nonnegotiable issue here. The Doctrine of t/Trinity sits at the throne of God along with other nonnegotiable doctrines such as salvation by grace alone thru faith alone, the full deity and humanity of JC, the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection of X.

To know t/God of the Bible is to know a Triune God. To deny a Triune God is to deny t/God of the Bible (thus to deny one’s own salvation).

“The goal of the Christian life, including the goal of Christian study and scholarship, is always the same: Jesus Christ, ‘in whom are hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ Do we long for a ‘true knowledge’ of Christ? When we sing, ‘Lord, I want to know you,’ do we really mean it, and then take advantage of the ways He has given us to attain this ‘true knowledge’ of Him? To know Christ truly is to know the Trinity, for God has not revealed himself in such a way as to allow us to have *true* and *balanced* knowledge of the Father outside of such knowledge of the Son, all of which comes to us through the Spirit. A person who wants to ‘know Jesus’ must, due to the nature of God’s revelation, know Him as He is related to the Father and the Spirit. We must know, understand, and love the Trinity to be fully and completely Christian. This is why we say the Trinity is the greatest of God’s revealed truths.” [White, 15]

If that’s true (and it is) then we must do what we can to know God is His fulness. If we say we love Him, then, as the saying goes, to love Him is to know Him. If I say “I love my wife,” yet put forward no effort to know about her, what she’s like, what she desires in life, what drives her personality, etc. my love rings quite hollow.

(4) SOME DEFINITIONS

There is one only and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three coeternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence [James Orr, ed. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. This was expressed by the Council of Constantinople as "one *ousia* in three *hypostaseis*."]

“While there is only one divine nature there are three subsistences or persons called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who possess not a similar but the same numerical essence and the distinction between them is not merely nominal but real.” [John Dick Lectures on Theology, cited by Cook, 126]

“A) There is in the Divine Being but one indivisible essence (*ousia, essentia*). B) In this one Divine Being there are three Persons or individual subsistences, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. C) The whole undivided essence of God belongs equally to each of the three persons. D) The subsistence and operation of the three persons in the divine Being is marked by a certain definite order. (e) There are certain personal attributes by which the three persons are distinguished. F) The Church confesses the Trinity to be a mystery beyond the comprehension of man.” [Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 87-89]

“There is in the Divine Being but one indivisible essence . . . The term ‘essence’ refers to God’s essential being or nature. . . . In this one being there are three persons or three individual subsistences—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These are to be viewed as personal self-distinctions in the divine essence or substance. . . . The whole undivided essence of God belongs to each of the three persons. Thus there is no subordination regarding the essential being of any person, although . . . there is an economical or administrative subordination.” [W. Robert Cook, 130]

God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God” [Grudem, 226]

“God is One as to Essence, Three as to Person.”

Not “Gods are” but God (one) is. Not one person and three persons (contra.) not one essence and three essences (contra.) but [^] (1 essence - 3 persons)

(5) THE TRINITY IN HISTORY

(a) EARLY CHURCH WITNESS TO THE TRINITY AND THE CHURCH’S RESPONSE TO FALSE TEACHERS

Safe to say that t/Xn CH from its earliest times to present has uncompromisingly believed & taught that God is a Triunity of F, S, & H.S. - Even if, early on that belief was implicit rather than explicit.

CH upheld what t/Jews were taught in t/OT - that God is one. There is no other (we call this ‘monotheism’). But, then, what do you do w/the Messiah? The one who called himself God; the great “I AM” of Jn. 8:58

The first thing that the CH this side of the Apostles dealt with was who X was and is.

Cults nothing new. Had them in 1st and 2nd c. Groups such as t/docetists and the gnostics who denied that JC was God in the flesh.

False teachers were so pervasive in t/4th c. that Gregory of Nyssa wrote about how they could be found everywhere:

“Every place in the city if full of them: the alleys, the crossroads, the forums, the squares. Garment sellers, money changers, food venders—they are all at it. If you ask for change they philosophize for you about [the nature of Christ]. If you inquire about the price of bread, the answer is that the Father is greater and the Son inferior. If you speak about whether the bath is ready, they express the opinion that the Son was made out of nothing.”

Be like stopping at Wegmans & after you ask for a lb. of salami from t/deli manager he doesn't respond w/"how thin would you like that cut" but "Jesus was only a man." Then you head over to Walmart and the gal in t/photo dept. doesn't say, "matte or glossy finish" she says, "The Trinity is a pagan belief." You next go to McDonald's and pull into t/drive through. Instead of hearing "Welcome to McDonald's, May I take your order" you hear "Welcome to McDonald's, "Our big Macs are not eternal and neither is JC." (if you were at the drive thru what you would prob. hear is "garbled, garbled . . .").

Satan has been at work from the beginning of time. False teachers plagued Israel // CH (from t/time of X thru t/Apostles, onward).

Focus early on was the person and work of Christ. False teachers weren't focused so much on God t/Father or on t/Holy Spirit. Focused their attacks on JC by denying that he was truly human, or by denying that he was truly God.

For example, the Gnostics of 2d c. claimed that X was not truly human, for being human would have meant that he was sinful. So they said he just appeared human. This, of course, turned t/work of X into an illusion: If he just appeared to be human he also just appeared to suffer and die. If he only appeared to suffer and die, then those who believe in such a Savior would only appear to be saved!

The CH responded by refuting these errors which, in turn, caused t/CH to formulate what in fact the Bible taught about X in his person (who he was) & work (what he came to do).

No doubt the early church was Trinitarian. Even if they were implicitly so at t/first. IOW - they hadn't formulated their belief into a systematic whole.

Same way w/their belief that JC was God. They believed it even though they hadn't formulated that belief into a systematic doctrine, examining all of the implications of that belief.

But it almost always takes attacks against a doctrine to force those who uphold t/truth to define it. IOW - CH councils, creeds, doctrinal statements, position papers and the like are in response to false teachers and false teachings. It took heretics like Marcion who denied t/authority of t/OT and much of t/NT (limiting his NT to most of Paul's letters and Gospel of Luke) to bring t/CH together at Carthage to affirm t/which books of t/Bible are indeed canonical.

ISW - it was attacks against true doctrine which compelled t/CH to put in writing what it is that it believes and defends about issues such as who Jesus is and the Trinity.

Some cultists & false teachers will say that t/CH made up t/doctrine in t/3rd or 4th c. - even claiming that t/CH borrowed from pagan Gk. thought or from Hinduism or Buddhism. Simply not true. For 1 thing t/test of any teaching is whether it is found in Scripture. God's Word always trumps CH history & councils. However, we do find that t/post-apostolic CH did uphold t/Trinity - we have evidence that dates as early as t/first part of t/2nd c. (a generation w/i t/Apostles).

The Letter of Barnabas, dated to t/early 2nd c. affirms "a Trinity of God t/Father, Christ t/preexisting Lord and Judge, and the Holy Spirit who prepares hearts for salvation." [cited in Lewis, 255]

Athenagoras (c. 177) who defended the doctrine as an essential part of t/faith of t/CH.

Later in the 2nd c. AD ==>

The Didache (teaching) a document discovered in the late 1800s in Constantinople indicates that t/CH believed in a Triune God. [cited in Lewis, 255]

2nd c. theologian, Theophilus, was t/1st to use t/term "Trinity" (trias) of t/Godhead (FSHS). [cited in Lewis, 255]

Irenaeus (c. 190) wrote against t/heresy of t/Gnostics and claimed that the one Creator and Redeemer God subsists as Father, Son, and Spirit.

Tertullian (c. 200) wrote extensively on the Trinity. He claimed that God is a unity of substance, with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit distinct divine persons w/i t/substance of the one God. [cited in Lewis, 255]

(b) ARIUS AND ATHANASIUS

Arius shows up early in 4th c.

He was an elder in Alexandria who came to t/false conclusion that,

"If the Father begat t/Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence: and from this is it evident that there was a time when the Son was not. It therefore necessarily follows that he had his subsistence from nothing." [New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, s.v. Arianism]

Arius was quite a promoter so he had his favorite slogan set to a popular tune and soon half of Alexandria was singing “There was a time when the Son was not.”

Arius had his thorn in the flesh, a dwarfly-looking young man w/dark skin and a red beard by name of Athanasius. It’s been said that Athanasius could have been the patron saint of stubbornness. Athanasius, only in his early 20s, was Bishop of Alexandria. According to history, Athanasius never gave up on anything. He once grabbed the bridle of the Roman Emperor Constantine’s horse and refused to let it go until Constantine conceded a theological point.

By God’s providential plan, Athanasius also would not give up his opposition to Arius which led to Arianism being branded heresy at the councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381)

The result was a statement that reads==>

“We believe in One God, the Father almighty . . . ; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father. . . . And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father. Together with the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.”

(c) AUGUSTINE TO THE REFORMATION

Then you have St. Augustine who was t/most prolific at that point in writing about t/Trinity. He composed his masterful work *De Trinitate*, between 399 and 419.

Move forward to the middle ages with men like Thomas Aquinas, & t/Reformation with Calvin, Luther, Zwingli, Tyndale. All of these men upheld t/belief that God is one in essence and three in person.

A position that is upheld in t/more recent confessions of faith, such as the Lutheran Augsburg Confession (1530) and Formula of Concord (1577); The Anglican 39 articles (1563), the Westminster Confession of 1646 and the 1689 Baptist Confession.

Test of any teaching is whether it is biblical.

Creeds, councils, the collective teaching of t/CH is important and carries weight. CH is t/pillar and support of t/truth & creeds councils show how God has been at work in history in building His CH. But creeds are still bound to t/plain teaching of Scripture and are therefore only useful in as much as they are biblical themselves.

(6) THREE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE TRINITY

We could call these “three pillars of the faith.” We will see that false teaching comes from perverting or denying any one of these three pillars. Each one must stand or they all will fall.

I want you to picture a roof supported at three points, or a stool w/three legs. If you were to knock down any one of the legs/supports, what will happen? Same here. Each of these points forms a non-negiable pillar of truth that, if taken away, causes one's theology to come crashing down into a pile of rubble. There's an illustration of this on the last page of your outline for this a.m.

(a) ELEMENT ONE: GOD IS ONE AS TO ESSENCE

God is One in Unity. By this we affirm that there is only one God. We're not bitheists (2 gods) // tritheists (3 gods) // polytheists (many gods). We are monotheists (one God).

i. MONOTHEISM

ISA 44:6 "Thus says . . . the \Lord\ of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

ISA 46:9 . . . I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,

That is a fact that is echoed time and time again t/o t/OT. The Jews lived among pagan nations and peoples who were polytheistic. One unique feature of Israel's belief in God was that it was a belief in ONE God.

In the NT James reflects this in James 2:19 - You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

TAP, in 1 Cor. 8:4 says the same thing==> . . . we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.

Deuteronomy 6:4 - The Jews called it "The Shema" which means "hear" (taken from first word of t/verse)==>

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

The word "one" carries the idea of uniqueness. There is none other like the Lord. He is unique in that he has no like or equal.

Was something Jesus affirmed in Mark 12 when 1 of t/Scribes queried Him about which was the greatest commandment. He replied==>

"The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD
He quoted the Shema.

You could not be a believer in the true God, OT or NT without affirming this fact. There is only one God.

God is One in Unity. IOW - God's oneness is not a "wooden one" - like a dead piece of lumber (give me one 2x4).

ii. A UNITY IN PLURALITY

The word "one" that's used in the Shema of Deut. 6:4 ==>

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

Is Heb. Echad. It comes from root "to unite" and is used to refer to a compound unity (like the word "rain" or "class" of students).

Word shows that sense in Gen. 2:24 [=>]

There was another word for one, "yachid" which carries the idea of a wooden one, like a stone. That's not the word that's used here.

In Israel's central confession of faith we find a word that allows for the concept of the Triunity of God even as it guards the belief in One God.

iii. OTHER KEY TERMS

Here are a few words for you to learn in this regard. When we talk about essence we are talking about who God is "ontologically." Ontological means what something is as it's very essence.

Like saying men and women are ontologically equal. By saying that we mean that as those who have been created in God's image men and women are equal in their essence. Men are not inherently superior. That said, there may be differences in function and role, but differences in function/role don't change essential equality.

Another word that means the same thing as essence, or ontology is "substance." Same idea. So we could change Pillar #1 to read

"God is one as to ontology" or "God is one as to substance". Same diff.

But in saying that we are not saying that being one in essence means that God cannot be Trinal / or a Triunity of person.

(b) ELEMENT TWO: GOD IS THREE AS TO PERSON

(God is Three in Distinction) Again, I didn't say "Gods are," but "God is" (Remember pillar #1)

MANIFOLD NATURE OF GOD IN THE OT==>

See it in plural pronouns used in reference to God. Such as in ==>

Gen.1:26 (let us make man in our own image)
Gen. 3:22 (man, in knowing good and evil has become like us)
Gen. 11:7 (let us go down and confuse their language)
Indicates a distinction of persons.

Plural of majesty? In Heb. no other examples of a monarch using plural verbs or plural pronouns of himself, so this suggestion has no evidence to support it. [Grudem, 227]. Other suggestion is that God is speaking to the angels. But angels do not participate in t/creation of man; man wasn't created in image and likeness of angels.

Redundancy of the name YHWH in Gen. 19:24==>

Then the \Lord\ rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the \Lord\ out of heaven,

Beyond this the point I want to make is that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons. They each have personality (intellect, emotion, will). They each relate to the other on a me-you-he basis.

i. THE PERSONALITY OF THE FATHER

That's not something that anyone is debating. That the Father is God is clear. That the Father is a person and not an impersonal force is also clear. He has intellect (he knows, he plans, he purposes), he has will (he does as he pleases), He even has emotion (he loves, hates, grieves).

ii. THE PERSONALITY OF THE SON

There's not much debate about this either, really.
Jesus has intellect (He thinks, reasons) - Luke 2:40; 4:32

Emotion ==> Matt. 23:37 (wept over Jerusalem); John 11:35 (wept for Lazarus); John 2:15 (moneychangers)

Will==>

JOH 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

MAT 26:39 . . . fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

iii. THE PERSONALITY OF THE SPIRIT

What about the Holy Spirit? Here is where some would say that the HS isn't a person. He's an impersonal "force" (let the force be with you).

Clear evidence that the HS is a person and has intellect, emotion and will.

He teaches (John 14:26); He bears witness (John 15:26; Rom. 8:16); He prays on our behalf (Rom. 8:26-27); Searches and knows the depths and thoughts of God (1 Cor. 2:10-11); He gives spiritual gifts as he wills (1 Cor. 12:11). He disallows certain activities (Acts 16:6-7); He speaks (Acts 8:29, 13:2); Can be grieved (Eph. 4:30).

Masc. pronoun used w/Spirit which is neuter (would be expected to see a neuter pn. used). (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14).

iv. SUMMARY: GOD IS THREE IN DISTINCTION

Distinction doesn't mean 'independence.'

But, also not three manifestations. If we say that God manifests himself three different ways we are echoing an age-old heresy known as modalism (sometimes today called "oneness").

(3) Historical Departures

(a) Modalism (dynamic/modalistic/oneness)

Sebellius - "Sebellius interpreted *came forth* to mean *came forth as a cause expressing itself in an effect*, saying that the Father himself is Son as taking flesh and Holy Spirit as giving life and holiness. [Aquinas, 65]

Sabellius tried to mediate between modalism and orthodoxy, responding to t/claim that modalism results in Patripassionism. So Seb. posited two poles of opposition and attraction in God, the Father and the Son. Both, said Seb. become incarnate in Jesus, but on the cross they separated, as the Son cried out "MY God, My God . . . ?" The love of the Father could not endure the separation, so He brought forth the H.S. as a kind of glue, to weld the Son back to him. [NDT, sv. Trinity]

"The Bible does not teach the doctrine of the trinity, and trinitarianism actually contradicts the Bible. It does not add any positive benefit to the Christian message. . . the doctrine of the trinity does detract from the important biblical themes of the oneness of God and the absolute deity of Jesus Christ." [Oneness writer, David K. Bernard, cited in "The Trinity, the Definition of Chalcedon, and Oneness Theology" by James White]

Patripassionism in our prayers "Father we thank you for dying on the cross for our sin."

"The fatal shortcoming of modalism is the fact that it must deny the personal relationships within the Trinity that appear in so many places in Scripture . . . it must deny three separate persons at the baptism of Jesus, where the Father speaks from heaven and the Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove. And it must say that all those instances where Jesus is praying to the Father are an illusion or a charade. The idea of the Son or the Holy Spirit interceding for us before God the Father is lost. Finally, modalism ultimately loses the heart of the doctrine of the atonement—that is, the idea that God

sent His Son as a substitutionary sacrifice, and that the Son bore the wrath of God in our place, and that the Father, representing the interests of the Trinity, saw the suffering of Christ and was satisfied (Isa. 53:11). Moreover, modalism denies the independence of God, for if God is only one person, then he has no ability to love and to communicate with other persons in his creation. Therefore, it was necessary for God to create the world and God would no longer be independent of creation.” [Grudem, 242]

Speaking of Oneness Pentecostals (specifically, the UPC), Wayne Grudem writes: “because of [their] denial of the three distinct persons in God, [they] should not be considered evangelical, and it is doubtful whether [they] should be considered genuinely Christian at all.” [Grudem, 243 fn.]

Actor wearing three masks.

This is why the illustration of the Trinity that God is like a man who is a father, son, and husband doesn't work. Those are modes or manifestations. I may be a F/S/H, but each of those isn't a distinct person. I can't be a Father at home and call myself at the office and talk to the Husband.

This goes back to the issue: “Who was Jesus praying to in the Garden?” If I'm a modalist Jesus has to be praying to himself, or as some say, his humanity is praying to his divinity. Neither of those makes any sense.

What do we mean by “person”. Person presupposes the quality of personality (Cook, 127).

And personality presupposes the power of self-consciousness and self-determination. We're talking about an individual existence with reason and will.

One theologian puts it this way==>

“While the attributes of deity are held in common by each member of the Godhead, there are attributes of each individual person, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which are peculiarly theirs and are held separately.”

[W. Robert Cook].

Word “person” is the best that we have in the English language. It still falls short because when we think of a “person” we think of someone with a bodily existence. We can't think in terms of three persons who make up one essential being.

Keep in mind, we are talking about God who is an eternal, omnipotent, infinite, omnipresent Spirit.

Sort of like the fact that God indwells each believer. If that's true then God is indwelling many people, yet God is not many but one. Similar sort of thing.

God is not a “unit” like a piece of wood; he is a unity. Trinity in unity and unity in Trinity.

Great theologian of the 19th c., W.G.T. Shedd writes==>

“God is not a unit, but a unity. A unit, like a stone or a stick, is marked by mere singleness. It admits no interior distinctions and is incapable of that inherent trinity which is necessary to self-knowledge and self-consciousness. Mere singleness is incompatible with society, and therefore incompatible with divine communion and blessedness. God is blessed only as he is self-knowing and self-communing. A subject without an object could not experience either love or joy. Love and joy are societal. They imply more than a single person.” [Shedd, 222]

IOW - God's Attributes would seem hallow apart from any object w/which to demonstrate them. How could God be Love if there was no one in eternity to love? How could God know fellowship if he was a mere singleness of person w/no object? Some say God had to create so that he could show love & have fellowship, but that smacks against fact that God is independent of his creation - If he somehow had to create that would mean he was somehow incomplete or imperfect before he did

(i) DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE PERSONS

*** MATTHEW 28:19 AND 2 CORINTHIANS 13:14**

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

Note that the word “name” is singular. God is one as to Essence. Then we have 3 persons (God is three as to person). In v. 19 we find t/Gk. def. article before each of the persons listed which indicates a distinction of person [^]

Same thing in 2 Cor. 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.

*** PSALM 110:1**

Psalm 110:1 (messianic) The \Lord\ says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet."

You might remember that Jesus asked the Pharisees about t/ramifications of this Psalm in Matt. chapter 22.

Jesus asked those Pharisees who were gathered around Him, "What do you think about the Christ [Messiah], whose son is He?" They replied, "The son of David."

The Scriptures taught that Messiah would be the son of David, which simply means that Messiah would be of Davidic Ancestry (true). Jesus fulfilled that, of course. But, the Jews expected the Messiah to be a mere man, a superman of sorts, but a mere man. Certainly not God.

So Jesus asks them another question: "Then how does David in the Spirit call him, that is the Messiah, 'Lord,' saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet"' "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?"

IOW - if the Messiah is no more than the human son of David, why would David use a divine name in referring to him as "my Lord?"

Matthew concludes the story by saying that==> no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.

"Jewish interpreters to this day will have no more satisfactory explanation of Psalm 110:1 . . . than they did in Jesus day." [Grudem, 228]

Point is, you have two persons here.

The \Lord\ says to my Lord:

Or we could paraphrase the thought as,

"God the Father said to God the Son" "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet

*** THE ANGEL OF YHWH**

The Angel of the Lord is a person who appears in the OT. Lit. "The Angel of YHWH." We see that this messenger is no mere angel. He receives worship, He speaks for God and as God. He is even called God.

We see the Angel of the Lord for 1st time in Gen. 16 following Hagar's banishment from t/presence of Sarah. TAL encourages Hagar & tells her that her descendants will one day be too many to count. After this encounter it says in v. 13 that Hagar called the name of the LORD who spoke to her "Thou art a God who sees" for "Have I remained alive after seeing Him?"

This is what we call a Theophany or a Christophany. This is an appearance of God, or more specifically Christ, in tangible form.

It was TAL who stopped Abraham from offering up his son, Isaac, in Gen. 22. TAL is there identified as being YHWH or Jehovah.

It was TAL who appeared as a burning bush before Moses in Exo. 3:2. Again, not an angel, but God Himself.

Yet, while TAL is clearly Jehovah God, he is sometimes distinguished as 2 persons w/i t/essence of the one God.

ZEC 1:12 (a vision of Zechariah) . . the angel of the LORD . . . said, "O LORD of hosts, how long wilt Thou have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah. . .

ZEC 3:1-2 (another vision of Zechariah) Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the \Lord,\ and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the \Lord\ said to Satan, "The \Lord\ rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the \Lord\ who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

BTW - TAL ceases to appear after incarnation of JC which leads me to believe that TAL was what we call a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

*** PSALM 45:6-7 (HEBREWS 1:8-9), ISAIAH 48:16**

PSA 45:6-7 Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness; Therefore God, Thy God, has anointed Thee

Who's being referred to here? "Your throne O God is forever . . . Therefore God, your God has anointed you."

The writer to the Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 1:8-9==>

But of t/Son He says, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, And t/righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee . . .

Not only do we see that the Son is eternal, but also that He is God the Son who is distinct in person from God the Father.

I see all three persons of the Trinity in one OT passage Isa. 48:16. I believe that Jesus is speaking here in the first person.

"Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord \God\ has sent Me, and His Spirit."

*** MATTHEW 3:16-17**

The distinction of the three persons of the Triune God is evident in Matthew 3:16-17 ==>

16 And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, *and* coming upon Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

Days of Arias - "Go to the Jordan and you will see the Trinity." [Shedd, 224]

Transfiguration of Jesus in Matt. 17:6 [=>] Either Jesus was doing a ventriloquist act, or he is a distinct person from God the Father.

*** GOSPEL OF JOHN**

John 14:16 "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

Who's speaking? To whom is he speaking? Who's the "He?"

John 15:26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,

John 16:13-15 **13** "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. **14** "He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose *it* to you. **15** "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose *it* to you.

John 17:1-26 (The Real Lord's Prayer)
Who is Jesus praying to? Himself?

*** IN THE GARDEN AND ON THE CROSS**

In the Garden of Gethsamane? MAT 26:39 fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

When Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" to whom was He speaking?

The answer is simple. God the Son was praying to God the Father. This is t/confusion, that is avoided when you grasp the three necessary pillars of truth as it relates to God in His Triunity.

(b) ELEMENT THREE: EACH PERSON IS FULLY GOD

God is Complete in Each Person.

i. THE FATHER IS FULLY GOD

****Add James White's Section on 'Church History' in His Book "forgotten trinity" to notes.

6. So What? What Difference Does It Make?

Why is it essential to understand what it means to worship a triune God?

Certainly we've already touched on many reasons as we've progressed thru this study tog. But let me sort of boil it down in t/rest of t/time we have left this a.m.

a. The Trinity is Essential Because:

(1) The Very Nature of God is at stake

We're talking about t/highest revelation of who God is - how God has revealed himself to us. To pervert or deny t/Triunity of God is to pervert t/very nature/character of God. That's to tread upon t/Third commandment & to take his name in vain (n. = embodiment of his character or nature - who He is).

Isaiah 42:8 "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to . . . images. (includes false images of who He is made up in t/minds of fallen men)

(a) Think a moment about the doctrine of modalism

This is a false doctrine, a heresy, as it relates to t/Trinity. Rem. modalists believe that there is one God who alternately manifests himself in three ways - F/S/HS. No distinction of persons. The F = S, etc.

Sometimes we liken this to an Actor Wearing Three Masks. In ancient Greece t/theater was quite pop. There were outdoor theaters that could seat some 10k people that were so well designed acoustically that a whisper from t/stage could be heard in t/entire aud. filled w/ppl. Back in t/days before JC t/actors who often wore masks were known as "hupocrites" (hypocrites). That's t/origin of t/word. It's someone acting out an artificial role - being who they aren't.

One oneness writer, "All visible projections of God to the eyes are manifestations of God and not God's original nature that is seen." [Reeves, Dimensions, 37, as cited by Boyd, 180]. Did you hear that? {restate}

If God is just appearing in three manifestations like t/ancient hypocrites of Greece, we have to ask, "Will the real God please stand?" Like the old game show, To Tell the Truth. But at least in t/game show you get to finally see the real guy, in a modalistic perversion of t/Trinity you never get to see t/real God, just a masked illusion.

One wonders how anything can be a genuine manifestation of God if it isn't a genuine manifestation of his original nature? Where is t/original God? God ends up being an illusion, a hologram that looks like something it isn't. It's hard to see how, in the modalistic/oneness view of things, God isn't just an illusion wearing a mask.

In t/biblical view of things we see God thru His Son JC. We see t/real thing, not just a "manifestation" or an "illusion." John 1:1,14,18 {read}

Even t/drama of t/cross becomes illusionary if you deny that t/Father & Son are distinct persons. Apart from that t/NT revelation of t/pain Father experienced in t/sacrifice of His Son is lost. It all becomes a charade.

(1) The Very Nature of God is at stake

(2) The Very Nature of Jesus Christ is at Stake

All other views pervert the incarnation of Jesus Christ (doctrine central to t/Gospel). w/o t/incarnation there is no Gospel.

(a) Certainly this is true if you deny that Jesus Christ is God

If you make him out to be a created being, angelic or otherwise, you have cut t/head off of the body (head being X t/body being t/gospel).

i. Remember - This was something the church addressed early on

Arius who was a pastor in Alexandria came to t/heretical conclusion that - “If the Father begat t/Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence: and from this is it evident that there was a time when the Son was not. It therefore necessarily follows that he had his subsistence from nothing.” [New

International Dictionary of the Christian Church, s.v. Arianism]

Arius was quite a promoter so he had his favorite slogan set to a popular tune and soon half of Alexandria was singing “There was a time when the Son was not.” In denying t/deity of X they denied t/only means by which they could be saved. Sort of like throwing t/pilot off t/plane & no one else can fly - everyone is going down to disaster.

Of course, all of this was based on an false understanding of what t/word “begotten” means. Rem. I’ve warned you before about t/dangers of making biblical words mean something they don’t. Begotten doesn’t mean having a beginning. The word means totally unique, w/o any like or equal. Very special. (μονογενής - “mono” = “one” + genos = “kind”)

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

“only begotten” (two words in English come from one word in Gk.) means unique or special. We could read it like this {re-read}

Of course, the CH understood what t/Bible taught & how essential t/deity of X was, and t/views of Arius were rejected at Nicea in 325 (have been to this day). As Jesus Himself said in John 8:24 {read}

ii. So What Does God’s Word Teach?

Teaches that JC is both God and man, fully God and fully man (hypostatic union). He had to be God to pay an eternal price for our sin (writer to t/Hebrews addresses that) he had to be man to stand in our place. We also see that in Hebrews ==>

Hebrews 2:17 *Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

If you deny his humanity or his divinity there is no grounds for salvation. Why we call departures from these truths “heresy.”

(b) But what about modalism or oneness views?

Don't they believe that JC is both God and Man? Yes and no. They believe that he is God, but not God the Son. They believe that JC is t/father incarnate, not the eternal Son incarnate. For them, t/Father became incarnate & became Jesus (this happened in Bethlehem in 4 BC). Father = God part; Jesus = man part. They effectively divide him into two (5th c. heresy of Nestorianism). JC has two natures (divine and human) but these two natures are not two separate persons w/i him.

Council of Chalcedon dealt w/this in 451 AD & these early theologians put together a statement on t/person of JC that has not been matched in over 1500 yrs. & that is believed by all ortho. theologians everywhere==>

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and also in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we are ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began he was begotten of the father, in respect of his deity, and now in these ‘last days,’ for us and on behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his humanness. We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ–Son, Lord, only-begotten—in two natures [divine/human]; and we do this without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories. . . . The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union [IOW - as t/God-Man he is not less than fully God or less than fully man]. Instead the ‘properties’ of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one ‘person’ They are not divided or cut into two . . . but are together the one and only and only-begotten Logos of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us; thus the [creed] of the Fathers has handed down to us.

Denial of t/Trinity is a perversion the incarnation and a retread of Nestorianism and Apollinarianism.

This logically leads us to our next point==>

a. The Trinity is Important (not only) Because:

(1) The Very Nature of God is at stake

(2) The Very Nature of Jesus Christ is at Stake

But, our third point (The Trinity is Important Because)==>

(3) The Nature of the Gospel is at Stake

Already said that “If you deny his humanity or his divinity there is no grounds for salvation.” But what about other views? What about view of t/modalist - a view that’s today tolerated—even embraced in t/CH? A view that’s held by men who have great influence in t/CH (T.D. Jakes; Tommy Tenny; Rod Parsley among them)? I know a lot of people who hold these views haven’t thot this all thru. Many who ignorantly hold these views even in evang. CH’s haven’t. The issue arises when people do think these things thru and take them to their logical ends.

(a) Follow me:

Modalism divides X into two persons, making his two natures (human & divine) essentially two different persons w/i X who communicate w/each other. One nature is t/Father; the other nature is man (Son). Question becomes: “What happened on the cross? Who died?” Those who deny t/Trinity contend that when JC died, He ONLY died as a man, not as God. Ask t/? “After all, How can God die?” “If God died (Father), who was running t/universe?”

i. That’s a misunderstanding of the issue

#1 - God t/Father didn’t die; God the Son did. #2 Death does not mean to cease to exist. Death means separation (spiritual death = S. from God temporally ; physical death = S. from physical life; eternal death = S. from God eternally). JC as Man and as God could die in that when He took upon himself t/sins of the world He was for a moment in time separated from t/F & t/Spirit. He not only experienced phys. death, he experienced spiritual death.

The God-man died on the cross as a person. Jesus, as the 2nd person of the Trinity was, momentarily, spiritually separated from the Godhead, although ontologically, he remained an inseparable part of it. Practically speaking, there was a brief fracture in t/fellowship of t/Trinity.

You can’t have only t/humanity of JC suffering for sin & not t/deity. Yet, that’s what modalists do when they have JC on t/cross dying only in his humanity (as t/son), not in his divinity (for them that means as t/Father). A man died on t/cross.

One writer points out the error of this when he writes==>

“A belief in the incarnation means that everything Christ went through and did, God went through and did; otherwise it is a meaningless belief. The one person of Jesus Christ cannot be split in two . . . When Jesus suffered, God experienced suffering. When Jesus was hungry, God experienced hunger and when Jesus experienced death, God experienced death. [Boyd, 58]

That same writer goes on to say==>

“The Oneness insistence that it was not as God, but only as a man, that Christ did these things [I would include his death] splits Christ in two and is tantamount to denying the incarnation altogether.” [Boyd, 58-59]

TAP, in Acts 20, called t/elders of Eph. together and said in v.28 to guard not only themselves, but also t/CH which God purchased w/His own blood. Wasn't just t/blood of a man, it was t/blood of t/God-man (certainly as far as blood goes, it would have retained t/props. of human blood). But concept of blood in t/Bible looks past t/bleeding to t/concept of death. (Life is in t/blood, Lev. 17:11). JC died as t/God-Man. God t/father didn't die; God t/Spirit didn't die. God the Son died for your sin. He had to die as man and as God. As one theologian writes==>

“By denying that Christ died for men's sins as God (not merely as man), Oneness theology implies an atonement and redemption inadequate for man's salvation, for: 1) No other sacrifice would be adequate to pay the infinite debt for man's sin, for no other sacrifice would have been of infinite value. It is impossible for a mere human to make full atonement and ransom for sin; God must do it (Ps. 49:7-9, 15). 2) Therefore, it was essential that the one who died as a ransom and satisfaction for man's sins be both human (to represent human beings properly; 1 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 5:12-19) and God. 3) Any other redeemer would put people in debt and servitude to someone other than God, for we belong to whoever redeems us (1 Cor. 6:19-20; see also 7:22-23; Rev. 5:9).” [E. Calvin Beisner, Jesus Only Churches, 16]

This is why modalism ultimately loses the heart of t/doctrine of t/atonement. God sent His Son as a substitutionary sacrifice. The Son bore the wrath of God in our place, & t/Father, representing the interests of t/Trinity, saw t/suffering of Christ and was satisfied (Isa. 53:11).

All of that is lost if JC didn't die as a complete person. If God the Son didn't die on the cross you have no eternal, effective substitute for sin. You only have half t/equation: a man who died for men, not t/other half: God who died for men.

You can't sing with Charles Wesley - Amazing Love, How Can it Be, That Thou My God Shouldst Die for Me!

(b) BTW - for you theologians out there:

This is why t/doctrine of imputation is crucial. Imputation is having something credited to you that you don't yourself deserve. As far as t/cross is concerned, Imputation means that our sin was credited to JC. He didn't inherently become sinful. He wasn't a sinner on t/cross; no - he was t/sinless lamb of God. God made a transaction by crediting our sin to Him who knew not sin. I believe this was necessary because that was the only way that JC as God could die. He could not become a sinful person (that was imp. for him as God). But sin could be imputed to him as a legal transaction. {pause}

(3) The Nature of the Gospel is at Stake

This is why we are not talking about some sort of negotiable issue. Why those who know better take this issue so seriously even at a time when so many w/i t/CH don't. Also why one of t/foremost

systematic theologians of our day, Dr. Wayne Grudem, can categorically state that those who reject t/Trinity as oneness and modalists do,

“ . . . should not be considered evangelical, and it is doubtful whether [they] should be considered genuinely Christian at all.” [Grudem, 243 fn.]

7. Why Should We Love the Trinity?

Let me give you a single answer followed by three additional thoughts

a. Because This is Who God is!

God exists and has revealed himself to his chosen people as a Trinal being, or as a Triunity of F/S/HS.

This is t/One who ordained, purchased, and completed our salvation from sin. That's where we began in 1 Peter 1:2 {read}

Jesus in John 17:3 {read}

So we love t/Trinity because we love God. The Trinity isn't a sterile concept stuffed in between t/dry covers of a theology text. The Trinity is God - God our all-in-all.

b. Here are three additional thoughts==>

(1) Loving The Trinity Encourages our Prayer

The general pattern of prayer in the Bible is to pray to the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit.

We see that in Eph. 2:18==> for through Him [Christ] we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

Jesus prays to t/Father for us (John 17). The Spirit also intercedes for us w/groaning too deep for words & in keeping w/God's will (Rom. 8:26-27)

(2) Loving The Trinity Deepens our Love and Fellowship

Think about this statement: "Love and fellowship can only exist eternally if God is Triune." {repeat}

(a) What does 1 John 4:8 say? God is (what)?

LOVE - This is part and parcel of his nature.

Have to ask t/? "How could God have been love if for all eternity there was no one for him to love?"

Apart from t/Trinity 1 John 4:8 should have read "God became love."

As Augustine wrote centuries ago==> If God is love, there has to be someone who is loving, someone who is being loved, and a spirit of love [SW C notes]

(b) There was eternal love and fellowship w/i the Trinity.

If God were a singular wooden monad He could not have experienced either love or fellowship until he created. He couldn't have. Both love and fellowship ring hollow w/o an object (like trying to clap w/one hand). And to contend that God had to create in order for him to exp. L&F makes him dependent on t/creation & therefore imperfect.

Sometimes inquiring minds ask, "What was God doing before He created the world?" (He wasn't sitting alone whistling in t/dark).

What was He doing? He was enjoying unbroken fellowship.

Jesus spoke of that in John 17:5 when he talked about t/glory he had w/the Father from before t/creation of t/world. Or in 17:24 when he spoke of t/love t/Father had for him from before t/found. of t/world.

Before the world was, before any creative activity (angels or otherwise), the F/S/HS enjoyed unbroken and harmonious fellowship in perfect love.

(c) Might be asking the Question:

"How does Loving The Trinity Deepen OUR Love and Fellowship?"

i. It starts w/how God created us

Man created in the image of God means that man is relational. There is a social aspect of man that evidences itself in the CH and in Family and in our love relationships. We are never complete in solitude. Yet, the Bible teaches that God is essentially & eternally loving, as well as essentially and eternally a God of fellowship. As we've said, these things can't exist apart from t/Trinity.

God created us to be relational. Integrity of our relationships has a direct correlation to our joy - beginning first w/our relationship w/God through X, and our relationships w/our family (spouses, kids, siblings), then our relationships in t/local CH. This is part of what it means to be created in God's image. God can only be truly relational if He eternally exists in a Triunity (note "unity") of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

ii. This is then an example for us

Do you realize that God has never had a problem w/disunity? The Son never threatened to move out of t/KD because He was tired of submitting to t/Father. The HS never complained because He was in t/background giving glory to t/Father & t/Son. That's an example for us. Why Jesus could twice pray in John 17 that we, his disciples, are to be one (unified) even as the three members of t/Trinity are one.

Are you willing to imitate t/highest example of love and unity you could ever have in God's relational Triunity in order that you may model that pattern in your life?

(3) Loving The Trinity Fuels our Worship

We exist to worship God. And God seeks people to worship Him in "spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Therefore we must always endeavor to deepen our worship of God--in truth as well as in our hearts.

This really caps it all off. You cannot worship God w/o worshipping him in His Triunity.

The Swiss Reformer John Calvin quoting Gregory of Nazianzus:

"I cannot think of the one without quickly being encircled by the splendor of the three; nor can I discern the three without being straightway carried back to the one." [1.13.17]

This is no insignificant issue

It touches upon the nature of God, the incarnation, and even t/sufficiency of t/person of JC in his role as Savior.

Can't separate t/truth of who God is (Trinity) from t/Gospel. It is inseparably part of t/faith "once for all delivered from t/saints."

Melito, Bishop of ancient Sardis, died around the year 180 AD. Recently a sermon Melito wrote on the Passover was discovered. Here's a CH leader writing about t/Passover Lamb, JC & doing so only a scant few years from t/lives of t/Apostles. Close your eyes & worship as we close with this. Speaking of t/eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ he wrote==>

He who hung the earth in place is hanged.
He who fixed the heavens in place is fixed in place.
He who made all things fast is made fast on a tree.
The sovereign is insulted.
God is murdered.
The King of Israel is destroyed by an Israelite hand.

This is the One who made the heavens and the earth, and formed mankind in the beginning,
The One proclaimed by the Law and the Prophets,
The One enfleshed in a virgin,
The One hanged on a tree,
The One buried in the earth,
The One raised from the dead and who went up into the heights of heaven
The One sitting at the right hand of the Father,
The One having all authority to judge and save,
Through Whom the Father made the things which exist from the beginning of time.
This One is "the Alpha and Omega,"
This One is "the beginning and the end" . . . the beginning indescribable and the end incomprehensible.
This One is the Christ.

This One is the King.
This One is Jesus.
This One is the Leader.
This One is the Lord.
This One is the One who rose from the dead.
This One is the One sitting on the right hand of the Father.
He bears the Father and is borne by the Father.
“To him be the glory and the power forever. Amen.”

B. THE WORKS OF GOD

Doerksen, page 83 ff.

Providence, see Elwell's Topical Analysis of the Bible, page 207 ff. Also see theological/bible dictionaries... and my message on suffering in 1 Peter 2 . . .

1. GOD'S DECREE

a. DEFINED

b. CLARIFIED

(1) INCLUDES THE ACTIONS OF MORAL AGENTS

(2) NOT TO BE EQUATED WITH GOD'S REVEALED DESIRE

(3) RELATED PRIMARILY TO THE FIRST PERSON OF THE TRINITY

c. WORDS RELATED TO THE DECREE

(1) HEBREW

(a) CHASHAB

(b) MACHASHABAH

(c) YAATS

(d) YATSAR

(2) GREEK

(a) BOULE

(b) DEI

(c) EKLOGE

(d) EUDOKIA

(e) PROGNOSIS

(f) PROORISMOS

(g) PROTHESIS

(g) THELEMA

d. AN OVERVIEW OF THE DECREE

(1) CLARIFICATION

(2) PERSONAL OR INTERPERSONAL WORKS OF THE GODHEAD

Divine council. Do the members of the Trinity come up with new ideas? What about new plans? Where the decrees eternal in nature? the decrees were eternal in nature while acted out in time.

e. GOD'S RELATION TO THE UNIVERSE

(1) HE PLANNED IT

(2) HE CREATED IT

(3) HE PRESERVES IT

(4) HE CONTROLS AND GUIDES IT

(5) HE BRINGS IT TO ITS APPOINTED END

f. GOD HAS NO PLANS OF CONTINGENCY

No plan B. If God needed backups and redundant systems . . . 1. What would that say to his omniscience/omnipotence/wisdom. Where would that leave us?

g. THE DECREE OF GOD INCLUDES THE ACTUAL, NOT THE POSSIBLE

h. THE DECREE OF GOD MAKES CREATION, PROVIDENCE, PRESERVATION, REDEMPTION NECESSARY, BUT THE DECREE ITSELF WAS NOT NECESSARY

i. WHAT THE DECREE OF GOD INCLUDES

j. CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S DECREE

k. THE GOAL AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE DECREE

(1) A REDEEMED SOCIETY OF HOLY ONES

(a) HOLY ANGELS

(b) A HOLY CHURCH

(2) IT IS A PLAN ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE SON

(3) IT IS TO BRING GLORY TO THE TRIUNE GOD

l. SALVATION AND THE DECREE

2. GOD'S CREATION

a. ANGELS AND DEMONS

b. THE COSMOS

(2) SOME OBJECTIONS

(a) THE CREATION CAME FROM NOTHING (THE FALLACY OF ABIOGENESIS)

To say that the creation is self-created is a logical contradiction as it must exist and not exist at the same time and in the same way. Never demonstrated scientifically.

(b) STEADY STATE THEORY

Matter is constantly created at the center of the universe and destroyed at the outer perimeter. No evidence for this.

(c) THE CREATION IS ETERNAL

Modern science (and Einstein's theory of relativity) have proven that the universe had a starting point in time.

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Reaction Paper #1
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"Can a Christian be Demonized?"

The answer to this particular question is dependent upon one's definition of "demonized." This writer will, however, base his opinion upon a general assumption that to be "demonized" means to be "demon possessed."³ Possession may be defined as demonic control of the individual from within and may be viewed as the unholy counterpart of the filling of the Holy Spirit.⁴

This control by a demon, or demons, is effectual. That is, the demons may exercise unmitigated control over the person and his faculties (cf. Matt 9:32-33, 17:14-15; Mark 5:1-10; Luke 8:27-29, 9:37-42).⁵ There is no clear scriptural evidence that a true believer in Jesus Christ can be so possessed by demon(s).⁶

Some trichotomists would argue that a Christian may be possessed in soul or body, but not in spirit. However, the dichotomist position that this writer holds views man as a conditional unity of body and spirit, material and immaterial. Therefore, for a demon to possess the body without a correlating influence upon the spirit would be an impossibility.

A few basis assumptions are in order at this point:

Satan and demons are only permitted as much power and influence as God allows. An orthodox position of the relationship between God and Satan disallows for any form of dualism. God is

³*ton daimonizomenon*, "the one demonized" (Matt 8:28; Mark 5:15).

⁴W. Robert Cook, The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology in Outline Form (n.p., 1981), 230.

⁵Ryrie states that "possessed individuals are not capable of severing themselves from the control of the demon(s)" (Charles Ryrie, Basic Theology [Wheaton: Victor Books, 1988], 166.).

⁶Some would argue that no scriptural passage states that a believer *cannot* be possessed by a demon. This, however, is an argument from silence and must be rejected. Since the Scriptures do not give evidence for the demon possession of a believer, it must be assumed that it does *not* occur. To state otherwise amounts to adding to Scripture what is not explicitly stated.

completely sovereign over His creation, which includes Satan and demons. The story of Job serves as an example in this regard (cf. Job 1:6-12). Satan was not permitted to *indwell* Job; he was only permitted to *afflict* Job. It is doubtful that God would permit Satan, nor any of his demons, to indwell one of His children.

It is unlikely that the temple of the Holy Spirit can mutually become the temple of demons. According to 1 Cor 6:19, the Holy Spirit resides within the believer. Demon possession is the satanic counterfeit of this indwelling. In addition, John 14:17-24, implies that the three members of the God-head indwell each believer. Can the temple of the God-head mutually be the temple of demons?

Experience is not a test of orthodoxy. Many Christian counselors testify to the fact that they have *experienced* demon indwelt believers. However, experience does not qualify as a valid test of truth. Scripture alone does. Moreover, experience does not dictate whether the individual in question was truly born-again; was *oppressed* rather than *possessed*; or simply afflicted with a physiological disorder rather than a spiritual one.

A distinction must be drawn between oppression and possession. As previously stated, there is no clear scriptural evidence suggesting that a true believer can be demon possessed.⁷ However, there exists a wealth of evidence that supports the premise that a Christian can, and will be, oppressed to varying degrees (Acts 5:3; 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 11:14; Eph 4:27, 6:10-20). Unger writes:

To demon possession only unbelievers are exposed; to demon influence, both believers and unbelievers. In one case, the personality is actually invaded, the body inhabited, and a dominating control is gained; while in the other instance, attack is made from without, through pressure, suggestion, and temptation.⁸

The position of the believer implies that he cannot be possessed. Again Unger writes:

The very nature of the believer's salvation, as embracing the regenerating, sealing, indwelling, and filling ministry of the Holy Spirit, placing him "in Christ," eternally and unforfeitably, is sufficient explanation why he is not liable to demon possession.⁹

Therefore, it is conclusive that a systematic interpretation of Scripture disallows the demonic possession of any true believer in Jesus Christ. While he may be oppressed and attacked from without, the believer cannot be indwelt from within by any spirit other than that which is Holy.

⁷A common rule of hermeneutics states that one must never base a doctrine of Scripture upon an obscure passage.

⁸Merrill F. Unger, Biblical Demonology (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1952), 100.

⁹Ibid.

"Is Biblical Creationism a Test of Faith?"

Is biblical creationism a test of faith? Contrary to the opinion of some within the ICR camp,¹⁰ the answer is a resounding "no!" There is only one true test of legitimate faith: the individual's standing in Jesus Christ. Specifically, a personal relationship based upon biblical truth. That is, there must be a correct understanding of who Jesus Christ is and what He came incarnate to do;¹¹ and there must also be a personal appropriation of these facts (John 1:12). An individual may be unorthodox in his bibliology, or in his view of creation, while remaining orthodox in His theology proper and soteriology.

Another problem arises in relation to this issue: namely, what exactly is biblical creationism?¹² Davis Young, Geology Professor at Calvin College, states that "there are as many views of creation as there are days of creation."¹³ For example, there are born-again believers who adhere to: *theistic evolution*; *progressive creationism*; *day-age creationism*; *ruin-reconstruction creationism*; *intermittent-day creationism*; *framework creationism*; *pictorial creationism*; and, commonly held *recent creationism* (fiat creation in recent time [4,000-12,000 years] during six 24- hour time periods).

Genuine biblical creationism may simply be defined as "the belief that the biblical record of creation is true."¹⁴ Within this definition lay a gamut of various interpretations of the biblical record. The church must be willing to allow individuals the freedom to develop their own biblical opinions

¹⁰Institute for Creation Research (Henry Morris, *et al*).

¹¹I.e. He is the Son of God, He *is* God; and His atoning death is the only basis for personal redemption.

¹²Cf. Howard Van Till, Davis Young, Clarence Menninga Science Held Hostage (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1988).

¹³Davis Young, "Genesis: Neither More nor Less," Eternity, May 1982, 14.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 15.

on non-essential aspects to subjects such as this one--without compromising on the essentials of Scripture.¹⁵

¹⁵The past failures of the church in regard to astronomy (Galileo), physics (Newton), medicine, and geology serve as poignant examples.

"When Does a Fetus Become a Person?"

Interestingly, this question brings to light a recent political controversy in which President Bill Clinton was speaking to a group of High School students in Ohio. One of the questions that he fielded involved his position on abortion rights in light of a recent court decision which ruled that life begins at conception. In his response, Clinton stated that "one of the issues that theologians have debated for centuries is when does the soul enter the fetus thereby making it a person." He went on to say that "we don't know when this occurs," and thus justified his pro-abortion stance upon the guise of ignorance.¹

In a similar vein, Lewis B. Smedes, in his book Mere Morality, writes in regard to this issue:

We have, in conclusion, arrived at a not-quite absolute anti-abortion position. The commandment against killing human beings sends us into every tragic situation of unwanted pregnancy with a powerful bias against killing fetal life. But it was precisely in facing the key question of fetal life that we blinked when we considered the earliest period of a fetus' existence. *The process of development not yet really begun leaves us with less than absolute certainty that we have a person as soon as we have conception.* Growth into personhood is dynamic, gradual, complex; its beginning is obscure. . . . In our discussion of abortion as a moral question, we concluded that we cannot flatly declare that a fetus at the earliest stages is a person. So we cannot simply equate abortion and murder.²
(emphasis mine)

Smedes goes on to say:

Many people believe that a woman is wrong to have an abortion at any time. They may do their utmost to persuade her not to do it; they may weep if she decides to go ahead. But if a woman does decide to have an abortion in the first six weeks of pregnancy, society must leave her alone, for she is doing what none of the rest of us can be sure is wrong. No one can reasonably be sure that the fetus is a person during the first six weeks. Indeed the most reasonable view is that it is not a person.³

Smedes, in enigmatic fashion, comes to the conclusion that personhood begins immediately after the sixth week! How does he know? What biblical data does he draw from?

¹Quotes are the writer's paraphrase.

²Lewis B. Smedes, Mere Morality (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 137-38.

³Ibid., 143.

On the other hand, Bill Clinton did not know when the soul enters the fetus. Would not common sense dictate that one should err on the side of caution? Louis Smedes states that there is no evidence that personhood begins prior to the sixth week, yet he gives no solid evidence to the contrary.

Much of the confusion that surrounds this issue is cleared up within the context of systematic theology--namely Traducianism verses Creationism.⁴ Simply stated, Traducianism contends that the soul is genetically transmitted from parents to off-spring at conception. Creationism holds that the soul is immediately created by God, sometime between conception and birth.⁵ This writer adheres to the Traducianist position for the following reasons:

1. Hebrews 7:9-10 indicates a moral act on the part of yet unborn Levi.
2. Romans 5:12 ff. indicates that Adam's sin was imputed to all of his progeny in that they sinned *when* Adam sinned.

3. God's work of immediate creation has ceased (Gen 2:3; cf Heb 4:1-11).
4. God cannot create a sinful soul, nor would He likely create a perfect soul and allow it to fall. This would be, in effect, a recreation of the Genesis fall within every child born, millions of times over!

Therefore, for the Traducianist the issue is settled. The fetus becomes a person at the moment of conception when both material and immaterial are genetically joined together in the formation of the human zygote. For the creationist, however, the issue is left uncertain. Since the creationist cannot be sure *exactly* when the soul is created by God, he must err on the side of caution within the scope of this debate.

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Reaction Paper #4

Western Seminary
TH 502 6/28/93

"The Imputation of Sin"

⁴Another line of evidence is the fact that Scripture commonly credits the unborn with full personhood (Psa 51, 139:13-15; Jer 1:4-5; Luke 1:41-44; Gal 1:15).

⁵Creationists differ on the exact time of the soul's creation.

Issue stated. The imputation of sin is an important doctrine of the New Testament.¹ The question, however, becomes "exactly in what way is Adam's sin imputed to each individual?" There are two primary views in answer to this question: the realistic or seminal view; and the representative or federal view.

In keeping with the limited confines of this paper, this writer will take the position of the realistic view and briefly discuss the proposed weakness of this position.

Doctrine stated. The realistic view contends that Adam's sin is transmitted seminally through each individual from Adam to the present. This view is related to traducianism, in that it gives priority to genetic transmission. Therefore, "we sinned in Adam" (Romans 5:12) in that we, as his progeny, were seminally present in Adam when he sinned. All men are direct descendants of Adam and thereby are held responsible for his sin.

Problem stated. Both positions, realism and federalism, have some difficulties. The major difficulty related to realism is that it appears to make man morally responsible for a sin he did not personally commit. However, this criticism fails to see sin in it's full context. Indeed, all men sinned in Adam when Adam sinned. All men thereby receive a sinful nature that is propagated genetically through the entire race. Therefore, man is born depraved and is confirmed in sin when he acts out his depravity.

¹Compare Romans 5:12.

"Toward a Definition of Sin"

In the attempt to come up with an all-encompassing definition of sin, a number of elements must be considered:

1) sin as specific evil; 2) sin as the basic constitution of man (depravity); 3) sin in relation to the Law of God (not the Mosaic Law *per se* but the moral law); 4) sin not being confined to specific acts of the will; 5) sin not being equated with finiteness; 6) sin as a lack of conformity to God's nature, namely His communicable attributes.

With these factors in mind, the following definition is offered:

"Sin is any lack of conformity, either active or passive, to the moral law of God and to the communicable character of God, whether by individual action, thought, neglect, or state of being."

The Unpardonable sin: Matthew 12

I. Introduction

A. The key verse: v 32

The *unpardonable* sin of "blaspheming the Holy Spirit" is contrasted with the *pardonable* sin of "speaking a word against the Son of Man."

B. The issue of forgiveness

What can be so heinous that God will not forgive? In all of our knowledge of God, is there any sin he will not pardon? Lying, stealing, adultery, murder; the Apostle Paul was a blasphemer (1 Timothy 1:12-15). Even the worst sin committed in all of history can be forgiven (Luke 23:33-34).

II. The broad context of Matthew 12

A. Jesus in Galilee

Matthew chapter 12 sees Jesus ministering to the people through divine works that clearly attest to His messiahship.

1. Rejection

As the ministry of Jesus unfolds, so does the attitude of the people's rejection of Him. John 1:11 is being fulfilled.

III. The linear context of Matthew 12

A. Miracles of Jesus attest to His divine authority (vv 9-22)

B. The response of the multitudes (v 23)

The multitudes, in response to the divine works of Jesus, wonder aloud: "this man cannot be the Son of David can he?" Interestingly, Matthew uses the Greek word "meti" (not) which when used with a question expects a negative response. The crowds wondered, but still were unconvinced.

C. The response of the Pharisees

1. The Pharisees saw the issue of Jesus' identity clearly

The Pharisees could clearly see the issue involved. Namely, the works that Jesus accomplished could only be wrought by supernatural means. This left them with two options: 1) Jesus' works were done by the power of Satan; 2) Jesus' works were done through the power of God. The Pharisees, in their refusal to acquiesce to option #2, contended that Jesus casts out demons by the power of Satan (v 24).

D. The rebuttal of option #1 by Jesus

1. Shown by the rule of internal division (vv 25-26)

Jesus, in verses 25-26, clearly refutes the first option of the Pharisees in regard to Jesus' identity (that His works were accomplished by Satanic power). Jesus states that a kingdom divided cannot stand; i.e. it would be sheer foolishness for Satan to cast himself out.

2. Shown by the bias of the Pharisees (v 27)

E. The consequence of Jesus' rebuttal (v 28)

The evidence that Jesus laid forth in verses 25-26 against the Pharisees' belief that He worked His power demonically left them with only one option--an option that they were unwilling to

consider: Jesus performs His works according to the power of God. This equates Jesus' ministry to the coming of the Kingdom of God (v 28).

1. Illustrated (v 29)

2. Realized by personal decision (v 30)

IV. The nature of the unpardonable sin (vv 31-32)

A. Continuing context of verses 31 and 32 with 22-30

The use of "therefore" ("dia touto" -- "on account of this") in verse 31 connects the verse with what preceded it, specifically verses 22-30. The words of Jesus in verses 31-32 must find their clarification in those of 22-30.

B. The significance of "Son of Man" (v 32)

1. Differing titles of Jesus

a. "Son of David" = "Jesus' messiahship"

b. "Son of Man" = "Jesus' humanity"

c. "Son of God" = "Jesus deity"

2. Speaking a word against

The phrase "speaking a word against" refers to the attitude of the heart (cf v 34); one's heartfelt beliefs (vv 33-37).

3. Why is blasphemy of the Son of Man forgivable?

To speak a word against the "Son of Man" involves an *incomplete* understanding of who Jesus really is--viewing him in His humanity (cf v 23).

4. Why is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit unforgivable?

However, speaking a word against the "Holy Spirit" involves a *fuller, more complete understanding* of who Jesus really is--it involves the illuminating work of the Spirit (vv 18, 28; cf John 15:26). So then, the Pharisees saw the issue much more clearly than the multitudes; they understood that Jesus could only receive His power from one of two sources. However, Jesus irrefutably demonstrated that His power could only be from one source: God; and if this were true, then the Kingdom of God has come upon the Jewish nation. This, in effect, left the Jewish leaders, and all else who understood Jesus' argument, with one clear option: Jesus was indeed who He claimed to be. To reject this option is to reject a clear, Holy Spirit wrought, understanding of the truth; and as long as one rejects the truth he is beyond forgiveness.

V. Contemporary application

Ultimately, the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit can no more be committed today than can the sin of crucifying the Son of God. The personal presence of Jesus in His humanity, as well as the presence of Israel is necessary. The unpardonable sin is not mentioned past the Gospel accounts which recorded the events of Jesus' life.

Therefore, *the* unpardonable sin cannot be committed today. However, *an* unpardonable sin can be committed today by those who disbelieve. This would involve the continual rejection of who Jesus is and what He came to do. As long as an individual *continues* to commit this sin, he is beyond the hope of forgiveness.

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Reaction Paper #7

Western Seminary
TH 502 8/3/93

Is The Atonement Limited?

The issue of the extent of the atonement is one that has been debated for centuries. The issue becomes even more complex because of differing definitions and semantic usage. For example, Louis Berkhof, reformed theologian and champion of limited atonement, states:

It is generally admitted that the satisfaction rendered by Christ was in itself sufficient for the salvation of all men, though they do not attain unto salvation. There is a difference of opinion, however, as to the question, whether Christ suffered and died *for the purpose* of saving all men or only the elect.¹

While Arminians and Universalists would give strong assent to the idea that Christ died *for the purpose* of saving all men, Calvinists would disagree. If election is unconditional, then *the purpose* of the atonement was to secure the justification of the elect. However, does saying that Christ died for the purpose of securing salvation for the elect logically contradict His dying for all men? Is saying that Christ's death was sufficient for all men, but efficacious for only the elect a contradiction of unlimited atonement? It would seem not. Contrast the statement of unlimited atonement advocate Lewis Sperry Chafer:

Certainly Christ's death of itself forgives no sinner nor does it render unnecessary the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Anyone of the elect whose salvation is predetermined, and for whom Christ died, may live the major portion of his life in open rebellion against God and during that time manifest every feature of depravity and spiritual death. This alone should prove that men are not severally save by the act of Christ in dying, but rather that they are saved by the divine application of that value when they believe. *The blood of the Passover lamb became efficacious only when applied to the doorpost.*²

The Scriptures are clear that the death of Christ was for all mankind (John 3:16; Rom 5:6; 2 Cor 5:14,19; Heb 2:9; 2 Pet 2:1).³ But Scripture is equally clear that only the elect receive the effectual benefits of that death (John 10:11,15, 17:2,6,9,24; Acts 20:28; Rom 4:25, 8:32-35; Eph 1:3-7, 5:25-27).⁴

In light of the biblical evidence, and in an attempt to harmonize this apparent discrepancy, it may be best to understand the *atonement* as being unlimited, but *redemption*, the purpose of the atonement, as being limited to the elect.⁵

The answer to the question, "For whom did Christ die?" is a complex one since the biblical presentation of the doctrine is complex. The death of Christ had worldwide implications and

¹Louis Berkhof, Manual of Christian Doctrine (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1933), 216.

²Lewis Sperry Chafer, For Whom Did Christ Die? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 73, quoted in Robert P. Lightner, "For Whom Did Christ Die?" Walvoord: A Tribute, Donald K. Campbell, ed. (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1982), 162-63.

³Attempts by those who advocate a limited atonement to interpret words and phrases such as "world" "all men," etc. to refer to the elect are hermeneutically unconvincing in all contexts.

⁴It should be noted that election does not in itself save; it only renders salvation certain.

⁵W. Robert Cook, The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology in Outline Form (n.p., 1983), 378.

thus we speak of unlimited atonement; the redemption that was actually made available thereby is realized through faith by the elect alone and thus we speak of limited redemption. Consequently, the view that seems best to account for all of the biblical data is Unlimited Atonement-Limited Redemption.⁶

⁶Ibid., 378.

creation - see swc notes

Ecclesiology - Use Section in the handout “What Rome Teaches about Salvation” on Peter as the rock.

Primary Sources: Gore (Outlines); Western Seminary (Class notes); Boice (Foundations); Ryrie (Basis Theology); SWC (Class notes).

Secondary Sources: Gore (tapes); Shedd (Dogmatic Theology); Grudem (Systematic Theology); Cook (Systematic Theology Notes); Calvin (Institutes).

Next Year, hone my notes w/the secondary sources, making them primary.

1The New American Standard Bible, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.