

Introduction to Theology

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1

Theology is Important

-The word "theology" does not appear in Scripture.

It is a useful word that means the "study of God."

-It is important to know God truthfully and teach the truth about Him.

Different people imagine different things about God and may be wrong in how they view Him.

-God wants us to know Him and to know the truth about Him. Therefore, He has revealed Himself to us.

-One way God revealed Himself to us is through *general revelation*.

This refers to nature and things we see that make it obvious that there is a powerful Creator.

Psalm 19:1

Romans 1:18-20

Romans 2:14, 15

-Being that general revelation is limited, God also revealed Himself through *special revelation*. This involves words and details, and could be from dreams, prophets, apostles, and the appearance of God Himself in the man Jesus Christ.

John 1:1, 14

The main reason Jesus came to earth was to redeem mankind, but He did teach and reveal God to us while He was here.

-A good translation of the Bible and a good understanding of it is what we need today to

know God more.

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

Other useful verses for this section:

Jeremiah 9:23, 24

John 17:3

The Existence of God

-It is important for us to be able to give reasons why we believe that God exists, and that He is the God described in the Bible.

1 Peter 3:15

-If there is no God, then we are not accountable to anyone. Many wish to do whatever they want, so they are eager to find ways to explain how we may exist without there being a God.

-If there is a God, then we had better get to know Him and His expectations.

-Two very good reasons to believe that the God of the Bible is one true God are:

1) Jesus rose from the dead, proving He was God, just like He said He was.

2) Jesus proclaimed that the Old Testament, and all that it said about God, is true.

-Twelve facts about the resurrection of Jesus leading us to believe it happened (these are believed by both Christians and skeptics):

1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.
2. He was entombed, likely in a private tomb.
3. Soon after, his disciples were discouraged, bereaved, and despondent, having lost hope.
4. Jesus' tomb was found empty very soon after his interment.
5. The disciples had experiences that they believed were actual appearances of the risen Jesus.
6. Due to these experiences, the disciples' lives

were completely transformed. They were even willing to die for their belief.

7. The proclamation of the resurrection took place very early, from the beginning of church history.

8. The disciples' public testimony and preaching of the Resurrection took place in the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified and buried shortly before.

9. The gospel message centered on the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

10. Sunday was the primary day for gathering and worshiping.

11. James, the brother of Jesus and a skeptic before this time, was converted when he believed he also saw the risen Jesus.

12. Just a few years later, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) became a Christian believer, due to an experience that he also believed was an appearance of the resurrected Jesus.

These 12 facts make it reasonable to believe that Jesus resurrected from the dead, showing that he is God.

-Examples of Jesus validating the Old Testament:

Matthew 4:4, 7, 10

Mark 1:2

Luke 24:46

Matthew 12:38-40

Matthew 19:3-7

There are many more examples!

2

The Nature of God

-To know God better, we study His attributes (also called “characteristics” or “qualities”).

-There are two categories of God's attributes: infinite (incommunicable) and moral (communicable).

-God's infinite qualities: eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence

-*Eternity*: God has always existed and always will.

Psalm 90:1, 2 Isaiah 46:9, 10

Only God is eternal in the ultimate sense. Believers will be eternal in that we will never die for the remainder of eternity.

1 Timothy 6:15, 16

-*Omnipresence*: God is in every place that exists at the same time.

Psalm 139:7-10 Acts 17:27, 28

-*Omniscience*: God knows everything that can be known.

Psalm 147:5 1 John 3:20

Only God is omniscient. **Isaiah 41:21-23**

-*Omnipotence*: God can do anything that can be done.

Romans 1:20 Psalm 135:5, 6

Because the above attributes are incommunicable, man does not have them and cannot imitate them.

-Some of God's moral qualities: holiness, justice, love, mercy, grace, patience, wisdom, and faithfulness

These are communicable attributes, meaning that man can have them and display them.

When we are told in Scripture to imitate God, this applies to God's communicable attributes.

Ephesians 5:2-15 **2 Peter 1:5-8**

-Holiness: God always does what is right and opposes what is wrong.

Psalm 5:4-6 **Habakkuk 1:12, 13**

To imitate: We should aim for holiness as well.

1 Peter 1:14-16

-Justice: God always supports those who do right and opposes those who do wrong.

Deuteronomy 32:4 **Revelation 19:1, 2**

To imitate: We should speak up for those who are treated unfairly, and support fair punishment for wrongdoers.

-Love: God sees dignity and worth in every part of His creation, and wants all of His creation to enjoy what is beneficial to them.

Luke 12:6, 7 **Romans 5:7, 8**

Psalm 145:9, 15, 16 **Acts 14:17**

This is not emotional love as man sees it, but a decision to treat others in a favorable manner.

To imitate: We should try to find some good quality in even the worst of people, and relate to every kind of person in a loving spirit.

-Mercy: God desires to help those who are in unfortunate circumstances.

Psalm 136:23-25 **2 Corinthians 1:3-5**

To imitate: we should try to develop a compassionate spirit for the unfortunate of the world and respond with benevolence.

Luke 6:35, 36

-Grace: God treats sinners better than they deserve.

Jonah 4:2 **Ephesians 2:4-8**

To imitate: We should love our enemies and pray for those who mistreat us.

Matthew 5:43-45

-*Patience*: God overlooks the shortcomings of mankind longer than they deserve.

Psalm 86:15 2 Peter 3:9

To imitate: We should take some time before reacting against the words and actions of others.

Proverbs 10:19 17:17, 28 James 1:19

-*Wisdom*: God puts the knowledge that He has to the best use.

Job 12:13 Romans 11:33 16:27

Omniscience refers to the amount of knowledge God has. *Wisdom* refers to how He uses it.

To imitate: We should spend significant time reading and meditating on God's Word in order to take advantage of His wise counsel.

Psalm 119:97-104

-*Faithfulness*: God always speaks the truth and always honors His word of promise.

Titus 1:1, 2 Hebrews 6:13-18

We should have confidence in everything God says, especially His promises and warnings.

Deuteronomy 7:9, 10

To imitate: We should try to speak the truth in every situation.

Ephesians 4:24, 25

The Trinity

-The word "Trinity" does not appear in the Bible, but is a useful word to refer to God's nature of being three divine Persons in one

God.

-There are three persons who are each described in the Bible as being deity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

-The deity of the Father is apparent in the descriptions of His divine attributes (which we just studied) and in the use of the name "God" for Him.

John 14:1

-The deity of the Son and Holy Spirit is shown by their association with divine attributes

Colossians 2:9

and the divine names applied to them.

Acts 5:3, 4

-The three persons are closely associated with one another in "Trinitarian" statements (ones that link them in a partnership).

There is no standard order for listing the three persons in Trinitarian statements.

Matthew 28:19 Romans 15:30 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

-Those these three divine persons are closely related, they are described as three distinct persons.

We see the distinction when one person refers to the other persons.

John 14:16, 17, 26

We see the distinction when more than one person is active in a scene.

Luke 3:21, 22

-The Bible plainly teaches that there is only one God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 1 Corinthians 8:4 Galatians 3:20

Since we know the Bible always speaks the

truth and does not contradict itself, it is reasonable to assume that the idea of three divine persons is compatible with the idea that there is only one God.

-It is not necessary for us to be able to explain exactly how we have one God in three divine persons. This is a truth about God that is beyond our human experience and understanding.

-It is helpful to note that even in human relationships, two people can be so closely related that they are spoken of as "one," such as in the case of marriage. This is not a perfect illustration of the Trinity, but it is helpful toward our understanding.

3

The Deity of Jesus

-The writers of the New Testament often make statements that clearly affirm the deity of Christ (that He is God).

-Jesus is identified as “The Word” and “The Word” is declared to be God.

John 1:1-3

“The Word” is a better translation of the original Greek phrase that “The Verb,” found in some versions.

-In the account of Thomas seeing Jesus for the first time after the Resurrection, Thomas proclaims Jesus to be God. John, the writer, confirms Jesus to be God.

John 20:24-31

The way Jesus entered the room where the disciples were also gives evidence that He is God.

-The Apostle Paul puts Jesus in a category with God.

Galatians 1:1

-Paul says that in heaven, Jesus was equal with God.

Philippians 2:5-7

-The human body of Jesus was real, but inside that human body was a person who possessed every quality of the nature of God.

Colossians 2:9

-The writer of Hebrews shows that some Old Testament passages were about Jesus, and these passages referred to Him as God, and described Him as being eternal and creating heaven and earth.

Hebrews 1:8-12

-The writers of the New Testament often include Christ in Trinitarian statements that indicate that He belongs in the same category of deity as God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19 2 Corinthians 13:14
1 Peter 1:1, 2

-Jesus Himself claimed to be equal with God.

John 5:17, 18 John 10:30-33

-Jesus claimed to be the Son of God in a unique way, a way that implied deity, and not the way believers refer to themselves as “sons” (children) of God.

John 10:34-36

The negative reaction of Jesus' audience shows that they understood him to be claiming to be “Son of God” in a unique sense.

Luke 22:67-71 John 5:17, 18 19:7, 8

-Jesus claimed to possess powers that belong exclusively to God:

The power to exist eternally

John 8:58

The authority to forgive sins

Mark 2:5-11 Luke 7:48, 49

The authority to determine man's eternal judgment

John 5:21-29

The Incarnation of Christ

-The word “incarnation” refers to something immaterial taking on a fleshly form. The “incarnation” of Christ refers to the Son of God taking on human nature in order to live on this earth as a man.

The New Testament view of Christ's incarnation is that He was both fully divine and fully human at the same time.

Colossians 2:9

-The writers of the New Testament clearly

affirm that Christ was as fully human as we are during the incarnation period.

Christ possessed full humanity in all things.

Hebrews 2:14-17

It is an anti-Christ heresy to deny that the Son of God took on a full human nature.

1 John 4:2, 3 2 John 7

-The New Testament description of Christ shows that He was in fact living fully as a human during the incarnation period.

Christ grew physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

Luke 2:40, 52

Christ became hungry and thirsty.

Matthew 4:2 21:18 John 19:28

Christ became tired and sleepy.

Matthew 8:24 John 4:6

Christ faced temptations to sin.

Hebrews 4:15

Christ died a real physical death.

Luke 23:46

-The incarnation of Christ placed some restrictions upon His divine nature.

Jesus did not cease being God

Colossians 2:9

but during the incarnation period, the Son of God chose not to use the special powers of His divine nature so that He could live fully as a human.

Christ chose to veil His radiant glory with human flesh.

John 17:5

-Christ chose to restrict His infinite qualities (omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, eternity) in order to live as a human being.

-Christ was apparently not using his power of omnipresence when he lived within the confines of a human body.

-Christ was apparently not using His power of omniscience throughout the incarnation period.

He is said to have grown in knowledge as a youth.

Luke 2:40, 52

-Christ was apparently not using His power of omnipotence during the incarnation period.

Since the changing of water to wine was said to be His first miracle, He obviously did not use his omnipotent powers during His first 30 years.

John 2:11

The supernatural work of Christ during His ministry is attributed in Scripture to an empowering of the Holy Spirit rather than Christ using His own divine powers.

Luke 4:1, 14, 17-21; 5:17 Acts 2:22 10:38

The Holy Spirit empowered Christ with supernatural powers just as he empowered other servants with powers suited for their ministries (such as prophets and apostles).

-Christ was apparently not using His power of eternity when He died on the cross.

-Christ was exercising His right and authority to rule over all creatures.

He submitted Himself to human authority, such as His parents, teachers, and government.

He became submissive to the will of God the Father even to the point of allowing Himself to be humiliated and killed on a cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

-These self-imposed restrictions in no way detract from Christ's claim to be the Son of God.

By “emptying Himself” in **Philippians 2:7**, Christ did not cease being God, but rather He stopped looking and acting like God for a period so He could live like a human.

-Within His human form was the full nature of deity, available for Christ's use once again whenever He desired.

Colossians 2:9 **Matthew 26:53**

4

The Death of Jesus

-The manner in which Christ accomplished our salvation was specifically designed by God to resolve a tricky problem within the nature of God.

Because God is holy and just, He insists that all sin be punished.

But because God is loving, and full of grace and mercy, He did not want to punish humans who sinned against Him.

Therefore, God had a dilemma: how to punish sin according to His justice, but prevent the people whom He loved from suffering this punishment.

Martin Luther called this “a problem fit for God.”

God resolved this problem by allowing Christ's suffering at Calvary to serve as a “substitutionary atonement.”

“Atonement” refers to suffering the penalty you deserve from God because you have sinned.

“Substitutionary” refers to having someone else take your place.

Jesus took our place and took the punishment we deserve. God punished Him in our place.

God treated Christ as if He were a sinner so that He could treat actual sinners as though they were perfectly righteous.

Isaiah 53:4-6 2 Corinthians 5:21
1 Peter 2:24

-In order for Christ to serve as our substitute, He had to meet certain conditions.

He had to be human in order to take the place of other humans.

Hebrews 2:14, 17; 10:4

He had to be perfectly innocent so that His suffering could count for someone else and not have to be used for His own sins.

Hebrews 7:26, 27

He had to have an eternal quality so that His suffering could have infinite application, both in the number of people it covered and the duration of its effect.

Hebrews 7:23-25

The suffering of Jesus included public humiliation as a criminal and sinner, tortuous pain, and the wrath of God the Father.

Isaiah 53:4-6 Matthew 27:46

-Christ's final statement, "It is finished" implies that His work of atonement was completed on the cross.

John 19:30

-The tearing of the temple veil at the moment of his death suggests that access to God was now available to sinners.

Matthew 27:50, 51

-As a result of what happened at Calvary, sinners now have two options regarding their guilt before God because of sin:

- 1) We can choose to accept Christ's substitutionary atonement (by honoring His conditions for salvation)
- 2) We can choose to make our own atonement with God (through suffering in hell)

-The sacrifices described in the Old Testament were designed to "foreshadow" the one real sacrifice of Christ.

In the Old Testament sacrifices, an innocent animal was killed in place of a sinner who ought to die.

The sinner symbolically transferred his guilt to the animal by laying his hands on the animal's head.

The priest killed the animal with a knife and poured out its blood as a witness to its death. The sinner returned home unharmed.

Christ is the sacrifice that was killed so that we are not harmed by God.

Christ is also the high priest who presented his own blood before God as a witness to His death.

Hebrews 7:26, 27 9:24-26 10:10-12

5

The Nature of the Holy Spirit

-The Holy Spirit is a distinct person of the Godhead (Trinity) and not just an impersonal force.

John 16:13 **Acts 13:2; 15:28**
Romans 8:26 **Acts 7:51**
Ephesians 4:30 **Hebrews 10:29**

-The Holy Spirit has been actively involved in the work we associate with God.

Creation and providence

Genesis 1:1, 2 **Job 33:4**

Revelation and inspiration

John 15:26, 27 **2 Peter 1:21**

Salvation

Romans 8:9-14 **Titus 3:5**

The Holy Spirit and Salvation

-On the night before His death, Christ predicted that the Holy Spirit would soon begin His ministry of convicting the world of its sin.

John 16:7-11

The Holy Spirit convicts sinners by means of the Word of God that He inspired.

2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 4:2 **Hebrews 4:12, 13**

The Holy Spirit and Sanctification

- "Sanctification" refers to the ministry of the Holy Spirit to supplement the believer's efforts at breaking sinful habits and developing godly habits and attitudes.

As a believer determines the changes he wants to make, the Holy Spirit supplies him the will power needed to eventually make those changes if he is determined to keep trying.

Philippians 2:12, 13

Those who consistently try to "walk in the

Spirit” will find their own spirit becoming revitalized and their lives producing spiritual fruit.

Romans 8:9-14 Galatians 5:16-25

Equipping Believers for Service

-The Holy Spirit helps believers find opportunities to serve Christ and His church by developing within them “spiritual gifts.”

A “spiritual gift” is an ability developed by the Holy Spirit within a believer that enables the believer to perform specific tasks or services on behalf of the Lord for his purposes.

The spiritual gifts of the New Testament are often separated into two categories:

Non-miraculous gifts: these are abilities to do tasks of service that are not normally considered to be supernatural.

Miraculous gifts: these include the ability to receive divine revelation directly from God, and the ability to perform act that give the impression that a supernatural activity has just occurred.

Non-miraculous Gifts

-O Novo Testamento tem duas listas de dons não-milagrosos.

Romanos 12:6-8 1 Pedro 4:11

Se bem que os nomes destes dons parecem ordinários e não-sobrenaturais (serviço, ensinando, exortação, dando, guiando, mostrando misericórdia, e falando), podemos assumir que estes dons tem naturezas não-milagrosas.

-Uma característica importante dos dons não-milagrosos é que são usadas em serviço para outras pessoas.

É possível que o Espírito Santo equipar um crente com um dom que não tinha antes da sua conversão. Mas parece provável que muitos dos nossos dons não-milagrosos simplesmente são capacidades naturais que permitimos o Espírito Santo a usar dentro de

nos quando servirmos às outras pessoas.

O papel do Espírito Santo pode ser a ajudar-nos ver oportunidades em que podemos usar as nossas capacidades em servir aos outros. Também o papel pode ser ajudar-nos melhorar as nossas capacidades nestas áreas varias.

Mas apesar da maneira em que o Espírito Santo dá dons não-milagrosos, a coisa mais importante é estes dons ajudar-nos a servir aos outros no nome de Jesus.

-Alguns exemplos de dons não-milagrosos: profetizar (pregar), serviço, ensinando, exortação, dando, guiando, mostrando misericórdia, falando.

O Espírito Santo distribui todos os dons dEle com variedade.

1 Coríntios 12:4-6, 11

O Espírito Santo equipa cada crente com pelo menos um dom.

Mateus 25:14, 15

1 Pedro 4:10

Dons Milagrosos do Espírito Santo

-O Novo Testamento tem duas listas de dons milagrosos.

Marcos 16:17, 18

1 Coríntios 12:8-10

-O Novo Testamento descreve dois usos chaves para os dons milagrosos:

1) Proporcionar revelação acerca do novo compromisso

1 Coríntios 14:3, 29-31

2) Confirmar que uma pessoa está a dar revelação acerca do novo compromisso

Marcos 16:20

Actos 2:22; 8:6

Hebreus 2:3, 4

-Muitos dons são chamados «dons revelações» porque ajudam dar informação: palavra de sabedoria, palavra de conhecimento, profecia, etc.

1 Coríntios 12:8

Baseado no contexto, podemos distinguir se o uso dum dom é milagroso ou não.

Por exemplo, parece que «profecia» em 1 Coríntios 12-14 refere a um dom milagroso, mas «profecia» em Romanos 12:6 refere a um dom não-milagroso.

Parece que «ensinar» em 1 Coríntios 12-14 refere a um dom milagroso, mas «ensinar» em Romanos 12:7 refere a um dom não-milagroso.

-Exemplos de dons de confirmação: expulsar demónios, falar em linguas desconhecidas, apanhar combras venenosas, beber venenos mortais, curar os doentes, fazer milagres, distinguir entre espíritos, interpretar línguas desconhecidas.

-Parece que os dons milagrosos foram distribuídos pelos apóstolos pro colocar as mãos na cabeça do recebedor

Actos 8:13-19; 19:6 2 Timóteo 1:6

Uma excepção: os apóstolos receberam os dons directamente do Espírito Santo.

Actos 2:1-4

Obviamente não havia apóstolos anteriormente, assim o Espírito Santo deu-lhes poderes directamente no princípio da época do Novo Testamento. Não devemos deduzir que o Espírito Santo dá poderes diretamente a pessoas além dos apóstolos.

Outra excepção: a família de Cornélio

Actos 10:44-47

Isto é exemplo único de falar com línguas desconhecidas. Os recebedores dos poderes ainda não foram crentes baptizados em Cristo. Aparentemente, o propósito não foi lhes preparar para serviço Cristão, mas a convencer Pedro que Gêntios crentes são aceitáveis a Deus e podem ser baptizados em Cristo.

Actos 11:1-3, 17, 18

Não devem deduzir desta história que Cristãos são dados dons milagrosas para serviço Cristão.

A Existência dos Dons Milagrosos Somente no Primeiro Século

-Sendo que o Novo Testamento é completo, não precisamos de dons de revelação e confirmação ainda.

O Novo Testamento dá toda a revelação do que Cristãos precisam.

2 Timóteo 3:16, 17

A Palavra escrita de Deus é suficientemente poderoso a convencer pecadores sem exigir provas milagrosas dos mensageiros.

Lucas 16:27-31

O Paulo comparou dons milagrosos com «brinquedos de crianças» que seriam afastados com maturidade.

1 Coríntios 13:8-11; 14:18-20

Agora, não há apóstolos para colocar as mãos sobre cabeças para passar tais dons.

6

The “Canon” of Scripture

-The Holy Bible consists of 66 books: 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

The phrase used to describe the books considered to be inspired by God as His holy word is: the canon (which means “the standard”).

There were many books written at the same time as these that were similar, so why are only 66 included in our Bible? Because the others failed to meet “the standard” to be considered the words of God Himself.

The Old Testament Canon

-Anyone who accepts the authority of Jesus will accept what He acknowledged as Scripture. He pointed people to the Scriptures and spoke of the faithfulness of Scripture.

John 5:39; 10:35

Jesus recognized three major divisions of the Old Testament, which included 39 books: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (to which the Psalms belong).

The law: Genesis through Deuteronomy

The prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets.

The writings: poetical books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs), historical books (Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles), and others (Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, and Ecclesiastes).

Jesus did not quote from all 39 books, but He did quote from all three divisions of the OT.

-The Apostle Paul acknowledged the Old Testament canon as written for our learning and admonition, and profitable for doctrine.

Romans 15:4 1 Corinthians 10:11
2 Timothy 3:14-17

The Apostles quoted from the Old Testament books

in their gospels

Matthew 1:22, 23; 2:17, 18
John 12:37-41

in their efforts to evangelize

Acts 17:2, 3

and in their epistles.

Romans 3:9, 10; 4:3 1 Peter 2:6

The Old Testament Apocrypha

-These were books written after Malachi (400 BC) and before the coming of Jesus, and are included in the Catholic Old Testament.

Some of the books included: The Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, Judith, 1 & 2 Maccabees, Susanna, and 1 & 2 Esdras.

Jesus and the apostles never accepted these books as part of the canon, and never quoted from them.

Jewish scholars from the first century do not recognize these books as part of the Old Testament Canon.

They contain teaching that is unbiblical, such as praying for the dead.

The Canon of the New Testament

-The early church considered the writings of the apostles to be part of the canon.

They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine.

Acts 2:42 2 Peter 3:2 Jude 17

They received their words as the word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

1 Corinthians 14:37

Paul's letters were designed to be circulated among the churches.

Colossians 4:16

Peter equated Paul's letters with "Scripture."

2 Peter 3:15, 16

The church accepted the apostles' writings because to accept their teaching was to accept Jesus Himself.

John 13:20

All books in the New Testament Canon were either written by an apostle, or by someone who worked closely with an apostle and whose writings would have their approval.

When an apostolic writing was considered to be Scripture:

it was read publicly

1 Thessalonians 5:27

it was circulated widely

Colossians 4:16 Revelation 1:11

copies of it were collected

2 Peter 3:15, 16

and it was often quoted in other writings.

1 Timothy 5:18

-Christians believe that God has spoken first through prophets in Old Testament times, then through His Son Jesus Christ, then through the apostles, whose writings remain for Christians from now on.

7

The Inspiration of Scripture

-The Holy Bible was “inspired” by God. This word comes from the Greek word *theopneustos*, which means “God breathed.” This means that the Scriptures were given by the Holy Spirit, and are not merely the words of men.

-The Bible claims itself to be inspired by God.

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

It tells of men speaking as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:20, 21

It contains claims by those who spoke words revealed by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:9-13

The Unity of the Scriptures

The words of the Bible are in complete harmony with one another despite the vastly different circumstances of the authors whom God inspired to write them.

-The books of the Bible were written over a 1600-year span, a period of more than 40 generations of humans.

-The books of the Bible were written by approximately 40 authors from very different backgrounds and experiences (“walks of life”). For example:

Moses: political leader trained in the universities of Egypt

Peter: fisherman

Amos: herdsman

Joshua: military general

Nehemiah: cup bearer to a king

Daniel: prime minister

Luke: physician

Solomon: king

Matthew: tax collector

Paul: tentmaker and rabbi

They wrote from different places.

Moses: in the wilderness

Jeremiah: in a dungeon

Daniel: on a hillside and in a palace

Paul: inside prison

Luke: while traveling

John: in exile on the island of Patmos

Some wrote in times of war, others in times of peace. Some wrote from great joy, others from despair.

Yet the Bible has remarkable harmony and unity. Where there appear to be contradictions, these can be explained with a fair amount of study.

For example:

Matthew 5:16

Matthew 6:1

Other considerations about the Bible

-All Christians should be in the habit of reading and studying the Word of God.

Psalm 1

Psalm 119:1-7

2 Timothy 2:15

-The sermons preached in our churches should consist of the reading of God's Word, an explanation of its meaning, and an application of it for our lives.

2 Timothy 4:2

Psalm 19:7-11

Hebrews 4:12

Luke 8:4-15

8

The meaning of “grace”

-When found in Scripture, the word “grace” means undeserved kindness.

For example, if one man strikes another, and the response is to invite the one who threw the punch to a nice dinner, that would be an act of grace.

Grace is important to all of us because of this surprising Biblical truth: no one deserves to go to heaven.

Romans 3:23; 6:23

When God became a man (Jesus) and took the punishment for sin that we deserve, in our place, that was an act of kindness that we did not deserve (grace).

A Christian believer should never brag that he's going to heaven because of his good life, but should admit that he's being allowed into heaven despite not deserving to be there, because of the grace of God and the death of Christ for his sins.

Ephesians 2:8, 9

Although Jesus died on the cross for the sins of everyone in the world, that does not mean everyone will go to heaven and avoid hell.

There are things one must do to receive the gift of being allowed into eternal life. Doing these things does not mean the person then deserves to go to heaven, but only that he has done what is necessary to receive the gift of eternal life.

There are five things described in the Bible that a person does to receive eternal life. No one verse of Scripture gives all five, but we get them by putting together a number of verses.

1) Believe

This one is the most basic. One may hear all about God creating man and coming to earth as Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. But if a person doesn't believe this, he has immediately disqualified himself from being allowed into heaven.

John 3:16

2) Repent

This word does not mean never to sin again. We will not be perfectly sinless until we get to heaven. It means that our whole heart and mind have changed about sin.

The unbeliever does not care about sin, and will continue to sin for the pleasure of it. The believer will still sin, but will try very hard to rid his life of sin, asking God's help to live more obediently.

The reason for trying to be more obedient and sin less is not to earn one's way into heaven, but to please God out of gratitude for saving him by grace.

If one claims to be a Christian, but does not care about trying to be holy, he very well may be deceived.

Luke 13:3 Acts 2:38

3) Confess

The idea behind this word is that the Lord does not want us to keep our faith a secret, or be ashamed by it.

Romans 10:9 Luke 9:26
Matthew 5:14-16

4) Be baptized

Many churches teach that baptism is an act in which a person participates after he has

become a Christian. But the Bible teaches that baptism is the occasion in which a person becomes born again, and is forgiven by God for the sins that have been committed.

Acts 2:38

Acts 22:16

Mark 16:16

5) Stay with Christ

It is possible to do the above four things and be close to the Lord, but later drift away from Him to the point where he no longer has a place in your life.

The devil is patient, and will try to draw you away from the Lord slowly and unnoticeably. We must guard against this and stay close to the Lord!

Hebrews 3:12

2 Peter 2:20-22

Other considerations

-It is not enough to want Jesus just as a Savior from sins. He must also be Lord of our lives.

Luke 14:25-33

-There are two kinds of forgiveness: that which relates to our eternal state, and that which relates to our ongoing relationship with God while on earth.

Matthew 6:12

John 13:3-11

9

Um termo fundamental: a palavra grega *Ekklesia*

-U uso leigo desta palavra: refere a uma assembleia de pessoas.

Actos 19:32, 39, 41

O uso de *ekklesia* no princípio para referir às assembleias dos crentes provavelmente precisava do uso de outras palavras descritivas. Por exemplo: «a assembleia (*ekklesia*) dos crentes».

Depois de tempos de uso frequente, a palavra *ekklesia* tornava-se numa palavra que, embora sozinha, diz «uma assembleia de Cristãos».

Membros da Igreja

-Uma pessoa torna-se membro da Igreja universal ao ser batizado (tende fé real em Cristo).

1 Coríntios 12:13

-Há boas razões de serem membros declarados numa igreja local também. Há muitos exemplos no Novo Testamento dos crentes reunindo-se e funcionando juntamente.

Actos 2:47; 4:32; 5:14; 6:2

O Novo Testamento não dá instruções específicas em diferenciar entre membros declarados e as pessoas que simplesmente assistiam ao culto.

Mas uma igreja local pode estabelecer vantagens razoáveis de ser membro declarado. Por exemplo:

³⁵₁₇ O direito eleger quem servirão nas posições várias da liderança e do serviço da igreja.

³⁵₁₇ O direito de ser considerado apto para

cargo numa posição da liderança ou do serviço da igreja.

³⁵₁₇ O direito de esperar e receber conselhos da liderança da igreja.

O Novo Testamento não dá condições específicas para ser membro declarado numa igreja local. Mas uma igreja local pode estabelecer condições razoáveis para ser membro declarado. Por exemplo:

³⁵₁₇ Uma confissão pública de fé e arrependimento. Sendo que este tipo de confissão é uma exigência básica de Cristianismo, parece razoável para esperar a mesma coisa dum membro potencial da igreja.

³⁵₁₇ Imersão (do crente). Apesar da controvérsia acerca do propósito de batismo, é aparente que o Novo Testamento associe batismo com evangelismo e ser membro da igreja.

³⁵₁₇ Nenhuma prática escandalosa. Qualquer prática que seria motivo para disciplinar pela igreja razoavelmente seria motivo para proibir a pessoa de ser membro em primeiro lugar.

As fontes das normas para a igreja

-A fonte principal de normas: as instruções do Novo Testamento.

Cristãos não são obrigados a seguir as instruções do velho compromisso do Moisés.

Gálatas 3:24, 25; 4:21-31

Hebreus 8:6-13

Exemplos de regras do velho compromisso que algumas pessoas da nova igreja no Novo Testamento tentavam exigir da igreja naquele tempo:

Actos 15:5, 10, 11, 28, 29

Colossenses 2:16, 17

Exemplos de regras do velho compromisso que algumas pessoas tentam exigir da igreja

hoje: adoração no sábado, regras do sábado, restrições dietéticas relativas a Moisés, circuncisão de bebés (na forma de batismo de bebés).

Uma norma do compromisso de Moisés pode ser útil a Cristãos (mas não pode ser exigida) se ela não contradiz as instruções claras ou o espírito do novo compromisso (tal como o sacrifício de animais).

-Uma fonte secundária de normas: precedente apostólico.

A frase *precedente apostólico* refere às práticas das igrejas nos dias dos apóstolos pelas quais não há repreensão apostólica.

Nos assuntos da igreja pelos quais o Novo Testamento não dá instruções específicas, o precedente apostólico dá-nos a melhor opção porque:

³⁵/₁₇ Podemos supor sem medo que uma prática permitida pelos apóstolos é aceitável na vista de Deus.

³⁵/₁₇ Mas não podemos saber certamente se qualquer outra prática é aceitável na vista de Deus.

Embora que o precedente apostólico não tem a força dum mandamento declarado claramente, devemos o seguir simplesmente porque é a posição mais razoável e segura de assumir.

A fundação pelos apóstolos e profetas

-Jesus Cristo é o Fundador Divino da Igreja, mas os «instrumentos humanos» na fundação da igreja eram os apóstolos e profetas do Novo Testamento.

Mateus 16:18 Efésios 2:20

-A ideia básica da palavra grega *apóstolos* (apóstolo): uma pessoa enviada numa missão como representante do remetente.

O uso especial de Novo Testamento de

apóstolos: referir a grupo especial de homens autorizados por Cristo para estabelecer e organizar a igreja, incluindo:

³⁵₁₇ Os doze: Simão Pedro, André, Tiago, João, Filipe, Bartolomeu, Mateus, Tomé, Tiago (filho de Alfeu), Simão o Zelote, Judas (filho de Tiago), e Judas Iscariotes. (**Lucas 6:13-16**)

³⁵₁₇ Matias (**Atos 1:26**)

³⁵₁₇ Paulo (**2 Coríntios 1:1; 11:5**)

-As exigências para ser apóstolo:

1) Tinha que ser testemunho da ressurreição de Cristo

Os doze e Matias: **Atos 1:21, 22**

Paulo: **1 Coríntios 9:1; 15:8-10**

2) Tinha que ser nomeado por Cristo

Os doze: **Lucas 6:13**

Matias: **Atos 1:24-26**

Paulo: **Gálatas 1:1, 15, 16**

-Poderes especiais dos apóstolos

1) A capacidade de fazer várias milagres

O padrão típico na igreja parece ter sido um ou dois dons milagrosos por pessoa.

1 Coríntios 12:8-11, 14-18, 28-30

O «marco do apóstolo» aparentemente era a capacidade de fazer muitas obras milagrosas.

Atos 5:12; Romanos 15:18, 19

2 Coríntios 12:12

2) A capacidade de dar dons milagrosos aos outros

Atos 8:13-19; 19:6 **2 Timóteo 1:6**

3) A capacidade de receber revelação de Deus acerca do novo compromisso

O Espírito Santo revelou as apóstolos qualquer informação que considerou ser próprio a ser

sabido e publicado.

João 14:26; 15:26, 27; 16:13
Gálatas 1:11, 12 Efésios 3:4, 5

Esta capacidade tinha limite: Os apóstolos não funcionavam com conhecimento absoluto e infalibilidade fora do uso deste do de revelação.

Atos 10:9-17 Gálatas 2:11, 12

-O trabalho do apóstolo

1) Testemunhar sobre a ressurreição de Cristo

Lucas 24:46-48 Atos 1:21, 22

2) Organizar a igreja no seu princípio

The apostles established the beliefs and practices of the new compromisso.

Os apóstolos foram encomendados publicar a informação dado a eles pelo Espírito Santo.

João 15:26, 27 Atos 26:16

A nova igreja submetia-se aos ensinamentos dos apóstolos.

Atos 2:42

O Novo Testamento essencialmente é versão escrita dos ensinamentos dos apóstolos. Pelo menos 21 dos livros do Novo Testamento foram escritos por apóstolos. Os outros 6 livros tem relação apostólica que confirma seu conteúdo: Marcos (Pedro), Lucas (Paulo), Atos (Paulo), Hebreus (Paulo), Tiago (os doze), e Judas (os doze).

Os profetas do novo testamento

-A ideia básica da palavra grega *prophetes* (profeta): uma pessoa que proclama uma mensagem no interesse de Deus.

O uso deste significado básico de *prophetes*

no Novo Testamento: referir a qualquer pessoa que pregue a Palavra de Deus (sem significar necessariamente a recepção daquela Palavra por revelação directa).

Romanos 12:6-8

O uso especial no Novo Testamento da palavra *prophetes*: referir ao grupo particular de homens e mulheres que recebessem revelação directamente de Deus e depois a anunciassem à igreja.

-Pessoas nomeadas no Novo Testamento por este uso especial de *prophetes*:

Agabo e os profetas de Jerusalém

Atos 11:27, 28; 21:10

Os profetas de Antioquia: Barnabé, Simeão, Lúcio, Manaene, Saulo

Atos 13:1

Judas e Silas

Atos 15:32

As quatro filhas de Filipe

Atos 21:8, 9

-O trabalho do profeta Novo Testamento:

Dar instrução à igreja antes da anotação da revelação do novo compromisso no Novo Testamento.

Um profeta devia informar a igreja do nova revelação ao recebê-la.

Atos 15:32 1 Coríntios 14:29-32

Esta informação for tencionada ser usada para ensinar e edificar a igreja.

1 Coríntios 14:3, 4, 6, 22, 29-32

A responsabilidade principal dum profeta parece ter sido falar da revelação de Deus (mas não necessariamente interpretar o significado ou aplicação dela).

-A verificação de profetas

A exigência na primeira igreja: todas as declarações proféticas tinham que ser provadas.

1 Coríntios 14:29 **1 João 4:1**
1 Tessalonicenses 5:19-21

A razão para esta prova: a quantidade grande de profetas na primeira igreja dava oportunidade às pessoas fingir serem profetas.

Uma pessoa com o dom real de profecia às vezes fazia declarações que não foram recebidas por revelação de Deus.

A mensagem dum profeta tinha que ser de acordo com a Palavra de Deus que já tinha sido estabelecida: o Velho Testamento e a instrução sabida dos apóstolos.

1 Coríntios 14:37, 38
1 João 1:1-3; 4:1-3

As predições futuras dum profeta sempre tinham que cumprir-se.

Deuterónimo 18:20-22

10

The universal church

-The phrase “universal church” is used to describe the whole collective body of all true Christians.

This is the church to which Jesus referred in **Matthew 16:18**.

It is made up of all the saved, both living and dead.

Hebrews 12:22-24

The universal church is called the “Body of Christ.”

Ephesians 1:22, 23

There is only one “body,” and therefore only one “church.”

Ephesians 4:4

The New Testament church began on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:1-47

Peter later referred to this day as the beginning.

Acts 11:15

The local church

-A local church is made up of Christians in one geographical area. For example, the church at Corinth, or the church in Thessalonica.

1 Corinthians 1:2

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul referred to a number of local churches in

his writings.

Romans 16:16 Galatians 1:2

-As the gospel spreads and people respond to it, those in a particular area start a local church when they agree to work together as one.

Whereas the universal church began in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, local churches have begun at different places and different times.

Acts 11:19-26

-A local church that is completely and correctly organized will have elders. Their function is to feed and oversee the flock, and to equip them for the work of ministry.

**Acts 20:28 1 Peter 5:1, 2
Ephesians 4:12**

-Only those who meet the qualifications found in Scripture should be elders in a local church.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 Titus 1:5-9

-While the Old Testament believers met on Saturday to worship God together, New Testament believers meet on Sunday, following the example of the church during the time of the Apostles.

Acts 20:7 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2

-The activities in which they engaged during their Sunday assemblies were designed for believers: fellowship, studying the Word of God, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and prayer.

Acts 2:42

The design of the Lord's Day assembly is to strengthen believers so they can effectively spread the gospel to others. When others

become believers, then they can benefit from the assembly of believers as well. There may be unbelievers present in the Lord's Day assembly, but the assembly was not designed as an outreach to unbelievers in itself.

11

The invisible creation: angels

-There exists a whole category of beings called (among other things) *angels*, beings that are different both from God and from human beings.

Angels are created beings, and they make up the main part of the “invisible” creation.

Colossians 1:16

-Angels do not have physical bodies, but they can take forms that are visible to humans.

Hebrews 1:14 Genesis 18:1-3

-Angels are part of the creation that is to praise God.

Psalms 148:1-5

-The work of angels is summed up as this: to serve the Lord and do His will.

Psalms 103:20, 21

It should be noted that God doesn't need angels to do His work. He can do anything Himself. But sometimes God does things He doesn't *have* to do, simply as a matter of choice.

-Angels are a higher order than man, and are not capable of death.

Hebrews 2:6, 7 Luke 20:36

-When the phrase “angel of the Lord” appears in the Old Testament, it nearly always refers to the second person of the Godhead (later called “Jesus” as a human).

When a being described as an angel appears

in the New Testament, it refers to the created beings of this study.

Genesis 22:9-19

Luke 2:8-12

-In New Testament times, angels do various tasks that God wants them to do.

Luke 1:26-28

Matthew 1:18-21

Matthew 2:13

Matthew 4:11

Luke 22:41-44

Matthew 28:3, 4

Matthew 13:40-42

-Due to the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the visible activity of angels has diminished. It is likely, however, that they minister unto us in ways we cannot see or perceive.

Hebrews 1:14

Matthew 18:10

Satan and his demons

-There are angelic beings who are evil. They were not created evil, but became so by exercising the free will that God gave them. They are commonly called demons. The Bible does not give much detail about how good angels turned evil.

-The usual name for the ruler or prince of demons is *Satan*, which means "adversary, one who tries to block your way, or accuser."

-Some think the mention of Lucifer in **Isaiah 14:12** applies only to the king of Babylon. Others think it refers to Satan or to both Satan and the king.

-The most reasonable view from the Scriptures is that Satan and other evil spirits are fallen angels, or angels that sinned.

2 Peter 2:4

-The angelic sin must have occurred before the fall of man, since Satan had already become

evil by then.

Genesis 3:1-6 John 3:8; 8:44

-Since the time that the sinful angels were expelled from heaven, they have still been able to interact with the physical universe, helping sin and rebellion against God to spread, and causing harm to people.

When Jesus came, the devil tried to thwart God's plan to save people from their sins by trying to attack Jesus.

Satan tried to have Jesus put to death as an infant.

Matthew 2:1-15

He then tried to tempt Jesus to abandon His mission.

Matthew 4:1-11

Finally, working through Judas, he sought the death of Jesus.

John 13:2 1 Corinthians 2:8

-Having failed to prevent God from carrying out His plan of redemption, Satan now targets individuals, seeking to have them abandon their saving faith in Christ.

1 Peter 5:8

Since Satan is limited and not omnipresent, he cannot do this alone. Therefore, he enlists the help of lesser angels, the ones we call "demons."

-Examples of the work of demons:

Matthew 9:32, 33; 12:22

Mark 9:17-27

Luke 13:11-16

Acts 10:38

12

The Final Judgment

-Two things that we know from Scripture are certain to happen are: death and judgment.

Hebrews 9:27 Acts 17:31

-While there are varying views, it is reasonable to conclude from Scripture that when Jesus returns, all the inhabitants of the world, dead and alive, will be gathered together and taken before the throne for the Day of Judgment.

John 4:17 2 Timothy 1:12
Matthew 7:22 Romans 2:5
Matthew 11:22 Matthew 25:31-46

-While God the Father has ultimate authority to judge, He has delegated this to the Son.

John 5:22 2 Corinthians 5:10

-Every aspect of our lives will be judged.

Matthew 16:27 Romans 2:5, 6
1 Peter 1:17

-There will be varying degrees of punishment for the lost.

Luke 20:47 Matthew 11:22-24

-There will be varying degrees of reward for the saved.

Luke 19:17, 18 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

-Some commandments have greater significance than others, and some sins are worse than others.

Matthew 22:36-40; 23:23

-The Word of God appears to teach that there

will be two stages of judgment for all. The first is according to “the books,” and may contain all the recorded works of men. In this judgment, no one is found to be worthy of heaven. In the second stage, the Lamb's book of life will be opened, showing that some have not trusted in their own works to save them, but have accepted God's gracious offer of salvation and the gift of eternal life.

Revelation 20:11-15

The spirits of believers who have died

-The traditional view of what happens to believers after they die is as follows:

³⁵₁₇ The body returns to dust and the spirit goes to Hades, the realm of the “unseen.” Hades is divided into three parts: paradise, where saved believers go; a place of torment where the unsaved go; and a great chasm (gulf) between the two that prevents anyone from crossing from one to the other.

³⁵₁₇ From the time they die until the time they are raised by Christ, the believers and unbelievers remain in these two respective places. Paradise is a great place to be, but it is not in heaven where God and Christ are.

³⁵₁₇ When Jesus returns, the unbelievers and believers will be united with their resurrected bodies and then be judged. The saved believers will spend eternity with God and Christ in heaven, and the wicked will be sent to hell.

The traditional view above is based largely on the following passages:

Luke 16:16-31; 23:43 John 20:17
Acts 2:29-35

Your teacher for this course believes the traditional view is mostly, but not completely, correct. The above accurately describes what was true before the ascension of Christ into heaven. But after the ascension, things

changed.

“Paradise” is now described as being in heaven with God and Christ.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4

Now saved believers may expect to be with Christ immediately upon death.

Philippians 1:23 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10

The apparent reason for this change: when Jesus died on the cross, the true price for sin was paid, allowing sinners to be declared forgiven and holy, and therefore the spirits of believers who died were allowed into heaven in the presence of our holy God.

Hebrews 9:11-15; 23-26

-While we often speak of spending eternity with God “in heaven,” it is perhaps more accurate to say that He will spend eternity with us in a glorious city on a newly recreated earth where everything is joyous and perfect.

Hebrews 11:10-16 2 Peter 3:7-13 Revelation 21:1-10; 22-27; 22:3-5 Revelation 3:12

The spirits of unbelievers who have died

-Just as the righteous are taken to judgment after the return of Jesus, so will the unbelieving dead be removed from their temporary place of torment to be judged and cast into hell.

The descriptions of hell in the Bible depict great suffering.

Revelation 20:15 Matthew 13:50 Mark 9:43-48

While there are varying views about whether the descriptions of hell are literal or figurative,

we may safely conclude that going to hell involves unspeakable suffering.

-The traditional view is that people who are cast into hell are subject to conscious torment for all of eternity. A growing number of Bible scholars are taking an alternative view that being cast into hell leads one eventually to being utterly destroyed, and not suffering conscious torment forever.

John 3:16

2 Thessalonians 1:19

Romans 6:23

Matthew 10:28

Revelation 20:11-15