

**Bible Baptist Theological Seminary**

***Systematic Theology***  
***Theology Proper***

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## Introduction to Systematic Theology

### Theme Verse:

Proverbs 9:10 *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”*

Psalms 33:8-9 *“Let all the earth fear the LORD: Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”*

Psalms 115:1 *“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, But unto thy name give glory, For thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake.”*

II Peter 3:18 *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.”*

Colossians 1:10 *“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”*

### Need for Systematic Theology:

1. To grow in the knowledge of God with the purpose of living out Wisdom (Prov.9:10)
  - a. Knowledge → understanding → Wisdom (context, interpretation, application)
2. Enhance the organization of teaching the Word of God *“to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”* in the process of training faithful men (Mt.28:19-20; II Tim.2:2)
  - a. Acts 1:1, I Cor.14:37, Jn.14:26, 16:13, I Thess.4:15, II Pt.3:2, Rev.1:1-3
3. To give attention, awe, glory, and honor to Christ
  - a. Treasure Christ in the media age - Ps.33:8, Eccl.1:8, Prov.27:20, 30:15-16, Hab.2:5
  - b. Pay attention to Him and His Word – Prov.4:20-22, Ps.46:10, Is.55:3, Dt.6:4-5, Jms.1:22, Rev.3:20.

### Course Requirements:

- 300 pages of reading
- Greek word studies: 1) Word Grammar, 2) Word usage elsewhere in TR, 3) theological significance to the following passages: Ephesians 1:3-4, Romans 8:29-30, Jn.6:66
  - Foreknew, predestine, chose, elect, book of life.
- 8-page Essay: Choose a passage from one of the discussion topics.
  - Provide a brief CIA (Context, Interpretation, Application) of Ephesians 1, Romans 8, and John 6. Defend and explain a Biblicist view of predestination and election in line with the book of life.
  - Write an essay on the love and sovereignty of God from a biblical view of the Book of Life.
  - Choose an 3 attributes of God, explain them biblically, and write 3 pastoral counseling scenarios where they can be applied (e.g. the impacts of God the Father on an individual with an abusive father, etc.)

**Required Reading:**

Frost, S., *Basic Teachings of the Great Philosophers*, Bantam Doubleday, NY, 1942, pp.100-174

\*choose 2 systematic theologies from below and read the Theology Proper chapters – borrow from Seminary Library \*

Hunt, D. *What love is this? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God*. Loyal Publishing, OR, 2002, pp.1-162.

Tozer, A.W. *The Knowledge of the Holy: the attributes of God*. New York, HarperCollins, 1961.

**Additional References**

Allison, G. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. Zondervan Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011.

Flowers, L. *The Potter's Promise: A Biblical Defense of Traditional Soteriology*. Trinity Academic Press, 2017.

Frost, S. *Basic Teachings of the Great Philosophers*. Anchor Book Doubleday, NY, 1962.

Hunt, D. *What love is this? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God*. Loyal Publishing, OR, 2002.

Reeves, C. *A Primer of Baptist History*. Emmanuel Baptist Press, 2009.

Weber, M. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Penguin Books, NY, 2002.

**Arminian Systematic Works:**

Cottrell, J. *The Faith Once For All: Bible Doctrine for Today*. Joplin, MO: College Press, 2002.

Miley, J. *Systematic Theology*. Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1989.

Oden, T. *Classic Christianity: A Systematic Theology*. NY, HarperOne, 2009.

Pope, W. *A Compendium of Christian Theology*. NY: Phillips and Hunt, 1875.

**Baptistic Systematic Works:**

Akin, D. *A Theology for the Church*. Nashville, B&H, 2007.

Boyce, J. *Abstract of Systematic Theology: Christian theology and the spirituality of God and His Son, Jesus Christ*. Adansonia Publishing, 2018.

Erickson, M. *Christian Theology 3<sup>rd</sup> ed*. Grand Rapids, Baker, 2013.

Garret, J. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, Evangelical*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

Gill, J. *Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*. Grand Rapids, Baker, 1767.

Strong, A. *Systematic Theology*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1907.

**Dispensational Systematic Works:**

Chafer, L. *Systematic Theology*. Dallas. Dallas Seminary Press, 1947.

MacArthur, J. and Mayhue, R. *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Biblical Truth*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017.

Ryrie, C. *Basic Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1986.

**Reformed Systematic Works:**

Bavinck, H. *Reformed Dogmatics Volume 2: God and Creation*. Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic, 2004

Berkhof, L. *Introduction to Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1932. Reprint, Grand Rapids, 1979.

- Calvin, J. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John McNeill. Translated and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles. The Library of Christian Classics, Vol.20-21. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.
- Frame, J. *Systematic Theology: an introduction to Christian Belief*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013.
- Grudem, W. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan Academic, 2020.
- Hodge, C. *Systematic Theology*. 1871. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.



## **Section 1**

### **Overview of Theology & Philosophy**

## **Introduction:**

- I. Definition for God
  - A. Linguistic definition – Theo = God; Logy = study of
- II. Biblical definitions
  - A. God is spirit (Jn.4:24)
  - B. God is love (I Jn.4:16)
  - C. “I AM that I AM” – Jehovah – the ever present and existent one (Ex.3:14)
- III. Inadequate definitions
  - A. Plato said that God is the eternal mind or oversoul
  - B. Aristotle taught that God is the first ground of all being
  - C. Spinoza held that God is the absolute, universal substance or first cause
  - D. Leibniz defined God as the Final reason of all
  - E. Fichte considered God the moral order of the universe
  - F. Hegel thought God was the absolute Spirit
  - G. Strauss identified God with the Universum
  - H. Tillich espoused that God is the ultimate concern, being itself, the God above God
- IV. Theological definitions
  - A. Berkhof defines God, saying, “God is one, absolute, unchangeable and infinite in His knowledge and wisdom, His goodness and love, his grace and mercy, His righteousness and holiness”
  - B. The New Hampshire Confession of 1833 states, “that there is one, and only one, living and true God, and infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth...revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”
  - C. Strong defines, “God is the infinite and perfect Spirit in whom all things have their source, support, and end.”

## **Existence of God**

- 1. Philosophical arguments
  - A. Ontological (“being”) Proof of God
    - i. Man has the idea of an absolutely perfect being
    - ii. Existence is an attribute of perfection
    - iii. Therefore an absolutely perfect being must exist
  - B. Cosmological (cosmos) proof of God
    - i. Everything in cosmos must have an adequate cause
    - ii. The universe must have an adequate cause
    - iii. This Cause must be indefinitely great – the uncaused God
  - C. Teleological (“end”) Proof of God
    - i. The cosmos reveals intelligence, harmony, and purpose
    - ii. The cosmos must have been caused by an intelligent being
    - iii. This intelligent being with purpose must be God
  - D. Moral proof of God
    - i. Mankind recognizes morality in the universe



- ii. This morality is based on moral codes or laws
- iii. Therefore there must be the Great Lawgiver of morality
- 2. Experiential arguments
  - A. Creation declares a personal deity (Rom.1:20)
  - B. Conscience demands an ethical system (Rom.2:15)
- 3. Biblical arguments
  - A. God is assumed to exist (Gen.1:1)
  - B. Paul assumed the existence of God against non-theistic pagans (Acts 17:24)

### **Philosophies regarding God:**

**\*\*Read:** Frost, S., *Basic Teachings of the Great Philosophers*, Bantam Doubleday, NY, 1942, pp.100-126

- 1. Early history – polytheism – gods of trees, rivers, crops, rain, fertility, etc.
  - a. Biblical example: Joshua 24:14-15, Ex.20:3
    - i. Judges 2:11-13 – Baal, Ashtaroath
      - 1. Baal = storm, fertility, agriculture, war (Canaanite)
    - ii. I Samuel 5:2-3 – Dagon
      - 1. Dagon = agriculture, grain, fertility (Philistine)
    - iii. Leviticus 18:21 – Molech
      - 1. Molech = child sacrifice for agriculture and fertility (Canaanite and Ammonite)
    - iv. I Kings 11:5 – Ashtoreth and Milcom
      - 1. Ashtoreth (Astarte) = love, fertility, war, sexuality (Venus, Near east cultures)
- 2. Greek Philosophy
  - a. Thales – all came about in a natural way – Materialism/naturalism
  - b. Anaximander – everything came from “the infinite” (pantheism)
  - c. Heraclitus – the divine logos, no anthropomorphic god (pantheism)
  - d. Xenophanes – God is the whole of nature (pantheism)
  - e. Socrates – single divine intelligence, skeptical of traditional mythology
    - i. “daimonion” (deity, demon) was a inner voice that would warn man against wrong actions
  - f. Plato – philosophical deism or idealism
    - i. Ultimate divine principle that is perfect and transcends reality – “form of the good”
      - 1. Distinct from pantheism – divine realm of forms distinct from physical world
    - ii. Not a personal god, but abstract
    - iii. Demiurge (architect or creator) who shapes the universe
      - 1. Eternal forms used to shape material world
    - iv. Oversoul
      - 1. A divine living essence that permeates universe and gives life to all
      - 2. Exists between eternal forms and material forms
      - 3. Serves as mediator between ideal and material
    - v. Influence on Christian theology and church fathers
      - 1. Plotinus (AD 204-270) – bridged philosophy wit Christian thought regarding oversoul

2. Augustine of Hippo – incorporated Platonic metaphysics into ecclesiology
  - a. Oversoul concept to understand divine intelligence & omnipresence
3. Neoplatonic influence -Used oversoul concepts to explain divine providence
- g. Aristotle
  - i. “Unmoved mover” or “Prime mover” – the infinite, philosophical ultimate being
  - ii. Completely detached from the physical world – provides ultimate purpose for creation
- h. Epicureans and Stoics – See Dr. Scott Blair’s review in “*Not after Christ*”
- i. Neoplatonic theory
  - i. God is transcendent and immanent
  - ii. All things are emanations of God on a path to return to God.
3. Medieval thought on God
  - a. Augustine
  - b. John Scotus Erigena
    - i. Neoplatonist – creation is the process of emanation from God
    - ii. Life is an expression of God
  - c. Modalism – oneness of God, rejects three separate persons
  - d. Thomas Aquinas – RCC deeply rooted in Aristotelian philosophy
  - e. Meister Eckhart
4. Renaissance thought on God
  - a. Nicolas of Cusa – RCC Cardinal – coincidence of opposites
    - i. Mystical theology – Neoplatonism – faith and reason lead to unity with God (pleroma)
  - b. Giordano Bruno – pantheist – immanent in creation – influenced by Neoplatonism (interconnection of divine and physical)
    - i. Rejection of anthropocentric universe
  - c. Francis Bacon – Theist - Anglican church – emphasized scripture and nature as divine revelation
  - d. Thomas Hobbes “Leviathon” – materialist – everything explained in matter and motion
    - i. Deist – God created, but was detached from world. God is apart of the natural law of physics
  - e. Rene Descartes – “Meditations” “I think, therefore I am” – the very act of doubting proves God
    - i. Theist with RCC roots
  - f. Blaise Pascal – “thoughts” – RCC theological roots – theist – Pascal’s wager = rational choice to believe in God and go to heaven instead of rejecting him and risking hell.
  - g. Baruch Spinoza – Pantheist, infinite substance, no human like attributes

### **Philosophies regarding Fate versus the Free Will of Man and immortality after death**

**\*\*Read:** Frost, S., *Basic Teachings of the Great Philosophers*, Bantam Doubleday, NY, 1942, pp.126-174

1. Animism – belief that every object is a person but much more powerful. Caused man to fear objects and seek to appease objects with charms, etc.
2. The Fates – beings of great power that determined the destiny of every man. Man is not free to untangle himself from the web of destiny.
3. Greek philosophy believed in the absolute power of the universe to determine man’s destiny
  - a. Pythagoras – the careful study of numbers could predict man’s future

- b. Heraclitus – man is subject to the justice and law (fate) of the universe
- c. \*\* Sophists – broke tradition towards the free will of man and unrealized possibilities to shape his own destiny.
- d. Socrates – through knowledge, man could do good and influence destiny.
- e. Plato – man can and does defeat the purposes of the universe for good or evil.
- f. Aristotle – “Virtue, as well as evil, lies in our power”
  - i. Plato and Aristotle believed that a world in which fate ruled completely could not be a good world because man was not held accountable for their actions.
- g. Epicurus – “atoms of man were endued with spontaneity” – free will of man
- h. Zeno and the Stoics – the universe is result of a fixed and unchanged law - fatalistic
  - i. “everything in the universe has its beginning and source in the will of God” (cf. Col.2:9)
- i. Philo – the soul is connected with the divine, but has the ability to accept or reject the rule of God
- j. Plotinus – gnostic ladder
  - i. *“Man’s soul had the desire to shape and mould matter, and thus became enmeshed in matter and fell. In this fall each soul loses its original freedom. As the real soul turns away from the life of sense in the body, it regains freedom. The nearer it returns to God the more freedom it has.”* – grow in secret knowledge, grow in freedom of will.

#### 4. Medieval Christian thinkers

- a. Apologists – the freedom of man is real in that it enables him to determine his estate forever
- b. Jesus – “Jesus came to save man from sin. Sin implies guilt. Guilt is meaningless unless man is in some way responsible for his sin. You cannot hold a man guilty of an act unless he is able to act differently. Thus, only if man is free to choose can he be condemned for his sin.
- c. Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202 AD)
  - i. Emphasized freedom of human will; God’s will is for all to respond in faith/repentance
  - ii. Foreknowledge of all possibilities dependent on their response to God’s call
- d. Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD)
  - i. God’s plan of salvation was for everyone.
  - ii. Human responsibility and cooperation with divine grace.
  - iii. God’s providence ensures that salvation is available to all, but outcome depends on free choice
- e. Tertullian (155-240 AD)
  - i. More deterministic – believed in God’s sovereignty over the fate of individuals
  - ii. God’s will determines final destinies, but still emphasized human actions and choices.
- f. Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)
  - i. Universal restoration that all souls would eventually be reconciled to God.
    - 1. In contrast to Augustine’s predestination to eternal damnation
  - ii. Believed in the free will of humans, by reason, would choose God
- g. Pelagius – God gave freedom to man to choose between good and evil.
  - i. Man is inherently good and born morally neutral. Adam’s sin did not effect other humans.
  - ii. Since they are not born with Adams’ sin, they can choose right or wrong.
  - iii. Wrongly emphasized free will of man from a posture of moral incorruption
  - iv. Condemned by the Council of Carthage in 418 AD
- h. Semi-pelagian – believe in original sin, have ability to respond and seek God
  - i. Grace is necessary AFTER the initial human desire

i. Augustine – (354-430 AD)

- i. Gnostic manichaeism of Persia for 10 years prior to conversion. Manichaeism believed in determinism and total depravity in the context of dualistic mythology.
- ii. Responded to Pelagius and proposed a deterministic view of predestination
- iii. Since Adam sinned, he lost freedom for man to choose God.
- iv. Adam was free to choose, after his sin, no one is free to choose.

*The Incomprehensible and Personally Knowable God*

**The Nature of God in View of “Philosophy and Vain Deceit, After the Tradition of Men” (Col.2:8)**

Dr. M. Ryan Strouse

**Introduction**

The nature of Jehovah God continues to be perverted as it always has been since the garden of Eden by Lucifer. Satan has blinded the eyes of man in tandem with their wretched hearts that lust to envy to various ideas of the Almighty Jehovah that appease the mind and flesh (II Cor.4:4; Jms.1:13-15). Among the deist, “god’s” nature is reduced to a creator who is cold and distant toward his creation – no judgment or accountability. Among the pantheist, “god” and his power are in everything – man has divinity within. The polytheist require numerous mediators and demi-gods to advocate on their behalf. Among theists, there is rampant error in every doctrine, namely that of God.<sup>1</sup>

II Corinthians 2:11 states, “*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*” Sadly, many Christians are ignorant of his devices and fall prey to “*Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness...*” (II Cor.11:14-15). It is of paramount importance for Christians to recognize that the modern, humanistic world is immersed in a spiritual battle that promotes false doctrines of God (Eph.6:12).

This spiritual battle has a vast array of erroneous tentacles that seek to fill the unique voids within the heart of mankind; it consists of organized religions, eclectic cults, and social media influencers. These tentacles pose a form of help towards happiness and contentment, but they trace back from the philosophy of man to the doctrine of devils, and eventually to the gnostic lies of the Garden from Satan (Gen.3:3-6; Col.2:8).<sup>2</sup> Christians are to counter this through growth in sound doctrine and increasing in the “*knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*” in the pillar and ground of truth (II Pt.3:18; I Tim.3:15; cf. Col.2:3).

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<sup>1</sup>Theism is the view of a God who has created all things and is intimately involved in the affairs of His creation (broad Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedism). Of note, Reformed Theology is a modern form of theism that undermines the nature of God through His willful reprobation of the non-elect prior to the foundation of the world. Hunt notes the rebuttal of many Calvinists against this claim, “*God does not prevent man from coming to Him. They are free to come to Him if they want to. What God does is withhold His mercy, which he is under no obligation to give since it is man’s desire not to know God.*” Hunt, D. *What Love Is This: Calvinism’s Misrepresentation of God*. Sisters, OR. Loyal Publishing, Inc.2002, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup>See “Who Completes You? – the cycle of error” in the demonology section of syllabus.

The philosophies of man cater to everything one could ever want or need; many of these market-facing aspects of these philosophies are practical, sound, and even biblical (i.e. Mormons = pro-family; Masons = pro-community; stoics = pro-self-awareness). Nonetheless, philosophy of man is always linked to a form of theology proper. It behooves Christians to trace back any pearl of wisdom to its doctrine of “god;” is it sound doctrine of Scripture or the doctrine of devils (I Tim.4:1)? It behooves pastors to show church members how being “*complete in Christ*” can help in all areas of life.

Ultimately, these philosophies seek to erroneously explain or explain away the innate notion of a Creator within each fearfully and wonderfully made soul. In connection to the garden lies of deathlessness and deification of man, these erroneous theologies lead to a vast array of error that protects the sinful heart of man from any form of eternal accountability or judgment. Does your “god” line up with “*all the counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27)?

Furthermore, these philosophies hijack terminology (with different meanings) from Scripture; terms such as “god,” “divine,” “word or logos,” “grace,” and “light.” Great confusion is caused for immature Christians who do not discern the terminology and connect it to a Scriptural definition. In particular, the term “god” is used as an in-road to beguile “unstable souls” (II Pt.2:14) and to the bewitching of foolish and immature Christians (Gal.3:1). Undiscerning believers continue to be ensnared by false teachers who promote a “god” and “jesus” that caters to the lust of flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life (I Jn.4:1-3, 2:13-17). In an effort to counter gnostic error, the Apostles Paul and Peter separately implored Christians to grow in the knowledge of the true God and Savior – Jesus Christ (Col.1:10; II Pt.3:18).

## The Father of Lies

Genesis 3:1 notes the perpetual subterfuge of God’s nature, “*Yea, hath God said...*” Lucifer, the father of lies, is a master in the ministry of questions that sow doubt and dispute against God’s Word (I Tim.1:4, 6:4; II Tim.2:23; Tt.3:9; cf. Jn.8:44). Consider the blasphemy of ministering doubt in the Word of the eternal, high, and lofty Jehovah. Likewise, Genesis 3:4 denotes the judgment free life promised by Satan, “*Ye shall not surely die.*” Immediately, Satan declared God as a liar who could not be trusted and proposed an alternative view of God. He presented Jehovah as one whose Word was weak, and as one who gave unclear instruction<sup>3</sup> (see Gen.2:16-17). He went a step further and denounced God’s sure judgment of “*thou shalt surely die*” (Gen.2:17).<sup>4</sup>

The de-emphasis of certain attributes of God and the over-emphasis of others is a common error (“God is love, and not judgement”). Furthermore, the separation of God’s attributes from His being has continued from the garden. Satan used Gnostic systems such as the Kabbalah to separate the attributes of “god” from itself via emanations. Plato proposed this error as “*archetypes*” and ascribed to them an independent existence alongside God.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Jehovah, the Great I AM, is entirely perfect; each of His attributes are perfectly identical with

<sup>3</sup> Sound familiar? This argument continues today in the exacerbated form of textual criticism. Can God overcome human history to preserve His Word? Do we really have the Words of God? Can we know for sure what God meant? Christians and critics are enamored with the research science of materialism. Certainly, there is a place for apologetic evidence, but when the evidence inevitably runs to an end the individual is left with a choice – doubt or faith in God’s Word. See I John 2:20.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD spoke emphatically as He employed the *Qal* absolute infinitive מָוֹת (*moth - dying*) followed by the *Qal* imperfect verb in the second person masculine singular תָּמוּת (*tamuth – thou shalt die*). Strouse notes, “*Moses shows the Lord’s emphatic words with a grammatical parallel, ‘not eating thou shalt eat...dying thou shalt die.’*” Strouse, T. *But God Meant It Unto Good: An Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*. Cromwell, CT. Bible Baptist Theological Press, 2012, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup>Cocker, B. *Christianity and Greek Philosophy: Or, the Relation between Spontaneous and Reflective thought in Greece and the Positive Teaching of Christ and His Apostles*. New York City. Scriptura Press, 2015.

His triune-being. He is perfectly good, holy, and just. Only through Christ can we have righteousness, access to God, and walk in the fruit of the Spirit (II Cor.5:21; Rom.5:1; Gal.5:22).

Lucifer's pride distorted his view of Jehovah; in pride, the Almighty, eternal God was capable of being overthrown and undermined (Is.12:12-14). Ezekiel 28:17 notes, "*Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.*" His brightness, skill, beauty, and wisdom were used as a means of authority in bringing error. Certainly, this mode has been carried out by his demonic ministers towards the earthly teachers of error (Col.2:8; II Cor.11:14). Furthermore, his wisdom was corrupted and is still used to blind the eyes of mankind with a false view of God.

A brief perusal of cults, religions, and philosophies will note the keen awareness of a supreme being through natural revelation; nevertheless, the distinguishing mark is they all or parts of His Word regarding His nature and His Son, the Savior Jesus Christ. Like Paul, Christians must not be ignorant of his devices as they contend for the faith (II Cor.2:11; Jude 3).

### **The Deceptive Views on the Nature of God**

The satanic lies of the garden have disseminated to demons and continue to influence the philosophies of mankind (Col.2:8). In a broad stroke, man often rejects the innate recognition of the ever-present Jehovah and moves from agnosticism to gnostic polytheism, deism, pantheism, or atheism. The recognition of a "god" splinters into the questions of His transcendence above creation and immanence with creation (I Kgs.8:27). Does "god" personally know those created in His image? Can "god" be known? Does He reveal Himself to His creation?

These questions have been peddled since the garden of Eden through the Greek philosophers and continue today. The gnostic sees the great gulf between "god" and man, which can only be bridged through the various aeons, angels, and polytheistic demi-gods with secret knowledge.<sup>6</sup> Gnostics have generally taught there is no revelation of God except through the aeons by way of secret knowledge (heresy). Consequently, there is no innate, acquired, or revealed knowledge apart from those specified channels. The "god" of the pleroma (fullness) is absolutely unknowable and inaccessible, often called the unknowable abyss and eternal silence.<sup>7</sup>

Other variations of garden deception regarding the nature of god abound under two broad umbrellas of deism and pantheism. The deist acknowledges the transcendence of a supreme being, but declares it is cold, distant, and unconcerned with creation.<sup>8</sup> The pantheist embraces the immanence of the universal god that is in all matter.<sup>9</sup> All the while, the practical "atheist" crowns himself as god. Nonetheless, all variations of garden Gnosticism lead to destruction (Pr.14:12).

Luke recorded Paul's visit to Athens where he encountered the Stoics and Epicureans. Acts 17:16 indicates that Paul's "*spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.*" Athens was the center of the

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<sup>6</sup>Rudolph, K. *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*. T & T Clark Limited, Edinburgh. 1984.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ryrie, C. *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. Chicago. Moody Publishers, 1999.

<sup>9</sup>Strong, A. *Systematic Theology A Compendium and Commonplace-Book Designed For The Use Of Theological Students*. Philadelphia. The Judson Press, 1907, p.68-69.



five majors schools of Greek philosophy that included the Platonist, Aristotelian, Stoic, Epicurean, and the Skeptics. Petronius, the Roman satirist, stated, “*it was easier to find a god in Athens than a man.*”<sup>10</sup>

In Acts 17, Paul rightly declared the superstitious fear of demons (δεδαιμόνων)<sup>11</sup> in Athens that resulted in all forms of worship. In essence, the Greeks covered all their bases – gnostic polytheism, deism, pantheism, and atheism. Nevertheless, they did have innate recognition of the “uncaused cause” and set up an idol to the “UNKNOWN GOD.”

Cocker depicts the sites Paul would have seen in Athens, the “*city wholly given to idolatry:*”

*“At the very entrance of the city he met the evidence of this peculiar tendency of the Athenians to multiply the objects of their devotion; for here at the gateway stands an image of Neptune, seated on horseback, and brandishing the trident. Passing through the gate his attention would be immediately arrested by the sculptured forms of Minerva, Jupiter, Apollo, Mercury, and the Muses, standing near a sanctuary of Bacchus.*

*Walking to the end of this street, and turning to the right, he entered the Agora, a public square surrounded with porticoes and temples, which were adorned in honor of the gods of Grecian mythology. Amid the plane-trees planted by the hand of Cimon are the deified heroes of Athens, Hercules and Theseus, and the whole series of the Eponymi.*

*Mercuries which gave the name to the streets on which they were placed; statues dedicated to Apollo as patron of the city and her deliverer from the plague; and in the center of all the altar of the twelve gods.*

*Standing in the market place, and looking up to the Areopagus, Paul would see the temple of Mars, from whom the hill derived its name. and turning toward the Acropolis, he would behold, a series of little sanctuaries on the very ledges of the rocks the shrines of Bacchus and Aesculapius, Venus, Earth, and Ceres, ending with the lovely form of the Temple of Unwinged Victory.*

*If the apostle entered the fivefold gates, and ascended the flight of steps to the acropolis, he would find the grand composition of architecture and dedicated worship of the gods. Here stood the Parthenon, the Virgin house, the glorious temple which was erected during the proudest days of Athenian glory, an entire offering to Minerva, the tutelary divinity of Athens. Within was the colossal statues of the dooess wrought in ivory and gold. Outside the temple there stood another statue of Minerva, cast from the brazen spoils of Marathon.”*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Cocker, B. *Christianity and Greek Philosophy: Or, the Relation between Spontaneous and Reflective thought in Greece and the Positive Teaching of Christ and His Apostles*. New York City. Scriptura Press, 2015.

<sup>11</sup>This compound Greek word consists of the adjective δειλός (*deilos*) that means “fear or dread” and δαίμων (*daimon*) that means “demon, spirit, god). This contextually more accurate in place of many commentators who denote this term in a positive light of being religious in their pursuit of god.

<sup>12</sup>Cocker, B. *Christianity and Greek Philosophy: Or, the Relation between Spontaneous and Reflective thought in Greece and the Positive Teaching of Christ and His Apostles*. New York City. Scriptura Press, 2015.

For more in-depth study, Dr. Thomas M. Strouse handles Paul’s message at Mar’s Hill with excellence;<sup>13</sup> however, this essay will focus briefly on the nature of God in the sermon in Acts 17:22-33. Paul revealed about God’s nature the following:

- God created heaven and earth (v.24)
- God is greater than His creation (v.24)
- God does not need man’s worship (v.25)
- God has created mankind as “one blood” (v.26)
- God is eternal and has foreknowledge of all possibilities regarding the full responsibility of man (v.26-27)
- God is near to man and desirous that they turn to Him (v.27)
- Man lives, moves, and has being because of God (v.28)
- Mankind is the offspring of God (v.28)
- The Triune Godhead is beyond man’s ability to imaginatively create (v.29)
- God is patient towards mankind (v.30)
- God desires repentance from mankind (v.30)
- God is interested in mankind and will judge in righteousness (v.31)
- God resurrected Christ and will resurrect Christians (v.31-32)

***A brief review of the erroneous concepts of God***

Belief system:	Very brief description:
Agnostic	Generally understood as an individual that believes nothing can be known about God or who is uncertain about the existence of God.  The Greek word behind “ <i>UNKNOWN</i> ” in Acts 17:23 is ἄγνωστος ( <i>agnostos</i> ) from which we get the word agnostic.
Atheism	“ <i>The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God</i> ” Ps.14:1 Man denounces his Creator and makes himself God (Rom.1:21-22)
Deism	A Deity created the universe, started it functioning, but is no longer actively involved in it.
Pantheism	Deity is the inner spiritual essence of everything in the universe.
Theism	Deity created the universe and continues to actively participate in the world’s activities and in human history.

***Atheism***

Regarding “atheism” Strouse indicates, “*there is no true atheism within mankind, as David the psalmist declared, saying ‘the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable , there is none that doeth good...have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Who eat up my people as they eat*

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<sup>13</sup>Strouse, T. *The Lord Added to the Church: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol.2. Cromwell, CT. Bible Baptist Theological Press, 2021.



bread, and call not upon the LORD' (Ps.14:1,4). Man rejects the authority of Jehovah over his life and therefore is a pragmatic atheist, making himself the ultimate god."<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, the Gnostics and polytheists saw the unthinkability of atheism. Cicero famously stated, "*there is no people so barbarous as not to believe in the gods...time obliterates the inventions of the imagination, but confirms the judgments of nature.*"<sup>15</sup> Just as the Athenians with the unknown God, humans cannot resist the recognition of a supreme power. As will be discussed, this is through the natural, innate, and special revelation of God toward man.

This "atheism" that permeates the current culture is that of billions of individuals who crown themselves as god, king, savior, and judge of their own life (Rom.1:21-22; cf. Is.14:14). This satanic lie continues to find preeminence in his earthly domain (Eph.2:1-2). One philosopher that promulgates this inane heresy denotes the courage it takes to selfishly pursue happiness at the cost of others.

*"To honor the self is to be in love with our own life, in love with our possibilities for growth and for the experiencing of joy, in love with the process of discovery and exploring our distinctively human potentialities. Thus we can begin to see that to honor the self is to practice selfishness in the highest, noblest, and the least understood sense of the word, and this, I shall argue, requires enormous independence, courage, and integrity."*<sup>16</sup>

### **Agnosticism - The Unknowable "God"**

Agnosticism has always found its place in the recognition of a supreme being with a fear of atheism's folly. Many of the various forms of agnosticism have posited philosophies such as the Greeks idol to the "UNKNOWN GOD." It has been noted that agnosticism usually leads to a pantheistic concept of "god." The challenge for the agnostic is the recognition of God's glory in creation and mankind; however, it stumbles in the fact that such a supreme God could condescend to mankind.

Plato rejected anthropomorphic representations of God and stated, "*Now to discover the Maker and Father of this universe is an enormous job, and, having discovered him, to tell everyone about him is impossible.*" Furthermore, he indicated "*that the deity or idea of the good transcends not only all that exists but even being itself.*"<sup>17</sup> Others would take Plato's concept of God and add a variety of error upon it in the form of Neoplatonism.

Plotinus (204-270 AD) has been deemed the father of Neoplatonism.<sup>18</sup> He carried the incomprehensibility of God even further by stating, "*nothing can be said of God that is not negative. God is absolutely one- above all plurality – and therefore not describable in terms of through or the good, not even in terms of being. We cannot say what he is, only what he is not.*"<sup>19</sup>

"Christian" Neoplatonist Pseudo-Dionysius of the 5<sup>th</sup> century transmitted the works of Dionysius of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. He continued the integration of "Platonic theology" into the Catholic Church, which continues his

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<sup>14</sup>Strouse, T. *The Lord Added to the Church: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol.2. Cromwell, CT. Bible Baptist Theological Press, 2021, p.1175.

<sup>15</sup>Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, I, 42.

<sup>16</sup>Branden, Nathaniel. *Honoring the Self: Personal Integrity and the Heroic Potentials of Human Nature* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983, p.4.

<sup>17</sup>Plato, *Timaeus*. <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/1572/pg1572-images.html>. Accessed 6/21/2024.

<sup>18</sup><https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plotinus/>

<sup>19</sup>Guthrie, K. *Plotinus Complete Works*. Alpine, NJ. Comparative Literature Press, 1918, p.1300. [https://www.gutenberg.org/files/42933/42933-h/42933-h.htm#Page\\_1300](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/42933/42933-h/42933-h.htm#Page_1300). Accessed 6/20/2024.

praise today for bringing cosmic praise to the church through his efforts.<sup>20</sup> He continued the declaration of God's unknowability. He stated, "*God is infinity beyond being...oneness that is beyond intelligence...the inscrutable One out of the reach of every rational process...nor can any words come up to the inexpressible good, this One, this source of all unity, this supraexistent being. Mind beyond mind, word beyond speech, it is gathered up by no discourse, by no intuition, by no name. It is and it is as no other being is...it alone could give an authoritative account of what really is.*"<sup>21</sup>

Neoplatonist philosopher John Scottus Eriugena (800-877 AD) perpetuated the following agnostic heresy:

*"For God is more truthfully said not to be any of those things that are claimed of him than he is said to be. He is better known by not being known; ignorance of him is true wisdom."*<sup>22</sup>

The agnostic incomprehensibility of God has permeated the world's philosophies ad nauseum; it has recognized a God who "cannot be known" by rejecting His Word. John 1:10-12 states, "*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*"

Likewise, Romans 1:21 states, "*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*" Agnosticism is the willful rejection of God's natural, innate, and special revelations of Himself. Jehovah is the high and lofty Creator that desires relationship and fellowship with His creation.

## Deism

Deism is the recognition of a Supreme Being or creator through reason only; however, this god is uninterested and disengaged in its creation. Deism has been seen across many cultures and religions as the acceptance of a higher power who values virtue, but is overly not involved in the affairs of one's life. Famous deists include Voltaire, Napoleon Bonaparte, Victor Hugo, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and Neil Armstrong. The worship system is that of virtue and morality; however, it does not demand prayer, church attendance, repentance, etc. Furthermore, it has rejected any form of divine revelation, but instead relies on the laws of nature and science. Deism has mixed views on the afterlife.<sup>23</sup>

The term "moralistic therapeutic deism" has been coined as the primary religious belief in America. Many Americans believe in "God and country;" however, this "god" is vague and uninvolved in the individual's life. Most would say they strive to be moral and virtuous. It is the lazy man's "god" to fit in with a moral majority. At the end of the day, there is no judgment from this god, which is a gnostic teaching of deathlessness (no judgment).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup><https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/pseudodionysius-the-areopagite-6362>

<sup>21</sup>Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*. <https://archive.org/details/theworksofdionys00dionuoft/page/n13/mode/2up>. Accessed 6/20/2024.

<sup>22</sup>Eriugena, *The Divine Nature*, I, 7. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/scottus-eriugena/>. Accessed 6/21/2024.

<sup>23</sup><https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/field-guide-on-false-teaching-deism>.

<sup>24</sup>Smith, C., "On Moralistic Therapeutic Deism" as U.S. - Teenagers actual, tacit, de facto religious faith." Catholic Education Resource Center.

Joel Osteen represents therapeutic deism. There is a god who is only interested in your personal happiness, and does not contain the concept of sin, accountability, or judgment. One must discern the cherry-picked idea of a proposed “god” or “jesus” of love, who has been amputated of the attributes of holiness and righteousness. This god appeals to the flesh by allowance of sin with no accountability. The one-dimensional god of love tempts every Biblicist assembly and does not represent the Great I AM – the Lord Jesus Christ.

### ***Pantheism***

Pantheism is the view that “god” and the universe are one, and that “god” is within all aspects of the universe including man.<sup>25</sup> Immediately, we see the gnostic garden deception of deification of man (Gen.3:3-6). Pantheism is extremely varied, but the following is a list of core varieties of the heresy that contain tenants of garden Gnosticism:

- **Absolute pantheism** was proposed by Greek philosopher Parmenides. He taught that there is only one being in the world – God. “All else that appears to exist does not actually exist.”
- **Emanational pantheism** comes from Plotinus the father of Neo-Platonism. This is standard gnostic teaching that emanations from “the One” descend toward man.
- **Developmental pantheism** is a recent heresy of G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831). He posited that history and life is the unfolding of the emanations of the “Absolute Spirit.”
- **Modal pantheism** was put forward by the rationalist Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677). He was similar to Plato in the idea that all finite things are a mode of the “Absolute Substance.”
- **Multilevel pantheism** has the standard tenants of garden Gnosticism, which proposes various levels or of “god.” These levels culminate in the manifestation of god as the “Absolute One.”
- **Permeational pantheism** indicates that the universe and “god” are one, and that “god” permeates into all things for inner power. Taoism and many new age cults adopt this form of gnostic error. Furthermore, the “tao” or universe is the premise for the “force” in the Star Wars saga.

### ***Ecumenical Pantheism***

One notable infiltration of pantheism into “evangelical” circles is that of the charismatic or Pentecostal movement. The Word of Faith movement has posed a pantheistic view of god, who is there for one’s personal happiness, material wealth, and physical health. Furthermore, the error of the deification of man has insidiously crept into the movement and has spread rapidly. Key leaders, Kenneth Copeland and Creflo Dollar, have both made comments regarding the “god” within the individual, who has power to speak miracles into existence.

Kenneth Copeland stated, *“You’re all god. You don’t have a God living in you; you are one! You are part and parcel of God.”*

Creflo Dollar stated, *“I’m going to say something, we are gods, in this earth, and it’s about time we start operating like gods instead of a bunch of mere powerless humans.”*

Paul Crouch stated, *“I am a little god. I have His name. I am one with Him. I am in a covenant relation. I am a little god. Critics be gone!”*<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>See N., Geisler, N., and Watkins, W. *Worlds apart: A Handbook on Worldviews*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House. 1989, 146-182.

<sup>26</sup>MacArthur, J. *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship*. Nashville. Nelson Books, 2013, p.11.

Not surprisingly, many of the Charismatic leaders poke holes in the deity of Jesus Christ and his resurrection.<sup>27</sup>

Kenneth Copeland states, *“How did Jesus then on the cross say, My God? Because God was not His Father anymore. He took upon Himself the nature of Satan. And I am telling you Jesus is in the middle of that pit. He is suffering all there there is to suffer...his emaciated, little wormy spirit is down in the bottom of that thing and the devil thinks he got him destroyed. But, all of a sudden God started talking.”*

Creflo Dollar states, *“Jesus didn’t show up perfect, he grew into his perfection. You know Jesus, in one scripture in the bible he went on a journey, and he was tired. You better hope God don’t get tired...but Jesus did. If he came as God and He got tired – he says he sat down by the well because he was tired, boy, we’re in trouble. And somebody said, well, Jesus came as God. Well, how many of you know the bible says God never sleeps nor slumbers? And yet in the book of Mark we see Jesus asleep in the back of the boat.”*<sup>28</sup>

Biblicist Christians must compare spiritual with spiritual under the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the House of God (I Cor.2:7-16; I Tim.3:15). We must not be caught in the snare of experience driven worship with similar nomenclature (i.e. god, jesus) that is disconnected from sound doctrine.

### ***Polytheism***

Polytheism is the organized or eclectic view of gods and demi-gods that deify and personify the various forces within creation. For instance, the Greek gods of Olympus had Zeus the king of the gods, who had power over the skies. He was followed by Hera the queen of the gods who had power over women, childbirth, and family. Ares was the god of war and manly virtues. Poseidon the god over the seas and storms. Demeter the god over harvest and agriculture.<sup>29</sup>

The error in polytheism is that it takes all the perfect attributes of Jehovah, the eternal and ever-present One, and stratifies them amongst various demi-gods. The concept that God’s attributes are separate and independent of Him preceded Plato and continue in various forms today. Gnostic systems such as the Kabbalah describe these as emanations or attributes that descend from the “divine being” to various demi-gods (demons) and to earthly gurus that guide unstable souls through these avenues.

Exodus 3:14 is clear, *“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”* Jehovah God is the great “I AM” or ever-present all consistent God. Paul reiterated this truth about the Lord Jesus Christ, God-manifest in the flesh, in Colossians 1:19 *“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”* Likewise, Colossians 2:9-10 state, *“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”* The moment that God’s attributes are separated from His being into emanations or demi-gods is the introduction of Gnostic polytheism.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>It is essential to understand that each person of the trinity raised Christ from the dead. God the Father (Jn.10:17-18; Rom.10:9; Acts 5:30), the Son Jesus Christ (Jn.2:19-21; Jn.10:17-18), and the Holy Spirit (Rom.8:11; I Pt.3:18).

<sup>28</sup>MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 2013, p.48.

<sup>29</sup>Cocker, B. *Christianity and Greek Philosophy: Or, the Relation between Spontaneous and Reflective thought in Greece and the Positive Teaching of Christ and His Apostles*. New York City. Scriptura Press, 2015.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. Plato posited the ideas that archetypes (prototype or primary model) of existing things, ascribed to them an independent existence alongside “god”.

## The Intrigue of Error

Peddlers of various philosophy generate intrigue through a form of humility that creates trust. II Peter 2:1 warns about false teachers “...*who privily shall bring in damnable heresies.*” The Greek root verb behind “*privily shall bring in*” is *παρεισάγω* (*pareisago*), which literally means “to come along side to bring into.” The KJV translators appropriately rendered the intimacy and secrecy of introducing error to an assembly. Error is best served with a smile, warm embrace and a “*shew of wisdom in will worship and humility*” (Col.2:23). There will always be a “humble and helping hand” to guide a suffering individual into a philosophy that leads to self-reliant pantheism, enslaved polytheism, or aloof deism.

Next, man’s philosophies pursue happiness and contentment apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. These pursuits elevate self-reliance instead of God-dependence. Often, the practical aspects of a philosophy are borrowed pearls of valuable truth from the Word of God that resonate with mankind. For example, the Stoics promoted the virtuous life that lived in active awareness of the brevity of life. The Stoics taught the need to put others first, not to trade evil for evil, to see the preciousness of time, and to be active in honest self-reflection. Primarily, these principles are riddled throughout Scripture and belong to God to point mankind to His Son, Jesus Christ. Man’s philosophies borrow the wisdom of God’s truth and mix in a tremendous amount of self-reliance. There is no need for a Savior in man’s philosophies. It is a dead-end road that leads straight to an erroneous theology and Gnostic error to tap into the “god” within the individual for help (Prov.14:12). The appeal of truth and common sense is quickly mixed with error that leads astray.

I Corinthians 1:20 rings loudly, “*Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*” Man’s wisdom dominates the prevailing think-tanks of the world; however, if it does not point to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Mediator and Advocate for miserable man then it is foolish and useless (Is.29:14). Colossians 2:8 plainly reveals that behind every philosophy is a rudimentary demon that promotes the Gnostic lies of the Garden. Wisdom must always be traced back to its source of power – self or Christ.

## Who of God is made unto wisdom

I Corinthians 1:29-31 states, “*That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*”

God is jealous of His own glory (Is.42:8, 48:11; Ps.115:1). Furthermore, God is greatly glorified in man’s dependence upon Him. However, the philosophers of the world who peddle various forms of garden Gnosticism and beguile unstable souls for their own glory will be abased (Jer.9:23-24). Meanwhile, the foolish, base, and weak individual “*in Christ Jesus*” is the one who has eternal wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Christ Jesus by God is “*made unto us*” (γίνομαι, *ginomai*) wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. God is glorified in man’s humble dependence upon Him through faith (Heb.11:6).

No guru that peddles a philosophy that leads to a false theology has access to biblical wisdom. The hidden wisdom of God was ordained before the world (I Cor.2:7). True wisdom is for those in humble contrition repent of sin and turn in faith Christ through the hearing of God’s Word. True wisdom is revealed by God and not flesh and blood (Mt.16:17). God “*revealed*” or uncovered this wisdom to man by His Spirit (I Cor.2:10). Paul made very clear to state, “...*even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*” Only born-again



Christians can receive the hidden wisdom of Jesus Christ. Those with the indwelling Holy Spirit can “*know the things that are freely given to us of God*” (I Cor.2:12).

## **The Revelation of God**

In contrast to the previous error, the Word of God declares that God has revealed Himself in His creation, in the heart of man, and through the special revelation of His Word. Understanding these core elements is imperative to understanding why man’s philosophy so often isolates their understanding of God strictly to natural revelation and rejects His Word.

### ***Natural Revelation***

Psalms 19:1 states, “*The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament sheweth his handywork.*” In stark contrast to the various deceptive philosophies, God has clearly revealed the perfections of Himself to mankind through His creation, His creatures, and His Word (Ps.19:1; Gen.2:7; Ps.139:14; Heb.1:1). Romans 1:19 clearly states, “*because that which may be known of God is manifest in them.*” The genitive noun “God” denotes possession over that “*which may be known,*” meaning God allows the knowledge of Him to be “*manifest in them.*” Of course, why would man, created in the image of God, not reflect on their Creator (Gen.1:26-27). Romans 1:20 states, “*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*” Mankind (the things that are made) has the ability to passively understand the eternal power and Godhead through their perception of creation. The verb “*being understood*” is a present passive participle that denotes the subject of the verb is receiving the action. Again, man has an innate understanding of the God of heaven. This revelation leaves man without excuse for repentance and faith.

### ***Innate Knowledge of God***

God has revealed Himself in the breath, image, heart, and conscience of man; hence, mankind has an intrinsic awareness of his or her Creator as they consider these truths. Satan, the doctrine of devils, and the philosophies of man enter early and swiftly to inject doubt and error regarding the nature of God. Nevertheless, God’s glory is replete and resounding all throughout Creation and within His image-bearers; man remains “*without excuse*” (Rom.1:20).

Genesis 2:7 states, “*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*” Simply, a soul includes a body (material) and spirit (immaterial – heart, mind, conscience). Luke 3:38b states, “*...the son of Adam, which was the son of God.*” The breath of life has passed through sin-cursed man through the fearful and wonderful process of reproduction that allows a male and female reproductive cell to join and form a zygote. This zygote goes through the process of cell division known as mitosis until it forms an embryo. The heart cells of that tiny embryo begin to beat at about twenty-eight days, which allows for the circulation of oxygen from the mother’s placenta. The birth of a child who can circulate oxygen from mom in the womb, and can breathe upon birth is a daily declaration of God!

Furthermore, the entire flesh and spirit of man is made in the likeness of the triune Godhead. Genesis 1:26 states, “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:*”<sup>31</sup> “God” (Elohim) is the dual ending

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<sup>31</sup>The Trinity are put on full display in Genesis 1:1-2. “God” is derived from the Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים (Elohim), which has a dual ending. Furthermore, the “Spirit of God” (רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, ruach Elohim) is involved in moving the face of the waters.

found in Genesis 1:1, and the first-person plural form is used in the verb “*let us make*” and in the pronoun “*our*.” Genesis 1:27 states the profound but overlooked truth, “*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*” Man is made in the “*image*” (תְּצַלֵּם, *tselem*) after the likeness or figure of the Trinity. The soul of man and all its faculties are made after the entire likeness of the Trinity. The incarnation of Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the definitive proof that the human body is a key component to the image of God. In the image of God, mankind is the highest form of self-revelation in nature since he is superior to the beasts and has dominion over the world (Ps.8:4-9).<sup>32</sup>

Ecclesiastes 3:11 reveals that man has an internal intrigue regarding eternity and life after death, “*He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*” The Hebrew word behind “*world*” is עוֹלָם (*olam*) that is primarily rendered in the King James Version (KJV) as “*forever*,” “*everlasting*,” “*perpetual*,” and “*forevermore*.” God has placed the intrigue of eternity to draw all men unto Him, despite the wealth, pleasure, power, and vanity that distracts the heart of man (Jn.12:32).

Similarly, Ecclesiastes 2:14 reveals that all mankind considers the “*one event*” (מִקְרֵה אֶחָד, *miqreh echad*), “*The wise man’s eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.*” Mankind always has there internal heart and mind considering the “*one event*,” man weighs decisions based on “*how much time*” they think they have in this world. Subsequently, Solomon praised the times of sorrow instead of laughter. Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 states, “*It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.*” Sorrow is a form of God’s goodness that challenges the heart of man to consider their life and eternity.

God has written His moral law in the hearts of mankind; hence, mankind understands good and evil. As image bearers, we naturally know what pleases or displeases God’s Law. Romans 2:15-16 states, “*Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*” One does not need to be born again to understand certain things are good and other things are evil. The “*conscience*” (συνείδησις, *syneidesis*) literally means “*co-knowledge, with knowledge or perception.*” It is a testament to the internal awareness of the spirit of man to consider morality and the author of it.

The above biblical foundation regarding the God-given intrigue of man towards the Creator, eternity, and morality is essential to avoiding the ditches of mysticism and rationalism. For instance, Plato posited that humans are born with a clear knowledge of all ideas at birth. He proposed his theory of recollection which states that before a soul was joined with a body, it had seen all ideas and stored them deep in their memory. In essence, he stated that all learning presupposes the preexistence of the soul.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, rationalism has taken this further by supposing that the entire universe is strictly from the thought processes of the human mind.<sup>34</sup> These erroneous philosophies obfuscate the biblical view of the Creator and His image-bearers.

<sup>32</sup>Consider these verses on the image of God: I Cor.11:7; James 3:9; Eph.4:24, and Col.3:10.

<sup>33</sup>Sena, Wesley. Socrates’ Four Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul in the Phaedo: Informal Fallacies, Ambiguities, and Overall Inconsistency. <https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/37373889>, 2022.

<sup>34</sup><https://www.britannica.com/topic/rationalism/Epistemological-rationalism-in-modern-philosophies>

## ***Special Revelation – The Word of God***

The natural and general revelation above are insufficient by themselves to revealing the full knowledge of God; hence, God would speak to man in various ways and preserve His message as the revealed, inspired, preserved, and illuminating Word of God. Psalm 138:2b highlights the special place of His Word, “...*for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*” God has supernaturally communicated truth about Himself, His creation, the sin of mankind, and the glorious redemption of man back to Him in His Word. Hebrews 1:1-2 sums up the various ways that God has revealed His Word, “*GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*”

The diverse manner of the revelation of God’s Word include Christophanies (Gen.32:24; Ex.24:9-10; Josh.5:13-15), dreams and visions (Num.12:6; Mt.1:20; Acts 16:9), direct communication (Gen.15:1), and the incarnation of Christ (Jn.1:1,14, 18; 14:8-9; Col.2:9). I Corinthians 2:6-13 notes that God reveals His Word to man by His Spirit. God has freely given us special knowledge of Him through His Words, which we are to compare spiritual things with spiritual and not the wisdom of the world’s philosophies.

Romans 16:25-26 reveals the culmination of God’s revelation to man was for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to redeem man to God. “*Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.*”

## **Increasing in the Knowledge of God**

Paul warned the church in Colosse about the numerous forms of error via philosophy of man that inundated the members of that pillar and ground of truth (Col.2:8). Each philosophy offered a practical route to a form of “happiness;” however, every philosophy of man apart from Scripture is tied to bad theology and the doctrine of devils (I Tim.4:1). One can easily tie the doctrine of devils back to the Satanic lies in the Garden of Eden that proposed a secret knowledge apart from God’s Word (Gen.3:3-6). Two-broad strokes of deception that integrate into man’s philosophy is deification of man and deathlessness (reincarnation or total annihilation and no eternal judgment). These flesh-attracting tenants use a knowledge of “god” that can fall underneath the umbrella terms of deism or pantheism (see chart below). In a world of false gods and erroneous theology, Paul instructed the Colossians to “*walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God*” (Col.1:10).

Nevertheless, mankind is vulnerable to the practical, quick-fix forms of comfort and fullness proffered by the world. Man wants to see themselves as good (deification of man); likewise, man wants assurances for the afterlife, which includes total annihilation that excludes eternal judgment or a form of reincarnation (deathlessness). After all, we are born unto sorrow and desperately searching from the womb for a form of relief, sense, and happiness (Job 5:7). In short, the world’s philosophies, through Satan, have something to fill every emotional and spiritual void. However, sound doctrine anchored in a Biblical theology that is focused on Jesus



Christ provides true fullness, completion, peace, satisfaction, covert, and rest (Is.32:2; Ps.63:1; Lk.4:18; Jn.4:14; Col.2:9-10).<sup>35</sup>

The Christians in Colosse had spiritual fruit; nevertheless, Paul sought to implore to increase “*in the knowledge of God*” (Col.1:10). Growth in the knowledge of God was critical for the believers in the Greco-Roman world, which was steeped in deism and pantheism that was put forward by the mighty Greek philosophers and their disciples.<sup>36</sup> Growth in the knowledge of God is through comparing spiritual things with spiritual by looking at God’s self-revelation of His nature in His Word (I Cor.2:13).

### ***The Personally Knowable God***

The high and lofty God that cannot be contained in the heavens, who is perfect in goodness, holiness, and righteousness, intimately cares for the lowliest and most contrite of His image bearers (Is.57:15; Lk.12:22-32). Herein lies the vast difference between God who has revealed Himself in His Word to man and the “god” that is contrived from the doctrine of devils and dispersed through the philosophy of man.

Genesis 2:7 is clear revelation from God Himself regarding His fearful and wonderful creation of Adam, “*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*” He formed man and breathed the breath of life (not divinity) into Adam with compassionate care and interest.

Likewise, Exodus 33:11 reveals “*And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend...*” The Almighty God engaged with sinful man through the advocacy of Moses, a picture of Christ. In this, He revealed His personal engagement with His Creation. He is a God who is near and not far off.

Isaiah 57:15 is another of many passages that reveal the eternal God who cannot be contained by the heavens states, “*I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.*” The root verb behind “*dwell*” is שָׁכַן (*shachan*) that means “to abide, dwell, reside.” In His omnipresence, there is no spatial distance from man, but only relational distance because of sin and pride. Spatial distance is resolved through humble repentance and faith in the blood of Christ (Eph.2:13; Jms.4:6-8).

Colossians 2:3 states, “*That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*”

Only those in humble repentance and faith can come into the full assurance of understanding regarding the revelation of God and Christ. Upon entry into this relationship is access into the treasures of wisdom and knowledge as revealed in the Word of God and taught by the Holy Spirit in the pillar and ground of Truth.

### ***Names of God***

God has revealed Himself to mankind in His Word; in particular, He has revealed His personal name (Jehovah) and other titles and names that describe His roles and attributes that pertain towards man made in His likeness. God has revealed His sacred name to mankind and desires to be called upon by that name (Ps.20:7-8;

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<sup>35</sup>Blair, S. *And Ye are Complete in Him: A Thorough Study of the Book of Colossians*. Waynesburg, PA. Willow Grove Baptist Theological Press, 2021.

<sup>36</sup>Strouse, T. *The Lord Added to the Church: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, vol.2*. Cromwell, CT. Bible Baptist Theological Press, 2021.

Prov.18:10; Joel 2:32; Rom.10:13; Acts 4:12; Phil.2:10-11). His name should be revered. Exodus 20:7 states, “*Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*”

However, Gnostic error, especially Platonism, have promoted a dualism that allows man to exist completely apart from God. So much that God cannot reveal Himself to man because they are eternally separate. Dualism is anti-Christ in that it prevents the Mediator between God and man. Dualism is unbiblical in that it denies in part or in whole the revelation of God to man. Hence, God cannot be named because He has not revealed Himself or His name. To this end, Gnostics of all stripes cannot give God a concrete representation so they come up with names such as “*eternal abyss*,” “*nameless silence*,” “*One*,” “*Absolute*,” “*Reason*,” and “*Spirit*.”<sup>37</sup>

In stark contrast to the pantheist and deist, God is the one who has made himself known to man (Jn.1:10-12). Well before Plato deemed God as “*being*,” God declared Himself to Moses and the children of Israel as the Great “*I AM*” (אֶהְיֶה, *eheyeh* – singular masculine noun). Jehovah is the ever-present and everlasting God. He revealed Himself through His Word to mankind; Jehovah did not need Plato (427-328 BC) to usher in a false revelation of God.

In fact, God declares in Exodus 34:14, “*For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*” Jehovah describes His “*name*” (שֵׁם, *shem*) with the adjective “*jealous*” (אֲנָק, *qanna*), which means “*jealous or not bearing any rival*.” No name of any god can rival that of the LORD’s; hence, His name is reverent and should be called upon regularly by His people.<sup>38</sup>

The most high aim of all things is for the Glory of God. In particular, for His name sake (Ps.23:3; 8:1; I Sam.12:22; Rom.1:5; Rev.22:4). God has revealed Himself to us through His Word; He has told us what to call Him. His name reveals His eternal being, His perfection, and His redemption of man.

Jehovah - ever present One

Jesus - Jehovah saves

Simply, God is what He calls himself. All the things He does is for His name to be glorified. When He creates, redeems, restores, afflicts, and leads through valleys...it is opportunity to glorify Himself among sinful man. Opportunity for His name to be glorified in all that He orchestrates. It causes man’s inward bent and natural selfishness to melt away...to restore or turn back (same word for repent) from selfishness to God. Instead of self-centeredness, we praise His name for mercy and grace to redeem us from our self-inflicting and harmful ways.

The eternal expression of God’s revelation of Himself to man is seen in Revelation 22:4 that states, “*And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*” Those who are born again will carry His name as a declaration of His glory, grace, and mercy for all eternity. Paul summed this truth up aptly, “*To the praise of the glory of his grace...*” (Eph.1:6).

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<sup>37</sup>Strong, A. *Systematic Theology A Compendium and Commonplace-Book Designed For The Use Of Theological Students*. Philadelphia. The Judson Press, 1907, p.21.

<sup>38</sup>Psalms 96:5 states, “*For all the gods of the nations are idols: But the LORD made the heavens.*” The LORD is jealous of His title “*God*” (אֱלֹהִים, *Elohim*) and condemns the false gods with the title “*idols*” (אֱלִילִים, *elilim*). *Elil* is derived from the adverb of negation אֵל (al) and means “*of nothing, empty, worthless.*”

## ***Without Christ – The Absence of the Mediator***

The whole of Scripture points to Jesus Christ – God manifest in the flesh, who would mediate and advocate for sinful mankind with Jehovah. Gnostic-laced philosophies have attacked the biblical position of Christ as the God-man and Advocate.<sup>39</sup> Colossians 2:8 sums up the error very well, “*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*” The reduction, omission, or substitution of Christ as Advocate must be discerned with every philosophy and theology. The idea of a mediator is varied in view of the dualistic gulf of separation between God and man.

The mystical Jewish theology of Kabbalah maintained the dualistic separation of God from man; consequently, “god” needed a variety of intermediate beings – angels (Col.2:18). Through a series of ever-increasing emanations (or aeons in classical Gnosticism) one faces the illusion of having communion with God to no avail. Truly there is no hope of peace with God apart from Christ (Rom.5:1).

Philo of Alexandria was a Hellenized Jewish thinker who was born prior to the birth of Christ and died a short number of years after the death of Christ. Philo is an excellent example of the erratic and deceptive nature of Garden Gnosticism. He is best known for fusing together Plato’s doctrine of ideas, the Stoic doctrine of logos, and the Jewish understanding of wisdom from the Tanak.<sup>40</sup> Alas, he influenced early patristics with an unbiblical amalgamation of error regarding the Advocacy of Christ. As will be seen, it mimics a type of Christ, uses Scriptural terms, and infuses Satanic error.

Philo helped bridge the gap with an intermediary in Plato’s dualistic separation of God and man, which he called the *Logos*. He took Plato’s use of *ideas*, the “forces” that enabled God to work among man, and united them with the Stoic’s *logos* (the idea that contains all ideas). Sometimes this is described as *Reason*, which is the intermediary between God and the world. He indicated that *reason* was the image, shadow, and firstborn son of God. This intermediary was unique in that it was neither divine nor creatural, but participated in both (a spirit of antichrist). In all of this intermediary dialogue, Philo never made a connection to the Messiah of the Old Testament, and rejected the idea of a human incarnation of the *logos* (*reason*). The continual fusion of Satanic error into local churches through the vehicle of the esteemed Greek philosophy was the demise of the undiscerning.

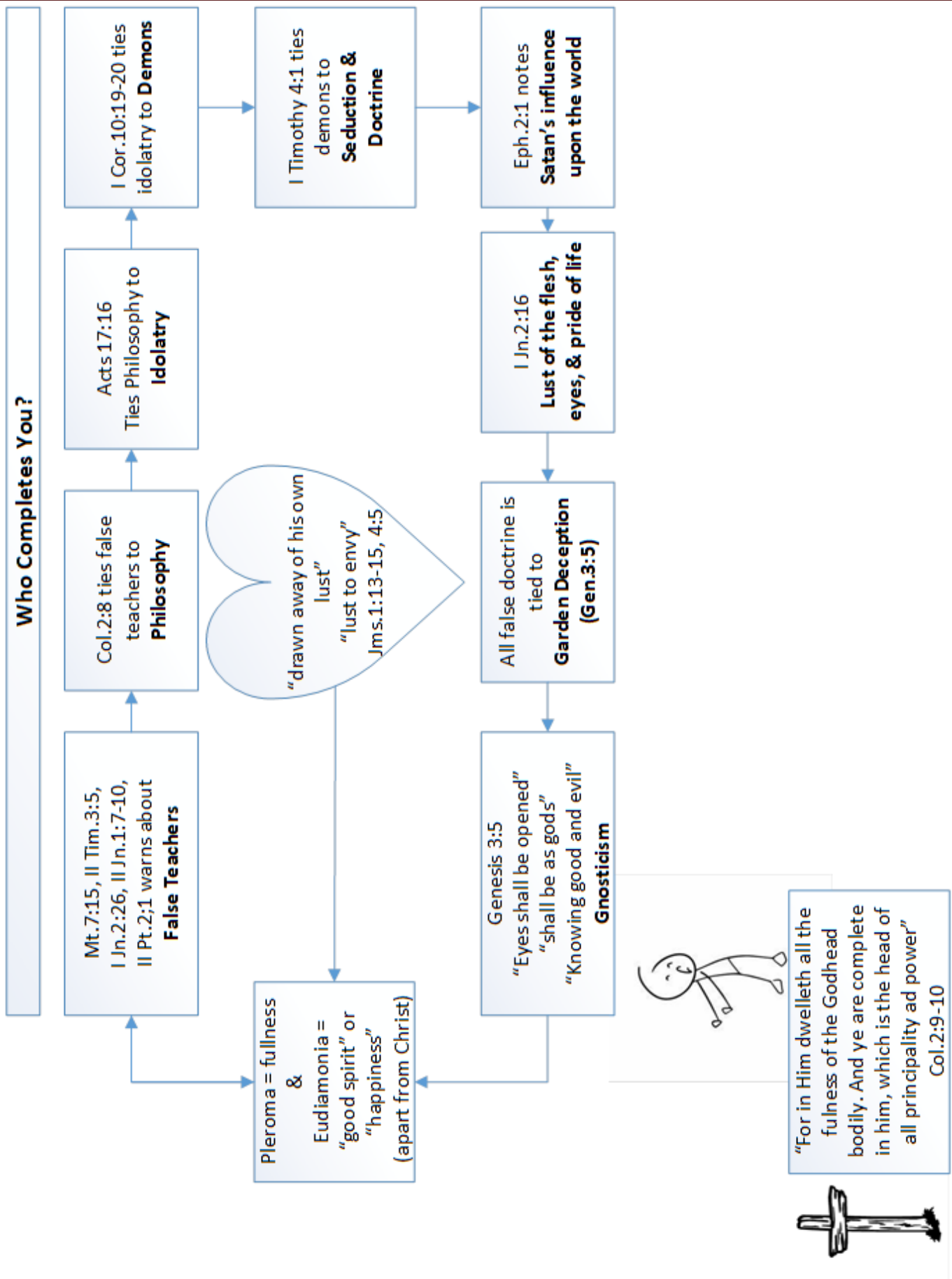
## **Conclusion**

The nature of God has been questioned since the Garden of Eden. Satan has repackaged his Garden Gnosticism and influenced the philosophies of man through the doctrine of devils surrounding theology. Is God transcendent, distant, and uninterested? Or is God immanent and permeating all matter? Or maybe, there is one God who exhibits some biblical attributes, but not all. Or another, who requires a variety of intermediaries for the possibility of fellowship? Error abounds, but Truth is straight and consistent. Christians of every age must increase in the knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus Christ to combat the abundant erroneous theology that appeals to the flesh.

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<sup>39</sup>Eve was looking for the Advocate in her son Cain (Gen.3:15, 4:1). The book of Job considers the need for a daysmen or Advocate between God and man (Job 9:33).

<sup>40</sup>Hatch, E. *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church*. London. Williams and Norgate. 1914, p.240-255.



## **Section 2**

### **A brief primer on Reformed Theology and A biblical understanding of God's sovereignty**

**Recommended reading:**

- Calvin, J. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John McNeill. Translated and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles. The Library of Christian Classics, Vol.20-21. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.
- Flowers, L. *The Potter's Promise: A Biblical Defense of Traditional Soteriology*. Trinity Academic Press, 2017.
- Hunt, D. *What love is this? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God*. Loyal Publishing, OR, 2002.
- Reeves, C. *A Primer of Baptist History*. Emmanuel Baptist Press, 2009, pp.155-205.
- Walls, J., *Does God Love Everyone? The Heart of What's Wrong with Calvinism*. Cascade books, Eugene, OR, 2016.
- Weber, M. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Penguin Books, NY, 2002.

**Considerations Amid Systematic Study**

1. I Thessalonians 5:21 “*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*”
2. The immediate context of a book should be established first before connecting themes across scripture.
  - a. While there is unity across scripture, it must be pieced together first in a contextual manner and second in a thematic manner.
  - b. For example, the context of Jacob and Esau is often diminished and the theme of double predestination is emphasized across scripture focused on Jacob and Esau.
    - i. God predestined Jacob and his family to be served by Esau and his family. Esau's bitter response and desire to kill the Messianic line is why God hated Esau (Mal.1:2-3). Genesis 25 does not refer to God predestinating Esau to reprobation; His response to God's sovereign plan led to his demise.

**Why preface Theology Proper with an argument against Reformed Theology?**

1. Calvinistic and reformed views of election, predestination, foreknowledge, and reprobation inundate theological and academic evangelical media and literature (i.e. MacArthur, Sproul, Packer, Piper).
2. Most Systematic Theology texts operate from a reformed view of God's sovereignty over salvation
3. Corrupt theology leads to corrupt soteriology
  - a. Reformed theology of God is built upon John Calvin's view of salvation:
  - b. “*By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with Himself whatever He wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of those ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or death...some are predestined to salvation, others to damnation...regarding the lost: it was His good pleasure to doom to destruction...since the disposition of all things is in the hands of God and He can give life or death at His pleasure, He dispenses and ordains by His judgment that some, from their mother's womb, are destined irrevocably to eternal death in order to glorify His name in their perdition...all are not created on equal terms, but some are predestined to eternal life, others to eternal damnation...*”<sup>41</sup>
4. Corrupt ecclesiology (sacral state, magisterial reformers) manipulated corrupt theology for geo-political reasons.

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<sup>41</sup>Calvin, J. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John McNeill. Translated and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles. The Library of Christian Classics, Vol.20-21. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960, section 5, pp.1030-1031.



- a. See Reeves, C. A Primer of Baptist History. Emmanuel Baptist Press, 2009, pp.155-205.
  - b. See Weber, M. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Penguin Books, NY, 2002.
    - i. Page xviii-xix regarding Calvin's doctrine of predestination on motivating sacral states to be industrious.
    - ii. *"God's will could not be manipulated or deciphered...Lacking any palatable answer from Calvin's own theology, Calvinist believers looked to their pastors for help.*
      - a. *1) Believers were counseled to assume that lack of faith in ones being chosen was tantamount to an absence of grace. The faithful were taught they had a duty to regard themselves as elect and to dismiss any doubts as a temptation from the devil.*
      - b. *2) they were encouraged to assume that tireless labor in a calling was...the best possible means of attaining this self-assurance."*
    - iii. *"The enduring crisis of proof of demonstrating to oneself that one was among the chosen elite. Unable to find solace in the sacraments or in the image of a kindly God, aware that their neighbors, even family, may be among the perpetually condemned, Calvinist believers were psychologically isolated. Their distance from God could only be precariously bridged, and their inner tensions only partially relieved, by unstinting, purposeful labor...inner worldly rational asceticism: rigorous, scrupulous, methodical work within a calling."*
5. Calvinism posits voluminous efforts on the above topics in dogmatic fashion, but then resigns to rest in His unapproachable light around the uncertainty over the free will of man. In particular, why did Adam choose to rebel? Calvinism rejects the libertarian freedom of the will and replaces it with a mystery that questions the holiness and trustworthiness of God. Is God implicit in the determination of moral evil?
- a. John Piper: *"How God feely hardens and yet preserves human accountability we are not explicitly told. It is the same mystery as how the first sin entered the universe. How does a sinful disposition arise in a good heart? The Bible does not tell us."*
  - b. R.C. Sproul: *"But Adam and Eve were not created fallen. They had no sin nature. They were good creatures with a free will. Yet they chose to sin. Why? I don't know. Nor have I found anyone yet who does know."*
  - c. John Calvin: *"...how foolish and frail is the support of divine justice afforded by the suggestion that evils come to be, not by His will but by His permission...it is a quite frivolous refuge to say that God otiosely permits them, when Scriptures shows Him not only willing, but the author of them...who does not tremble at these judgments with which God works in the hearts of even the wicked whatever He will, regarding them nonetheless according to desert? Again it is quite clear from the evidence of Scripture that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills just as he will, whether to good for His mercy's sake, or to evil according to their merits."*
  - d. Herman Bavinck: *"While Calvinism does not offer a solution, it invites us humans to rest in him who lives in unapproachable light, whose judgments are unsearchable, and whose paths are beyond tracing out."*

### ***Biblicist vs. Calvinist Soteriology:***

1. **Calvinist** teach that Christ self-sacrificially loves a preselected number of individuals
2. **Biblicists** teach that Christ loves every single person so much that He died for them all and offers salvation to all.
3. **Calvinist** teach that before the world began, God predestined some individuals to salvation and the rest to eternal damnation based on nothing having to do with the individuals choices or actions.
4. **Biblicist** teach that God has predestined every individual in the book of Life to be “*in Christ*” through faith and repentance. Upon death and not turning to Christ in faith and repentance, the individual is blotted out of the book of life.

<b><i>Biblicist Order of Salvation</i></b>		<b><i>Calvinist Order of Salvation</i></b>	
<b><u>Event</u></b>	<b><u>Reference</u></b>	<b><u>Event</u></b>	<b><u>Explanation</u></b>
Book of life	Ex.32:32, Rev.3:5, 13:8	Election	God's choice of people to be saved
Gospel call	Rom.1:16, 10:11-15	Gospel call	Hear the Gospel message
*Faith & Repentance	Mk.1:15, Mt.3:8, Acts 5:31	Regeneration	being born again
*Regeneration	Jn.3:3-8	Conversion	faith & repentance
*Justification	II Cor.5:15-21, Rom. 5	Justification	right legal standing
*Adoption	Rom.8:12-17	Adoption	membership into God's family
Sanctification	Rom.6:1-11	Sanctification	right conduct
Death	Eccl.7:15; Rom.13:11-14	Perseverance	remaining a Christian
Book of life - remain or blotted out?	Rev.3:5, 13:8, 20:15, 21:27	Death	go to be with Lord
Resurrection to life or damnation?	John 5:29	Glorification	receiving a resurrection body

### ***Calvinist Definitions and Presuppositions (Man's Interpretation with Scripture):***

1. Sovereignty = “Meticulous Determination” of every detail and “choice” among man and creation
  - a. Calvinist presume Omnipotent God has no alternative to meticulous deterministic rule over His creation.
  - b. Foreknowledge – God knows every detail before the fall.
  - c. Predestination – God has pre-ordained everything prior to creation and fall.
  - d. Elect – those chosen to salvation from before the fall.
2. TULIP – a structure of soteriology built upon John Calvin's interpretation of predestination (see above)

#### **Against Reformed Theology**

- John Calvin (1509-1564) – a brilliant magisterial reformer in Geneva wrote Institutes of the Christian Religion at age 26.

- Purported the heresy that God predestined some to election and some to reprobation from the beginning of time; children should be baptized by virtue of parents faith in the covenant.

- The 5 points of Calvinism will be defined and contested below:

- Total depravity – man is so sinful he cannot will himself to turn in faith/repentance  
- Jn.12:32, 46, Acts 16:30, Rom.10:13

- Unconditional Election – elect are chosen by sovereign God without any merit of own  
- Jn.3:16, I Tim.4:10, Jn.1:29, Eph.4:1-4

- Limited Atonement – Christ's work only applies to the elect, not all humanity  
- I Jn.2:2, I Tim.2:6, Heb.9:2, Jn.1:29

- Irresistible Grace – elect cannot resist God granting them repentance  
- Ezek.18:30-31, Mt.23:37, Acts 7:51

- Perseverance of the Saints – election is eternally secured through God's election and not their faith in the finished work of Christ  
- Jn.6:47, 10:28, I Jn.5:10-13

3.



4. Double predestination
  - a. Elect predestined to salvation
  - b. Reprobates predestined to eternal hell
    - i. Thomas Aquinas interpretation of Malachi 1:2-3 “*Thus, as men are ordained to eternal life through the providence of God, it likewise is part of that providence to permit some to fall away from that end; this is called reprobation...therefore, as predestination includes the will to confer grace and glory, so also reprobation includes the will to permit a person to fall into sin, and to impose the punishment of damnation on account of that sin.*”<sup>42</sup>
5. Compatibilism (universal divine causal determinism): concurrence of God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility (mental gymnastics to explain that man is “free” to do exactly as God predetermined or programmed them to do).
  - a. \*\*This is a form of hard determinism – it means that God’s predetermination and meticulous providence is compatible with voluntary choice (choosing according to desire). It means that individuals never make choices against God’s predetermined will (contra Proverbs 1). \*\*
  - b. John Calvin “*creatures are so governed by the secret counsel of God, that nothing happens but what He has knowingly and willingly decreed*”
  - c. John Calvin “*...thieves and murderers, and other evildoers, are instruments of divine providence, being employed by the Lord Himself to execute judgments which he has resolved to inflict*”<sup>43</sup>

***Biblicist Baptist Terms and a Brief Defense against Calvinism (Scripture with Scripture):***

1. Book of Life – all are contained in the book of Life; those who refuse to believe/repent are blotted out.

**The Book of Life**

- all humanity is written in the book of life; those who do not meet the conditions of faith and repentance are blotted out upon death.
- Mt.25:41 – Hell was prepared for the devil and angels
- II Tim.2:10 – mankind must obtain salvation by faith/repentance
- Exodus 32:32 – Moses converses with LORD about who is blotted out
- Psalm 69:28 – David prayed against those who opposed Messianic line to blotted out of the book of the living
- Rev.3:5 – the saint that overcomes the world by faith/repentance (I Jn.5:4) will not be blotted out.
- Rev.20:15 – anyone blotted out and no longer found in BOL is cast into Lake of Fire
- Rev.21:27 – no possibility of entering New Jerusalem without remaining in BOL.

a.

2. Foreknowledge – God know all possibilities of man’s choice regarding special and natural revelation.

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<sup>42</sup>Allison, G. Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine. Zondervan Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p.460.

<sup>43</sup>Cited in Flowers, L. The Potter’s Promise: A Biblical Defense of Traditional Soteriology. Trinity Academic Press, 2017, p.58.

3. Predestination – God’s plan from creation is that all would be conformed to His Son’s image (Rom.8:29, Ps. 33:8).
4. Elect – individuals who respond to the Gospel in faith and repentance
5. Sovereignty of God over moral creature. God is sovereign because He is all-powerful, not the other way around (Ps.115:3, 16).
  - a. A.W. Tozer *“The potter, in His sovereign freedom, decide to create vessels that bear His image and are free to exercise moral choice, so these earthen vessels from the beginning have fulfilled that decree by making choices between good and evil. When the created vessels choose to do evil, they do not thereby countervail as the sovereignty of the Potter, but fulfill it, inasmuch as the Potter decided not which choice His vessels should make but that they should be free to make it. if in His absolute sovereign freedom, the Potter has willed to give His vessels limited freedom, who is there to stay His hand or say, “what doest thou? The vessel’s will is free because the Potter sovereignly chose to mold His vessel to be free. A Potter less than sovereign could not craft a morally free vessel to bear His image. He would be afraid to do so.”*
6. Moral Choice as evidence all throughout Scripture
  - a. Man is born with a deceitfully wicked heart that desires sin, but is confronted with special and natural revelation of God to make a choice.
    - i. Man chooses to sin.
    - ii. Man receives the sin of others who choose to sin.
    - iii. Man suffers from the inescapable effects of a sin-cursed world.
7. Matthew 13:10-17 - “Light received, Light increased...Light rejected, Light diminished”
  - a. Example 1 – pharisees of 1<sup>st</sup> century
  - b. Example 2 – Pharaoh in Exodus
    - i. Pharaoh rebelled against God and the light given. God hardened his heart after rejecting light.
  - c. Example 3 – Israel in Isaiah 6:9-13 – choose to harden heart followed by God’s hardening
8. Proverbs 1:20-33 – Wisdom’s perpetual call to listen!
9. The “Three pillars of predestination” in the Calvinist apologetic include: John 6, Ephesians 1, Romans 9
10. God calls and draws, Man has moral choice to respond

God's Sovereignty He has the power to save	Man's Responsibility Turn in faith & repent
Gen.4:4-5	Gen.4:4-5
Ex.12:13-14, 23	Ex.12:21-23
Deut.28:2, 15	Deut.28:1ff
Ps.110:3	Ps.81:10-13
Mt.1:21	Lk.2:10-11
Mt.11:27	Mt.11:28
Mt.16:16-17	Jn.8:24
Jn.15:16	Mt.4:19-20
Jn.5:21	Jn.5:24
Jn.6:37a, 39; 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24	Jn.6:37b
Jn.6:44, 45, 65	Jn.6:35, 5:40
Acts 2:39, 47	Acts 2:37-38, 40
Acts 13:48	Acts 13:38-39
Acts 16:14	Acts 16:30-31
Rom.3:10	Acts 17:27, Heb.11:6
Acts 18:27b	Acts 18:27a
Rom.8:30, 9:11, 15-18	Rom.9:33, 10:9, 11-13, 17, 21
Eph.1:4-5	Eph.1:12-13
Eph.2:8a	Eph.2:8b
II Thess.2:13-14	II Thess.2:10, 12
II Tim.1:9	I Tim.2:3-4; 4:10
I Pt.1:2	I Pt.1:21-22
Rev.17:14	Rev.22:17

11.

12. Esau – example of reprobation before birth or bitter rejection of God’s sovereign plan?

a. See Genesis 25-27, Obadiah, Malachi 1:2-3, Romans 9, Hebrews 12

#### **Esau: The Prime Example of Bitterness**

- Unbelief in the Father’s will in suffering & despising His chastening (12:5) are the roots of bitterness that drive individuals to directly oppose His will unto their own disaster.

- The Hebrew’s unbelief and bitterness = despised God because they had to make a choice between Judaism and Jesus Christ; hence, the chastening of the “*Word of Exhortation*” (Acts 13:15; Heb.13:22).

#### **Comparison:**

- The Hebrews unbelief & bitterness was crucifying Jesus “*afresh*” (6:4-6)  
- Esau’s unbelief & bitterness attempted to murder the seed line of Christ (Gen.27:41)

#### **Esau’s Bitterness”**

- **Emotion:** apathetic, profane, sensuous, vengeful  
- **Action:** sell birthright, marry out of spite, murderous intent, opposed Seed promise  
- **Object:** God, Isaac, and Jacob  
- **Duration:** From realization that he would serve Jacob until the Edomites were extinguished in AD 70 (Oba.1:18)

## Esau's Response (or the continual springing up of the root of bitterness):

- Profanely sold his birthright in suffering “*at the point to die*” (Gen.25:32)
- Exchanged the spiritual for the physical – should have submitted to God’s plan in faith
- Fornicator – married Canaanites in spite of the birthright & seed promise through Jacob
  - Judith and Bashemath (Hittites) – “*grief of mind unto Isaac*” (Gen.26:35)
  - Adah (Hittite -36:2 ) Mahalth (Ishmaelite – 28:9 ) Aholibamah (Hivite – 36:2)
- Hoped in his father’s favor to give him blessing on death bed, but tricked out of it (27:38)
- Committed himself to hating and killing Jacob (Anti-Seed promise – Gen.27:41)



## **Section 3**

### **Theology Proper**

#### **Attributes of God**

I. God the Father

A. A Name – a biblical distinguishing mark to reveal how God desires to be called

1. Connection between a name and its bearer, which reveals the identity of a person
2. Adam named the animals – Gen.2:19-20
3. Scriptures spells out the meaning of names
  - a) Eve – Gen.3:20; Cain – 4:1; Seth – 4:25; Noah – 5:29; Babel – 11:9; Ishmael – 16:11; Esau and Jacob – 25:25-26; Moses – Ex.2:10; Jesus – Mt.1:21
4. Names are changed when a person acts in another capacity
  - a) Abraham – Gen.17:5; Sarah – 17:15; Israel – 32:28; Joshua – Numb.13:16; Jedidiah – II Sam.12:25; Mara – Ruth 1:20; Peter – Mark 3:16; Christ – Phil.2:9, Heb.1:4
5. “Summed up in His name , therefore, is His honor, His fame, His excellencies, His very being, His entire revelation”
6. God’s name is identical with His attributes that He exhibits to the world
  - a) His glory – Ps.8:1
  - b) His honor – Lev.18:21; Ps.86:10-11, 102:16
  - c) His redeeming power – Ex.15:3; Is.47:4
  - d) His Service – Is.56:6; Jer.23:27
  - e) His Holiness – I Chron.16:10; Ps.105:3
  - f) Put His name on Israel – Numb.6:27
  - g) Caused His name to be remembered – Ex.20:24
  - h) Made His name to dwell among them – Dt.12:5; 14:23
  - i) Temple was built for His name – II Sam.7:13
  - j) His name lived in the Temple – II Chron.20:9; 33:4
  - k) On account of His name He cannot abandon Israel – I Sam.12:22; Is.48:9
  - l) His name cannot be used in vain – Ex.20:7; Lev.18:21
7. God’s name must be feared, exalted, passed on, and magnified
  - a) Gen.4:26, 12:8, Ex.9:16, Deut.28:58; I Kgs.8:33; Ps.5:12, 34:3, 52:9, 83:17, 122:4, Is.26:8; Mt.6:9; Jn.12:28
8. By the name of Jesus
  - a) The Word – Jesus Christ – was with God in the beginning - Jn.1:18
  - b) Christ revealed His name – Jn.17:6, 26
  - c) Confess the Son have the Father – I Jn.2:23
  - d) Jesus means Jehovah saves – Mt.1:21
  - e) Only name under heaven to be saved by – Acts 4:12
  - f) Miracles are performed – Acts 4:7
  - g) Reception of forgiveness – Acts 2:38
  - h) Become God’s children – Jn.1:12
  - i) Eternal life – I Jn.5:13
  - j) His name inscribed on the foreheads of believers – Rev.22:4

B. Names and titles of God

1. In language

- a) The English “God” comes from the German “Gott”

- b) The Latin “Deus” comes from the Sanskrit “Devas, which comes from the Greek “Theos” from the Hebrew “El”

### C. In the Bible

#### 1. Old Testament

- a) El – general name - Job 5:8
- b) Elah – Aramaic for El – Jer.10:11
- c) Eloha – singular for God – Job 9:13
- d) Elohim – plural for God – Gen.1:1
- e) El Shaddai – God Almighty – Gen.17:1
- f) El Roi – God who sees me – Gen.16:13
- g) El Olam – eternal God – Gen.21:33
- h) El Elyon – most high God – Numb.24:16
- i) Adonai – Lord, Master – Gen.18:3
- j) Jehovah – LORD – 5500x in OT – Ex.3:1
- k) Jehovah Elohim – LORD God – Gen.2:4
- l) Jehovah of Hosts – LORD of hosts – Josh.5:15
- m) Angel of Jehovah – Angel of the LORD – Zech.3:1,2
- n) Jehovah Jireh – the LORD will provide – Gen.22:14
- o) Jehovah Nissi – My Banner is the LORD – Ex.17:8-15
- p) Jehovah Shalom – the LORD is Peace – Judg.6:12-24
- q) Jehovah Shammah – the LORD is there – Ezek.48:35

#### 2. New Testament

- a) Theos – God
  - i. The Father – Jn.3:16
  - ii. The Son – I Jn.5:20
  - iii. The Holy Spirit – Acts 5:3, 4
- b) Kurios – Lord – Mt.14:30
- c) Jesus – Jehovah Saves – Mt.1:21
- d) Christ – Messiah, the Anointed One – Mt.16:16, Ps.2

#### 3. Jehovah – The ever-present God – this name stands supreme – Ex.3:14-15

- a) Read “Who is this Deity name Yahweh?” by Dr. T. M. Strouse
- b) “God” = אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*)
- c) “I AM” = אֶהְיֶה (*e-heyeh* – *Qal imperfect 1<sup>st</sup> person sing*) → root הָיָה (*haya*) = “to be”
- d) “LORD” = יְהוָה (*Jehovah*) – based on the root verb “to be” – ever existent One
  - i. Self-existent – Ps.90:2; I Cor.8:6; Rev.4:11
  - ii. Dependent on nothing – Rom.11:36
  - iii. Potter over clay – Is.64:8; Jer.18:1; Rom.9:21
  - iv. His counsel is the ground for all that happens – Ps.33:11; Prov.19:21
  - v. Does all for the sake of His name – Dt.32:27; Josh.7:9; Ps.25:11
  - vi. All-sufficient – Job 22:2-3; Ps.50:19; Acts 17:25
  - vii. First and the Last – Is.41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Rev.1:8

## II. The Nature of God

A. Accommodation and anthropomorphism - Man made in His likeness – God has revealed Himself to man through His Word and Creation. This culminated in Christ – “God manifest in the flesh”

1. Man did not describe God, but He described Himself to man through His revealed Word
  - a) “Is God like us, or are we like God?”
2. All that pertains to humans is attributed to God – Gen.1:27
  - a) Refers to His “Soul” or totality – Lev.26:11
  - b) Refers to His Spirit – Gen.1:2, Mt.12:28
  - c) In Christ, God assumed a real body – Jn.1:14, Col.1:18, I Tim.3:16, Eph.1:22
3. Physical organs attributed to God
  - a) Face – Ex.33:20, 23; Is.63:9; Ps.16:11; Mt.18:10; Rev.22:4
  - b) Eyes – Ps.11:4; Heb.4:13
  - c) Eyelids – Ps.11:4
  - d) Apple of His eye – Dt.32:10; Ps.17:8; Zech.2:8
  - e) Ears – Ps.55:3
  - f) Nose – Dt.33:10
  - g) Mouth – Dt.8:3
  - h) Lips – Job 11:5
  - i) Tongue – Is.30:27
  - j) Neck – Jer.18:17
  - k) Arm – Ex.15:16
  - l) Hand – Numb.11:23
  - m) Right hand – Ex.15:12
  - n) Finger – Ex.8:19
  - o) Heart – Gen.6:6
  - p) Intestines – Is.63:15; Jer.31:20; Lk.1:78
  - q) Bosom – Ps.74:11; Jn.1:18
  - r) Feet – Is.66:1
4. Human emotions attributed to God
  - a) Rejoicing – Is.62:5, 65:19
  - b) Sorrow – Ps.78:40; Is.63:10
  - c) Grief – Ps.95:10
  - d) Provocation – Jer.7:18-19
  - e) Fear – Dt.32:27
  - f) Love as mercy, compassion, grace, long suffering, zeal – Dt.32:21
  - g) Repentance – Gen.6:6
  - h) Hatred – Dt.16:22
  - i) Wrath – Ps.2:5
  - j) Vengeance – Dt.32:35
5. Human actions attributed to God
  - a) Investigating – Gen.18:21
  - b) Searching minds – Ps.7:9
  - c) Knowing – Gen.3:5
  - d) Intending – Gen.50:20



- e) Forgetting – I Sam.1:11
  - f) Remembering – Gen.8:1; Ex.2:24
  - g) Speaking – Gen.2:16
  - h) Calling – Rom.4:17
  - i) Commanding – Is.5:6
  - j) Rebuking – Ps.18:15, 104:7
  - k) Answering – Ps.3:4
  - l) Seeing – Gen.1:10
  - m) Hearing – Ex.2:24
  - n) Smelling – Gen.8:21
  - o) Abandoning – Judges 6:13
  - p) Healing – Ps.103:3
  - q) Killing and making alive – Dt.32:39
  - r) Wiping away – Is.25:8
  - s) Wiping out – II Kings 21:13
6. God is described by human occupation, office, and position
- a) Bridegroom – Is.61:10
  - b) A man – Is.54:5-6
  - c) A father – Dt.32:6
  - d) Judge, King, Lawgiver – Is.33:22
  - e) Warrior – Ex.15:3
  - f) Mighty Hero – Ps.78:65-66; Zeph.3:17
  - g) Architect and builder – Heb.11:10; Zechariah
  - h) Gardener – John 15:1
  - i) Shepherd – Ps.23:1
  - j) Physician – Ex.15:26
7. God is likened to elements of His Creation
- a) Lion – Is.31:4
  - b) Eagle – Dt.32:11
  - c) Lamb – Is.53:7
  - d) Hen – Mt.23:37
  - e) Sun – Ps.84:11
  - f) Morning Star – Rev.22:16
  - g) A light – Ps.27:1
  - h) Lamp – Rev.21:23
  - i) Fire – Heb.12:29
  - j) Spring or fountain – Ps.36:9; Jer.2:13
  - k) Food, bread, drink, water, ointment – Is.55:1; Jn.4:10, 6:35, 55
  - l) Rock – Dt.32:4
  - m) Refuge – Ps.119:114
  - n) Tower – Prov.18:10
  - o) Stronghold – Ps.9:9
  - p) Shadow – Ps.91:1; 121:5
  - q) Shield – Ps.84:11

r) The Way – John 14:6

s) Temple – Rev.21:22

#### B. His Being

1. He is immaterial and Incorporeal – Jn.4:24, Lk.24:39, Acts 7:48

2. He is invisible – Jn.1:18, Col.1:15, Heb.1:3

3. He is alive – Ps.84:2, Mt.16:16

4. He is a person

a) He has self-consciousness – Is.45:5, I Cor.2:10

b) He has self-determination – Rom.9:11, Heb.6:17

5. He is One – Dt.4:35, 6:4

#### C. His Tri-unity (Trinity)

##### 1. Old Testament

a) Plural pronouns – Gen.1:26, 3:22, 11:7, Is.6:8

b) The Lord is distinguished from the Lord – Gen.19:24

c) The Son is distinguished from the Father – Ps.2:7, Is.63:9, 11

d) The Spirit is distinguished from God – Gen.1:1-2; Numb.27:18

e) The Triple usage – Is.6:3, Numb.6:24-27

f) The angel of the Lord is distinguished from the Lord – Gen.16:7-14, 22:11-18

g) The Trinity is declared – Is.48:16

h) Branch, Spirit of the Lord, LORD – Is.11:1-2

i) LORD, engraved Stone, the seven eyes – Zech.3:9

##### 2. New Testament

a) Deity of the Father – Jn.6:27

b) Deity of the Son – I Jn.5:20

c) Deity of the Spirit – Acts 5:3,4

d) The Three together – Mt.3:16, 28:19-20; II Cor.13:14; I Cor.12:4-6

e) Johannine comma – I Jn.5:7-9 (see Strouse I – III John Commentary)

##### 3. Heresies associated with the Trinity

a) Arianism – denial of the deity of Christ

b) Apollinarianism – denial of humanity of Christ

c) Unitarianism – denial of persons of Son and Spirit

d) Monarchianism

a. Modalistic – God manifested in 3 modes

b. Dynamic – person of Son and Spirit impersonal

e) Filioque – affirmation that Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son

f) Christomonism – Denial of Father and Spirit; “Jesus only”

### III. Attributes of Jehovah

#### A. Non-Communicable attributes (not shared with man)

1. Self-existence of God (Aseity) – He is the ground of His own existence – Jn.5:26

2. Immutability of God – He is devoid of all change in His person, perfections, and purposes – James 1:17

a. He comes and goes, reveals and conceals:

i. Hides his face and turns it back and repents

1. Gen.6:6; I Sam.15:11; Amos 7:3; Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:9

- ii. Becomes angry – Num.11:1; Ps.106:40; Zech.10:3
      - iii. Sets aside his anger – Dt.13:17; II Chron.12:12
      - iv. Love toward the humble and hate for the wicked – Pr.11:20, 12:22; Ps.18:26
    - b. Amid the expression of His attributes, He is and remains the same – man’s actions vary, but God remains the same – Ps.102:26-28
      - i. Always the same – Rom.11:29
      - ii. Does not change – Mal.3:6; James 1:17
  - 3. Infinity of God – He is free from all limitations – Is.57:15
    - a. His absolute perfection – Job 11:7
    - b. His eternity – Ps.90:2 – excludes a beginning, an end, and the succession of moments
      - i. He enters time, but transcends it – Is.41:4; Rev.1:8
      - ii. Existed before the world – Gen.1:1; Jn.1:1, 17:5
      - iii. He continues despite all change – Ps.102:27-28
      - iv. Eternity to eternity Ps.90:2, 93:2
      - v. Number of years unsearchable – Job 36:26
      - vi. 1000 years = a moment to Him = Ps.90:4; II Pt.3:8
      - vii. He inhabits eternity – Is.57:15
    - c. Time: a continuous becoming that must rest in the immutable being - Jehovah
      - i. Jehovah – I AM – is not in time because He is not in the process of becoming; hence, His eternity should be seen as an eternal present without past or future.
      - ii. Extrinsic time – standard by which we measure motion of heavenly bodies – Gen.1:14; Rev.10:6; 21:23)
      - iii. Intrinsic time – the mode of existence of things with a past, present, and future – the succession of moments.
      - iv. Aquinas *“in hell there is no eternity, but only time, and that the more a creature resembles God and is his image, the more he or she will rise above the imperfections of time and approach eternity”*
      - v. “Time is the duration of creaturely existence”
      - vi. “Time began with the creature”
      - vii. Kant “a mind that retains the past by recollection, exists in the present, and expects the future”
      - viii. Aristotle “Time is not synonymous with motion, it is most intimately connected with it, with becoming, that is, the transition from the potential to the actual”
      - ix. Augustine “time exists only where the present becomes past, and the future becomes present”
    - d. His immensity – I Kings 8:27
  - 4. Unity of God – He is numerically One and Unique – I Kings 8:60; I Cor.8:6
    - a. There is One divine being – Jehovah – He cannot be more than one being, and all other beings come from Him.
- B. Communicable attributes (shared with man)

1. Spirituality of God – Jn.4:24
  - a. Self-existent – Ex.3:13-14; Is.41:4
  - b. Eternal – Dt.32:40
  - c. Omnipresent – Dt.10:14; Ps.139
  - d. Incomparable – Is.40:18; 46:5
  - e. Invisible – Ex.33:20
  - f. Unpicturable – Ex.20:41 Dt.5:8, 4:12
  - g. Reveals himself in dreams and visions – Gen.32:20; Ex.24:10, 33:11; Numb.12:8; Dt.5:24; Jdg.13:22; Is.6:1
  - h. By His Spirit he is present in his creation – Gen.2:7; Job 33:4; Ps.33:6; 104:30; 139:7
  - i. Invisible – Jn.1:18; 6:46; Rom.1:20; Col.1:15; 1 I Tim.1:17; 6:16; I Jn.4:12
  - j. God will be visible in glory – Job 19:26; Ps.17:15; Mt.5:8; I Cor.13:12; I Jn.3:2; Rev.22:4
2. Intellect of God – He is conscious and knowledgeable
  - a. Knowledge – He knows all things potentially and actually – I Sam.2:3
    - i. Job 12:13; 28:12-27; Pr.8:12; Ps.147:5; Rom.11:33
    - ii. His eyes see all – II Chron.16:9
    - iii. All are exposed before His eyes – Heb.4:13
    - iv. He knows all details – Mt.6:8, 32; 10:30
    - v. He knows the depth of man's heart motives – Jer.11:20; 17:9-10; 20:12; Ps.7:10; I Kgs.8:39; Lk.16:15; Acts 1:24; Rom.8:27
    - vi. He knows thoughts – Ps.139:2; Ezek.11:5; I Cor.3:20; Rev.2:23
    - vii. He knows human origin, nature, and action – Ps.139
    - viii. Hell and perdition – Prov.15:11
    - ix. The future – Is.41:22, 42:9
    - x. The end of a person's life – Ps.31:16; 39:6; 139:6; Job 14:5; Acts 17:26
    - xi. He knows all options from eternity – I Cor.2:7; Rom.8:29;
  - b. Foreknowledge (dissentingly called middle knowledge by Calvinists)
    - i. How to reconcile God's omniscience of all things and man's free will
    - ii. God knows all possibilities – He knows in advance what He would do if Adam sinned and if Adam did not sin.
    - iii. Gen.11:6; Ex.3:19; 34:16; Dt.7:3-4; I Sam.23:10-13; 25:29; II Sam.12:8; I Kgs.11:2; II Kgs.2:10; 13:19; Ps.81:14-16; Jer.26:2-3; Ezek.2:5-7; Mt.11:21; 24:22; 26:53; Jn.4:10, 6:15; Acts 22:18; Rom.9:29; I Cor.2:8
  - c. Wisdom – He applies His knowledge to the attainment of His ends – Eph.1:11,12; Rom.8:28
    - i. Wisdom is orientated and relatable to life
    - ii. God created through Wisdom – Gen.1:3; Ps.33:6; 107:20; 119:105; 147:15; Is.40:8; 48:13
    - iii. Constitution of the world and choosing Israel – Job 9:4; 12:13; 37:24; Is.40:28; Pro.8:22; Job 28:23
    - iv. Wisdom of God in NT – Rom. 16:27; I Tim.1:17; Jude 25; Rev.5:12

- v. God’s wisdom revealed in foolishness of Cross – I Cor.1:18, I Cor.1:24; Eph.3:10; Rom.11:33
- d. Veracity of God – He is reliable in His revelation – Jn.14:6; I Jn.5:20
  - i. אמת (*emet*) – truth, faithful, verity, sure – the act of hanging onto something in faith
  - ii. God of faithfulness without deceit – Dt.32:4; Jer.10:10; Ps.31:6; II Chron.15:3
  - iii. He does not lie or waffle like humans – Numb.23:19; I Sam.15:29
  - iv. Chesed love and faithfulness despite lack of reciprocity – Gen.24:49; Josh.2:14; II Sam.2:6; Ps.40:11; Ex.34:6
  - v. His Word is true and faithful – II Sam.7:28; Ps.19:9; 25:10; 33:4; 111:7; 119:86; Dan.4:37
  - vi. He confirms His Word by swearing an oath by Himself – Gen.22:16; Heb.6:13
  - vii. The unshakable firmness of a Rock – Dt.32:4, 15, 18, 30-31
  - viii. Trustworthy refuge for all – Ps.31:5; 43:2; 54:7; 57:3; 71:22; 96:13; 143:1; 146:6
- e. He is light – pure, holy, and full of joy - I Jn.1:5; Ps.27:1; 36:9; Is.60:19; Jn.1:4
  - i. In contrast to darkness = error, sorrow, misery – Ps.82:5; Eccl.2:13; Is.8:22
  - ii. Christ is the light – Jn.1:4-5; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35; II Cor.4:4
  - iii. God shines in our hearts – II Cor.4:6; Eph.1:17
  - iv. Christians love the light – Mt.5:14; Jn.3:21; Rom.13:12; Eph.5:8; Phil.2:15; I Thess.5:5; I Jn.1:7
- f. Unapproachable light – I Tim.6:16
- 3. Morality of God
  - a. His Holiness – all other attributes are based on this one – Job 34:10; Is.6
    - i. “freedom from all defilement; a purity that is total and utterly untainted”
    - ii. קדוש – *qadosh* – to cut, separate - Holiness, flaming majesty, inapproachability – Ex.3:5; 15:11; I Sam.2:2; 6:20; Is.6:3; 8:13; 10:17
    - iii. Holy Jehovah – Lev.11:44; 19:2; 20:26; Josh.24:19; Ps.22:3; Is.5:16; Is.29:23; Habb.1:12;
    - iv. God’s Holy name – Lev.20:3; I Chron.16:35; Is.52:10
    - v. God’s holiness incites Himself to mete out punishment of sin
      - 1. Lev.11:44; 19:2; 21:8
      - 2. Majestic and terrible – Ex.15:11; Ps.99:3; 111:9
      - 3. Causes to fear Him – Is.8:13; 29:23
    - vi. God’s holiness in NT – Lk.1:49; Jn.17:11; I Jn.2:20; I Pt.1:15-16; Rev.4:8
    - vii. Jesus Christ is the Holy One of God – Mk.1:24; Lk.4:34; Acts 3:14; 4:27
    - viii. Consecration to the LORD = “that which is has been made holy lives a life of its own, has a character of its own, and is set apart from the common life
      - 1. Ex. 19:23-24; Ex.29:33, etc.

- ix. Sanctification often seems to consist in nothing other than separation – Lev.25:10; 27:14; Josh.7:13; Judges 17:3
- x. Sanctification also includes washing, anointing, sacrifice, and sprinkling of blood – Lev.8:15; 16:15; Job 1:5
- xi. Holy ground – Ex.3:5; Holy assembly – Ex.12:16; Holy sabbath – Ex.16:23; holy people – Ex.19:6; Holy place – Ex.29:31; Holy linen coat – Lev.16:4; holy house – Lev.27:14; Holy vessels – Numb. 16:37
- b. His goodness – No one is good but God alone – Mk.10:18; Lk.18:19; Ps.4:6-7; 73:25
  - i. *Chesed* - steadfast love – Gen.39:21; Numb.14:19; II Sam.7:15
  - ii. Love – goodness of God that conveys benefits including God - Jn.3:16; Dt.4:37; Hos.11:1;
  - iii. Grace – goodness shown to those who only deserve evil - Eph.1:6-7; Gen.6:8; Ex.33:12; Job 8:5; Dan.1:9
  - iv. Mercy – shown to those in misery – not getting what they deserve - Deut.5:10; Ex.34:6; Dt.4:31; Ps.86:15
  - v. Patience and Long-suffering – II Pt.3:15; Ex.34:6; Numb.14:18; Neh.9:17
- c. His righteousness – Jn.17:25; II Tim.4:8
  - i. Law abiding person who is proved right; correctness and true. Right and in step with the law.
  - ii. God’s righteous anger is synonymous with His love – Ps.22:31; 33:5; Is.45:21; I Cor.13
  - iii. God forgives because of His righteousness – Ps.51:14; 103:8-12; I Jn.1:9
  - iv. צַדִּיק (*tsaddiq*) – righteous, devout, innocent – Ex.9:27; Dt.32:4
  - v. God is judge of all – Gen.18:25
  - vi. Christ is the Righteous Branch and Righteous One – Jer.23:5; Zech.9:9
  - vii. He does not spare the wicked – Ezek.7:4; Ex.20:7; Neh.1:3
  - viii. No respect of persons – Dt.10:17
  - ix. Punishes the wicked because of righteousness – Ex.6:5; 7:4; Ps.7:11; 9:4-8; Lam.1:18; Is.5:16; Rom.2:5
  - x. God’s Wrath and Fury stem from Righteousness – “to burn, express a vehement emotion” – Lev.10:6; Dt.32:22; Ps.2:11; Is.13:9; Dt.29:27; Dt.9:8
    - 1. His wrath is terrible – Ps.76:7; dreadful – Ps. 2:5; brings pain – Job 21:17; punishment – Ps.6:1; Destruction – Jer.42:18; Ps.21:9;
- d. His Sovereignty – He is creator, owner, possessor, and Lord of all things
  - i. God’s will over all things
    - 1. Over creation – Ps.136:6
    - 2. Over Government – Rom.13:1
    - 3. Over Election – Rom.9:15-16
    - 4. Over Sanctification – Phil.2:13
    - 5. Over Suffering – I Pt.3:17
  - ii. Omnipotence – God has no boundaries on His power

1. Great and terrible – Dt.7:21
2. Humans cannot see Him and live – Ex.33:20
3. Great and mighty – Jer.32:18; Job 9:4; Ps.24:8; Mt.5:35; I Tim.1:17

iii. Omnipotence is revealed in His works

1. Creation – Gen. 1; Is.42:5
2. Maintains the ordinances of creation – Jer.5:22; 10:10
3. He does as is needed to humans – Ex.4:11; Dt.26:8; 29:2; I Sam.2:6
4. Nothing can resist Him – Ps.8, 18-19; Job 5:9-27
5. All things are possible – Gen.18:14; Zech.8:6; Jer.32:27; Mt.19:26; Lk.1:37; 18:27

4. The Glory of God

- a. כְּבוֹד – *kabod* – “heavy, weighty, splendor, brilliance that causes man’s face to fall to the ground”
- b. Ex.29:43; Is.6:3; I Chron.16:27; Ps.29:4; 96:6; 104:1; 111:3; 113:4;
- c. Appeared to Israel – Ex.16:7; Lev.9:6; Num.14:10; Dt.5:24
- d. Filled the tabernacle, temple, church, Mill. Temple – Ex.40:34; I Kings 8; Ezek.43:4; Acts 2
- e. Above those in Christ – Jn.1:14; Rom.15:7; II Cor.3:18; Tt.2:13

IV. The Decrees of God

A. Defined: “God’s eternal purposes, based on His most wise and holy counsel, whereby He freely and unchangeably, for His own glory, ordained either efficaciously or permissively all that comes to pass” (Thiessen)

B. The Purpose of the Decrees

1. For the happiness of man – Acts 14:17
2. For the holiness of man – Lev.11:44
3. For the Glory of God – Is.48:11

C. The content of the Decrees

1. Physically

- a. To create universe – Gen.1:1
- b. To create man – Gen.1:26
- c. To create seasons – Gen.8:22
- d. To create length of life – Job 14:5

2. Socially

- a. To establish the Family – Gen.2:13
- b. To establish Government – Gen.9:5
- c. To establish Israel – Gen.12:1
- d. To establish the local church – Mt.16:18
- e. To realize final victory – Ps.2:6-9

3. Spiritually

- a. To permit sin – Ezek.28:15
- b. To over-rule sin – Rom.5:12
- c. To save from sin – I Tim.2:4



d. To reward obedient and punish disobedient – Dt.28

V. Providence of God

- A. Defined: “the continuous activity of God whereby He makes all the events of the physical and spiritual realms work out His purposes” (T. Strouse)
- B. Content of Providence
  - 1. His creation
  - 2. His preservation of His creation
  - 3. His rule over His creation
- C. The Means of Providence
  - 1. God uses nature – Gen.8:22
  - 2. God uses Government – Gen.9:1
  - 3. God uses conscience – Rom.1:26
  - 4. God uses angels – II Kings 19:35
  - 5. God uses miracles – Ex.14:21
  - 6. God uses His Word – Ps.33:9
  - 7. God uses the Holy Spirit – Acts 16:6

VI. Works of the Father distinguished from God the Son and Spirit

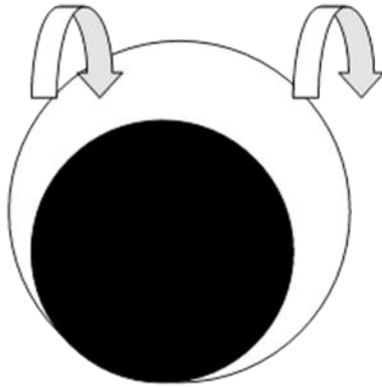
- A. The Father sent His Son and the Spirit – Jn.3:16; Jn.14:26
- B. The Father gives believers to the Son – Jn.6:37
- C. The Father gives rule to the Son – I Cor.15:24
- D. The Father resurrected the Son – Acts 3:15, 5:30; Rom.10:9
  - 1. Jesus raised Himself – Jn.2:19-21; 10:17-18
  - 2. The Spirit raised Jesus – Rom.8:11; I Pt.3:18

VII. The Works of God

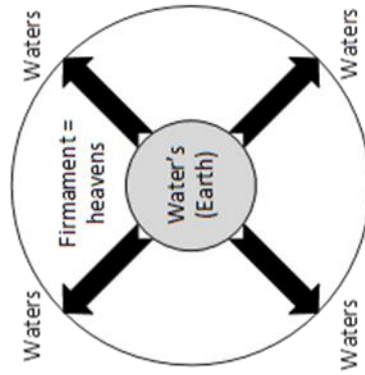
- A. God’s Creation
  - 1. Immediate Creation – free act of God to bring into being something from no pre-existing material
  - 2. Mediate creation – free act of God to bring into being something through secondary causes or pre-existing material
- B. Purpose of Creation
  - 1. To have fellowship with man – Gen.1:27
  - 2. For His own pleasure – Rev.4:11
  - 3. For His own Glory – Is.43:7
- C. The basic approaches to the existence of the universe
  - 1. The universe does not exist except in one’s mind – solipsism
  - 2. The universe created itself – big bang theory
  - 3. The universe is eternal – eternal matter pantheism
  - 4. The universe was created by God
- D. Biblical Account of Creation
  - 1. General account
    - a. God created heaven and Earth – Is.40:26
    - b. God created all men – Ps.102:18
    - c. God created all things – Rom.11:36
    - d. Christ created all things – Jn.1:3, Col.1:16

- e. Holy Spirit created all things – Ps.104:30
- f. The Word – Ps.248:5 and Wisdom – Prov.8:22 created all things
- 2. Specific account (see chart on next page)
  - a. Key words
    - i. Bara – Gen.1:1, 21, 27
    - ii. Yatzar – Gen.2:7, 19
    - iii. Ashah – Gen.1:26, 2:4
  - b. The days
    - i. Day 1 – time-space-mass continuum created
    - ii. Day 2 – atmosphere and water created
    - iii. Day 3 – land mass and life created
    - iv. Day 4 – light bearers created
    - v. Day 5 – life species created
    - vi. Day 6 – animals and Adam/Eve created
    - vii. Day 7 – God ceased from creating

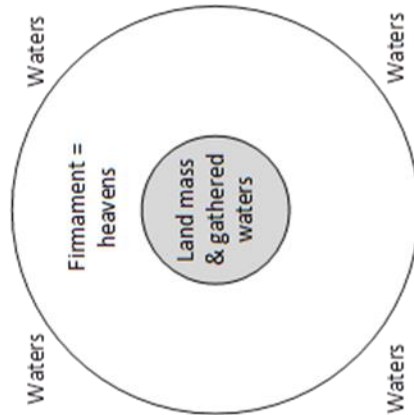
**Day One:**  
The LORD encircled the Earth with  
created light (Gen.1:2-5, Ps.104:2)



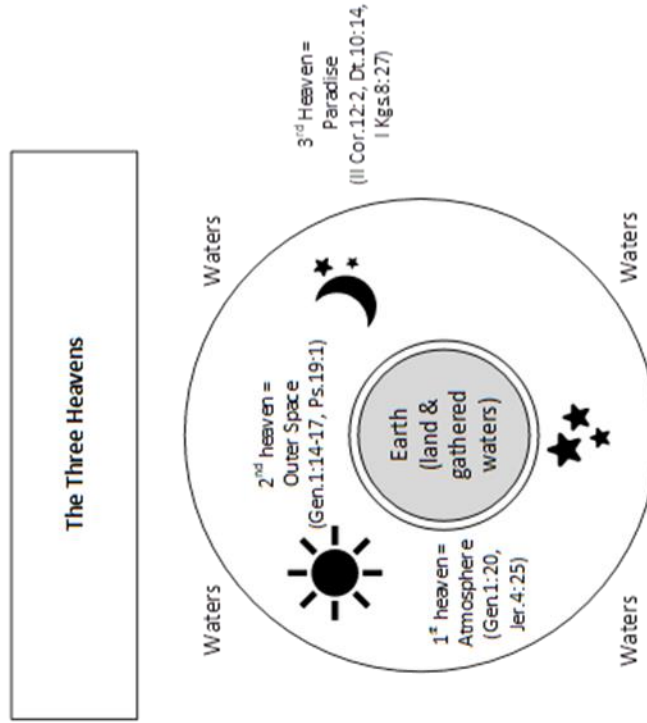
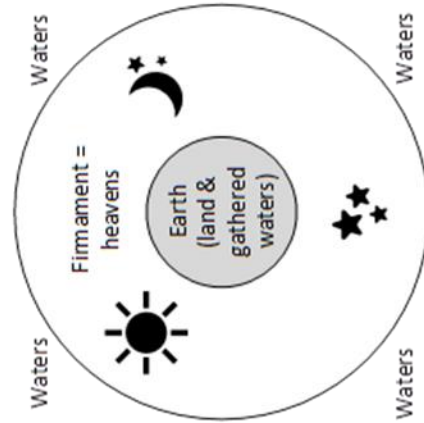
**Day Two:**  
He expanded the waters above from the  
waters below (Gen.1:6-8)



**Day Three:**  
Land created from sediment in water  
(Gen. 1:9-13)



**Day Four:**  
Sun & Moon created in firmament (not Earth) as  
timekeepers (Gen.1:14-19)



VI. Angelic Realm (Works of God continued)

A. Titles of Angels

1. Hebrew “*malach*” = messenger
2. Greek “*angelos*” = messenger

B. Specific titles

1. Sons of God – Job 1:6; Gen.6:2, 4
2. Sons of the Mighty – Ps.29:1 (see Hebrew)
3. The Holy Ones – Ps.89:5
4. The Hosts – Neh.9:6
5. The Watchers – Dan.4:13, 17, 23
6. The Archangels – I Thess.4:16; Jude 1:9
7. The Morning Stars – Job 38:7

C. Existence and Creation of Angels

1. Christ taught the existence of Angels – Mt.18:10; 26:53
2. The creation of Angels
  - a) During creation week – Gen.1:1; Col.1:16
  - b) Created perfect – Ezek.28:14; 15
  - c) Created for Christ’s glory – Rev.4:11
  - d) Created evidently on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of Creation – Job 38:7; Gen.1:9

D. Personality of Angels

1. They have intellect – II Sam.14:20
2. They worship God – Is.6; Ps.148:2
3. They have intellectual limitations – Mt.24:36
4. They have a capacity for learning – I Pt.1:12

E. The Nature of Angels

1. They are incorporeal
  - a) They are spirits – Ps.104:4
  - b) They are ministering spirits – Heb.1:14
  - c) They may be cast out of man – Mt.8:16
  - d) They may indwell man – Mt.12:45
2. They are a company, not a race – they do not marry because they have no need to produce offspring – Mt.22:30
3. They do not die – Lk.20:36
4. They are higher order than man – Heb.2:7
  - a) They are greater in knowledge, but not omniscient – II Sam.14:20
  - b) They are greater in strength, but not omnipotent – II Pt.2:11
  - c) They are greater in mobility, but not omnipresent – Zech.1:11
5. They are not glorified Human beings – Heb.12:22,23
6. Their number – Dt.33:2; Heb.12:22

F. The classes of Angels

1. The elect angels – I Tim.5:21
2. The Fallen angels – Rev.12:9
3. The angels which kept not their first estate – Jude 1:6

G. Organization of Angels

1. The Archangels – Jude 1:9
  2. The thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers (Col.1:16; Eph.1:21)
  3. The chief princes – Dan.10:13
  4. Ruling Angels – Eph.6:12
  5. Seraphim – Is.6:3
  6. Cherubim – Gen.3:22-24
  7. Guardian angels – Heb.1:14; Mt.18:10
- H. Ministry of Angels
1. Relative to unbelievers
    - a) They announce great judgments – Gen.19:13; Rev.14:6
    - b) They will reap in judgment at end of the age – Mt.13:39
    - c) They rejoice in the salvation of sinners – Lk.15:7, 10
  2. Relative to believers
    - a) They minister to believers – Heb.1:14; I Kgs.19:5-8
    - b) They help in answering prayers – Acts 12:7
    - c) They observe Christian activities – I Tim.5:21
    - d) They encourage believers in danger – Acts 27:23-24
    - e) They are present in the NT assembly services – I Cor.11:10
    - f) They are interested in doctrinal truth – Eph.3:10; I Pt.1:12
    - g) They care for believers at death – Lk.16:22; Jude 1:9
  3. Relative to Israel
    - a) They ministered for healing in certain cases – Jn.5:3-4
    - b) They administrate God's plan for the Nation – Dan.10:21
    - c) They will judge during the Tribulation – Rev.8, 9, 16
    - d) They will accompany Christ at the Second coming – Mt.25:31-32
    - e) They gave the Law – Acts 7:53; Gal.3:19; Heb.2:2
    - f) The archangel for the nation of Israel is Michael – Dan.12:1
  4. Relative to Christ
    - a) They predicted Christ's birth – Lk.1:26
    - b) They announce His birth – Lk.2:13
    - c) They guarded the infant Jesus – Mt.2:13
    - d) They ministered to Christ after the temptation – Mt.4:11
    - e) They were capable of defending Christ – Mt.26:53
    - f) They ministered to Him in Gethsemane – Lk.22:43
    - g) They rolled away the stone of the tomb – Mt.28:2
    - h) They announced Christ's resurrection – Mt.28:6
- I. Satanology
1. The existence, names, and titles of Satan
    - a) The existence of Satan
      - (1) Man acknowledged the existence of Satan – II Cor.2:11
      - (2) Angels acknowledged the existence of Satan – Jude 1:9
      - (3) Christ acknowledged the existence of Satan – Mt.13:39; Lk.10:18
    - b) The names and titles of Satan
      - (1) Satan or adversary – Job 1:6; Zech.3:1

- (2) Devil or slanderer – Rev.12:10
  - (3) Lucifer or light bearer – Is.14:12
  - (4) Beelzebub or Lord of the flies – Mt.12:24
  - (5) Belial or worthless one – II Cor.6:15
  - (6) Drago or sea monster – Rev.12:3
  - (7) Serpent or twisted one – Rev.12:9
  - (8) Apollyon or destroyer – Rev.9:11
  - (9) The Evil One – Eph.6:16; I Jn.2:13
  - (10) The tempter – Mt.4:3; I Thess. 3:5
  - (11) The god of this age – II Cor.4:4
  - (12) The prince of the power of the air – Eph.2:2
  - (13) The ruler of this age – Jn.12:31, 14:30, 16:11
  - (14) The accuser of the brethren – Rev.12:10
  - (15) The angel of light – II Cor.11:14
2. The personality of Satan
- a) Personal pronouns used for him
    - (1) Thou, thy, thine – Job 1:8, 12
    - (2) Thee – Zech.3:2
    - (3) Thee – Mt.4:10
    - (4) He – ekeinos, auto
  - b) Personal attributes
    - (1) He has personal intellect – II Cor.11:3
    - (2) He has personal emotions – Rev.12:17
    - (3) He has personal will – II Tim.2:26; Is.14:13
  - c) Personal acts performed by him
    - (1) He speaks – Job 1:9
    - (2) He tempts – Mt.4:1-11
    - (3) He murders and lies – Jn.8:44
    - (4) He contends – Jude 1:9
  - d) He is treated as a free, moral agent
    - (1) In his creation – Ezek.28:15
    - (2) In his judgment – Mt.25:41
3. The original state and fall of Satan
- a) The original state of Satan
    - (1) His person
      - (a) He was a created being – Ezek.28:15
      - (b) He was of the cherubims – Ezek.28:14
      - (c) He was created perfect – Ezek.28:15
    - (2) His privileges
      - (a) He was the summation of wisdom and beauty – Ezek.28:12
      - (b) He had a special place of prominence around God’s holy throne – Ezek.18:13
      - (c) He has a God-given throne for rulership – Is.14:13
  - b) The fall of Satan – Is.14:12

- (1) The sin = pride – I Tim.3:6
  - (a) I will ascend into heaven – Is.14:13
  - (b) I will exalt my throne above the stars of God – Is.14:13
  - (c) I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation (angelic council)
  - (d) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds – usurp God's glory
  - (e) I will be like the most high – mimic deity – antichrist
- (2) The time – after the 6<sup>th</sup> day of Creation (Gen.1:31) and before man's fall. Perhaps the sin occurred on the 7<sup>th</sup> day when God rested.
- (3) The consequences
  - (a) He was corrupted wisdom – Ezek.18:17
  - (b) He was cast out of God's mountain – Ezek.28:16
  - (c) He will be destroyed by sin – Ezek. 28:16, 18
  - (d) His sin and fall will be exposed to mankind – Ezek.28:17, 18; Is.14:16
  - (e) He will be brought down to hades and the pit – Is.14:15
- c) Judgments of Satan
  - (1) Satan was cast out of his original position in Heaven – Ezek.28:16
  - (2) Satan was cursed in Eden – Gen.3:14-15
  - (3) Satan was judge at the cross – Jn.12:31
  - (4) Satan will be cast out of heaven at midpoint of Tribulation – Rev.12:13
  - (5) Satan will be confined to the pit during the millennium – Rev.20:2
  - (6) Satan will be cast into the lake of fire at end of the millennium – Rev.20:10
- d) Work of Satan
  - (1) Satan's work relative to Christ
    - (a) He has led a conspiracy against Christ since the beginning – Is.14:12; Gen.3:1
    - (b) He tempted Christ – Mt.4:1-11
    - (c) He attempted to thwart Christ work – Mt.2:16; Jn.8:44
    - (d) He indwelt Judas to betray Christ – Jn.13:27
  - (2) Satan's work relative to the world
    - (a) He directs the world system – Jn.12:31, 16:11, I Jn.5:19
    - (b) He controls world leaders – Is.14, Ezek.28; I Chron.21:1
    - (c) He deceives the world – Rev. 20:3
    - (d) He will gather the nations to Armageddon – Rev.16:13, 14
  - (3) Satan's work relative to Unbelievers
    - (a) He blinds men to the truth – II Cor.4:3-4
    - (b) He promotes false religions and cults – James 3:15; I Jn.2:16
      - (i) By using false prophets – Dt.13:1-5; I Jn.4:1
      - (ii) By teaching false doctrine – I Tim.4:1
      - (iii) By attacking the doctrine of the incarnation – I Jn.2:22; II Jn.1:7; I Tim.3:16; I Jn.5:7
    - (c) He snatches the seed of the Word of God – Lk.8:12
    - (d) He counterfeits God's program



- (i) By using a counterfeit Gospel – Gal.1:6
- (ii) By using a counterfeit church – Rev.2:9; 3:9
- (iii) By using a counterfeit ministry – II Cor.11:13-15
- (iv) By using a counterfeit Christ – II Cor.11:3; Rev.13:1
- (4) Satan's work relative to believers
  - (a) His titles are related to his work against believers
    - (i) He is a fowler or birdcatcher – Ps.91:3; II Cor.2:11
    - (ii) He is a sower of tares – Mt.13:24
    - (iii) He is a wolf – Jn.10:12
    - (iv) He is a Lion – I Pt.5:8
    - (v) He is a serpent – Rev. 12:9; 20:2
  - (b) His work is in opposition to God's will for believers
    - (i) He brings bodily affliction – Job 1-2
    - (ii) He attempts to have believers pervert Word – Gen.3:1-5; II Cor.2:11
    - (iii) He tests believers – Lk.22:31
    - (iv) He slanders them before the LORD – Rev.12:10
    - (v) He tempts with fleshly sins
      - (a) He tempts believers to Lie – Acts 5:3
      - (b) He tempts believers to be immoral – I Cor.7:5
    - (vi) He incites persecutions against believers – Rev.2:10
    - (vii) He hinders believers in their service for Christ – I Thess.2:18
  - (c) The believer's defense against Satan
    - (i) Christian armor – Eph.6:11-18
    - (ii) Resist the devil through submission to God – James 4:7
    - (iii) Looks to Christ's intercession ministry – Jn.17:15
    - (iv) Be on guard – I Pt.5:8
    - (v) Believers should not speak contemptuously of Satan – Jude 8-9

## J. Demonology

- 1. The origin of the demons
  - a) Greeks maintained they are souls of departed evil people
  - b) The gap theorists maintain that they are dis-embodied spirits of the pre-adamic race
  - c) Others maintain they are offspring of angels and antediluvian women
  - d) The bible teaches that they are fallen angels
    - (1) Satan is the prince of the demons – Mt.12:24
    - (2) Satan has ranks of angels – Eph.6:11
    - (3) Some demons are confined, suggesting those who fell in the sin of Gen.6:1-4; II pt.2:4; Jude 1:6
    - (4) Some of the angels are evil – Ps.78:49; Mt.25:41; Rev.9:11; 12:7-9
- 2. The nature of demons
  - a) They are spirit beings – Eph.6:12

- b) They have limited knowledge
  - (1) They know Jesus – Mk.1:24
  - (2) They know they are doomed – Mt.8:29
  - (3) They are believing monotheists – James 2:19
  - (4) They are basic Gnostics in their theology – I Tim.4:13
- c) They are unclean and immoral
  - (1) They are unclean – Mk.7:25 and their doctrine leads to immorality – I Tim.4:1-3; II Pt.2:1
  - (2) They attempted moral perversion and pollution of the human race by breeding with mankind – Gen.6:1-4; II Pt.2:4; Jude 1:6; the incubus for the occults input
- 3. The classes of demons
  - a) The sinning angels in tartaros – II Pt.2:4; Jude 1:6
  - b) The free demons – Rev.12:7-9; Ps.78:49; Rev.9:14
  - c) Demons – Mt.25:41; Mk.6:13; Lk.11:15-19
  - d) Satan
- 4. The work of demons
  - a) Relative to the cosmos
    - (1) They attempt to thwart God's plan – Dan.10:10-14
    - (2) They are an extension of Satan – Eph.6:11-12
    - (3) They are ultimately under God's authority and are his tools – I Sam.16:14; II Cor.12:7; I Kgs.22:5-23
    - (4) They inflict diseases, blindness, and dumbness – Mt.9:33; 12:22; 9:32
    - (5) They desire to possess men and animals, not for incorporation, but to thwart God's plan – Mt.4:24; Mk.5:13; Mt.8:28
  - b) Relative to believers
    - (1) They corrupt sound doctrine – I Tim.4:1-3
    - (2) They corrupt godly wisdom – Jms.3:15
    - (3) They corrupt Christian fellowship – I Cor.10:20
    - (4) They oppose the Christians spiritual growth – Eph.6:12
- 5. The destiny of the demons
  - a) The free angels will be cast into the abyss – Lk.8:31; Rev.9:11
  - b) The imprisoned ones will be loosed in the tribulation – Rev.9:8-11; 16:13-14

## **Section 4**

### **Theology Proper**

#### **From Select Books of the Bible**

***Theology Proper in Job***

- Omnipotence
  - Job 9:4-10, 26:14, 42:2
  - Job 11:7-10, 23:13-14, 36:22, 37:5, 40:9
- Omniscience
  - Job 28:24, 31:4, 37:16
  - Job 24:23, 34:21-22, 36:4
- Sovereignty
  - Job 12:16-18, 23:13
  - Job 9:12, 33:12-13, 34:24-25
- Creator
  - Job 38:4-7, 10:8
  - Job 26:7-13, 28:26-27, 37:6-7
- Righteousness
  - Job 34:12, 37:23
  - Job 8:3, 35:13-14, 36:6
- Wisdom
  - Job 12:13, 36:5
  - Job 9:4, 28:23-24, 38:36
- Holiness
  - Job 34:10, 36:3
  - Job 15:15, 37:22
- Mercy and Compassion
  - Job 33:26-28, 14:15
- Eternality
  - Job 36:26
- Transcendence
  - Job 11:7-9, 26:14, 37:23
- Sustainer
  - Job 12:10, 34:14-15
- Provider
  - Job 38:41, 39:5-6

***Theology Proper in Ezekiel***

- Glory and Majesty
  - Ezek.1:26-28, 3:23, 43:2, 8:4, 10:4, 44:4, 39:21
- Holiness
  - Ezek.20:41, 36:23, 39:7, 28:22, 28:23, 39:27, 20:12
- Sovereignty

- Ezek.12:25, 17:24, 24:14, 6:14, 13:9, 20:33, 29:20, 33:29
- Omniscience
  - Ezek.11:5, 9:9, 11:5, 17:24, 21:5, 39:23
- Justice
  - Ezek.7:3, 18:25-30, 33:20, 9:10, 16:43, 22:31, 24:14
- Mercy and Compassion
  - Ezek.18:23, 34:11-16, 36:25-26, 11:19, 20:17, 39:25, 16:63
- Omnipresence
  - Ezek.8:4, 11:16
- Faithfulness
  - Ezek.16:60, 36:36, 37:14, 17:24, 34:30, 39:29
- Wrath against sin:
  - Ezek.5:13, 7:8, 8:18
- Life giver:
  - Ezek.37:5-6, 37:13-14, 17:22-24
- Divine protection:
  - Ezek.34:10, 38:19-23, 39:1-6
- Restorer:
  - Ezek.36:33-35, 37:21-22
- Shepherd:
  - Ezek.34:11-12, 34:15-16
- Purifier:
  - Ezek.20:38, 24:13, 36:25, 36:29

### ***Theology Proper in John***

- Love:
  - Jn.3:16, 14:21, 16:27, 17:23, 17:26
- Spirit:
  - Jn.4:24
- Truth:
  - Jn.3:33, 14:6, 17:17
- Life-giver:
  - Jn.1:4, 5:21, 5:26, 6:33
- Light:
  - Jn.1:4-5, 8:12
- Glory:
  - Jn.1:14, 17:5, 17:24,
- Omniscience:
  - Jn.2:24-25, 16:30, 21:17
- Holiness:
  - Jn.17:11
- Power:
  - Jn.10:29, 19:11

- Eternal:
  - Jn.1:1-2, 8:58
- Justice:
  - Jn.5:30, 8:16
- Mercy:
  - Jn.3:17, 12:47
- Faithfulness:
  - Jn.14:1-3
- Unity of Godhead:
  - Jn.10:30, 14:9, 17:21
- Good:
  - Jn.10:11, 10:14
- Sovereign:
  - Jn.5:17, 6:44

### ***Theology Proper in Romans***

- Righteousness:
  - Rom.1:17, 2:2, 3:25-26
- Love:
  - Rom.5:5, 5:8, 8:39
- Wisdom:
  - Rom.11:33, 16:27
- Power:
  - Rom.1:16, 1:20, 9:17
- Mercy:
  - Rom.9:15-16, 11:30-32, 12:1
- Sovereignty:
  - Rom.9:18-21, 11:34-36
- Faithfulness:
  - Rom.3:3-4, 11:29
- Wrath:
  - Rom.1:18, 2:5, 9:22
- Truth:
  - Rom.3:4, 15:8
- Goodness:
  - Rom.2:4, 11:22
- Holiness:
  - Rom.1:4, 6:22

### ***Theology Proper in Ephesians***

- Love:
  - Eph.2:4, 3:19, 5:2
- Power:
  - Eph.1:19-20, 3:20, 6:10
- Wisdom:
  - Eph.1:8, 3:10
- Grace:
  - Eph.1:6-7, 2:7, 4:7
- Mercy:
  - Eph.2:4-4
- Sovereignty:
  - Eph.1:11, 3:11
- Glory:
  - Eph.1:12, 17, 3:21
- Holiness:
  - Eph.1:4, 4:24
- Kindness:
  - Eph.2:7
- Unity:
  - Eph.4:6
- Forgiveness:
  - Eph.4:32

***Theology Proper in Revelation:***

- Eternal:
  - Rev.1:4, 1:8, 4:8, 21:6
- Holy:
  - Rev.3:7, 4:8, 6:10, 15:4
- Almighty:
  - Rev.1:8, 4:8, 11:17, 19:6
- Just/Righteous:
  - Rev.15:3, 16:5, 16:7, 19:2
- Truth:
  - Rev.3:7, 3:14, 19:11
- Sovereign:
  - Rev.1:5, 17:14, 19:16
- Glory:
  - Rev.4:11, 5:12-13, 7:12
- Light:
  - Rev.21:23, 22:5
- Wrath:



- Rev.6:16-17, 15:1, 19:15
- Judge:
  - Rev.20:11-12, 2:23
- Life giver:
  - Rev.1:18, 21:6
- Creator:
  - Rev.4:11, 10:6
- Faithful:
  - Rev.1:5, 19:11

## **Section 5**

### **Application of Theology Proper in Christian Life (The Fear of the LORD)**

Proverbs 9:10 “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: And the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*”

## Defining the “*Fear of the LORD*”

### *Getting Back to Normal*

Psalms 33:8-9 “*Let all the earth fear the LORD: Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.*”

Genesis 1:27 “*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*”

Mankind was created in the image or likeness of Jehovah God for the purpose of worshipping, praising, and fearing their Creator. As image bearers, mankind is the height of the LORD’s creation; as stated in Psalm 139:14, “*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvellous are thy works; And that my soul knoweth right well.*” The LORD has instilled these basic aspects in the spiritual realm of man’s heart and conscience.

Mankind is without excuses when it comes to their broken relationship with Jehovah.

1. Romans 2:15 reveals that the law of God is written in the conscience (co-knowledge) of man.
2. As well, Solomon revealed that the LORD placed *olam* “*the world*” or eternity in the heart of man (Eccl.3:11).
3. Furthermore, mankind is in the midst of the created realm which declares the glory of God (General revelation – Rom.1:20, Ps.19:1-4).
4. Even further, the LORD has provided His Word to mankind (Ex.31:18; II Tim.3:15-16). Man is separated from God by sin and does not live in recognition of a Creator (Jer.5:24; Ps.36:1; Eccl.8:13; Rom.3:18).

Each soul must recognize their Adamic sin nature in view of the Holy One that is high and lifted up, and turn to His Son – Jesus Christ – in faith and repentance (Is.57:15). Romans 10:17 “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Knowledge of the Holy and exposure of man’s sin are essential to re-establishing a Biblical fear of the LORD (Pr.9:10).

### ***A Definition***

The fear of the LORD begins with knowledge of the LORD (nature, attributes) that leads to understanding of how to fear Him; ultimately, the learning process culminates in Wisdom, which is actively fleeing sin and obeying the LORD in awestruck submission.

Knowledge = Context

Understanding = Interpretation

Wisdom = Application

Proverbs 9:10 “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: And the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*”

- Recognizing who God is (Holy Creator) in contrast to who we are (sinful creature).

- Perfect Holiness and separation from sin in contrast to desperately wicked hearts
- Reverential awe – a mix of respect, fear, pleasure, joy, and awe that drives submission, humility, and obedience.
  - Loving fear of a child toward a loving Father.
  - Hebrews 12:6-7 “*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*”
- Transcendent majesty

### ***Practical Definition:***

- 1) Growing in the knowledge of the LORD and His Word (Prov.1:7)
- 2) Growing in the interpretation and understanding of the LORD in a full biblical context (Prov.9:10)
- 3) Having Wisdom: Applying the knowledge and understanding of the LORD and His Word to the extent that we obey Him (Job 28:28)
  - a. Obey Him
  - b. Seek Him
  - c. Praise Him
  - d. Thank Him
  - e. Submit to Him
  - f. Be ever aware of Him

### ***Word Study***

The Hebrew root verb יָרָא (*yare*) is found 314 times in the Masoretic Text (Gen.15:1); it is rendered in the King James Version (KJV) as “*fear*,” “*afraid*,” “*terrible*,” “*terrible thing*,” “*dreadful*,” “*reverence*,” “*fearful*,” and “*terrible acts*.”<sup>44</sup> The identical Hebrew root adjective יָרָא (*yare*) is found 64 times in the MT (Gen.32:11), and it is rendered in the KJV as “*fear*,” “*feareth*,” “*afraid*,” and “*fearest*.” Furthermore, the noun form יִרְאָה (*yira*) is found 44 times in the MT (Gen.20:11).

The phrase “*now...feared*” (הָיָה יָרֵא, *haya yare*) is found five times in the MT, and gives the sense of immediate fear and respect (I Kings 18:3, II Kings 4:1, 17:32-33, 41).

The Hebrew verb, פָּחַד (*pachad*), is found 25 times in the MT, and it is rendered as “*fear*,” “*tremble*,” “*awe*,” and “*shake*.”<sup>45</sup> See Genesis 31:42, Deuteronomy 11:25, I Samuel 11:7, I Chronicles 14:17.

The Hebrew noun מַגּוֹר (*magor*) is found 8 times in the MT, and it is rendered as “*fear*” (Ps.31:13) and “*terror*” (Jer.20:4, Lam.2:22). See also Isaiah 31:9, Jeremiah 6:25, 20:10, 46:5, 49:29.

The Hebrew noun מוֹרָא (*mora*) is found 13 times in the MT, and is rendered as “*fear*” (Gen.9:2, Ps.9:20), “*dread*” (Gen.9:2, Dt.11:25, Is.8:13), “*terror*” (Dt.4:34, Dt. 34:12, Jer.35:21), and “*terribleness*” (Deut.26:8).

The Hebrew noun אֵימָה (*ema*) is found 17 times in the MT, and is rendered as “*fear*” (Ex.15:16, 23:27, Ezra 3:3, Job 9:34, Prov.20:2), “*terror*” (Dt.32:25, Jos.2:9, Job 20:25, 33:7, Ps.55:4, 88:15, Is.33:18), “*terrible*” (Job 39:20, 41:14), “*horror*” (Gen.15:12), “*dread*” (Job 13:21), and “*idols*” (Jer.30:38).

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<sup>44</sup>First reference is found in Genesis 3:10, “*And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*”

<sup>45</sup>Key references include Deuteronomy 28:66, Job 3:25, Isaiah 51:13.

The Hebrew verb עָרַץ (*arats*) is found 15 times in the MT, and is rendered as “shake terribly” (Is.2:19, 2:21), “Fear” (Ps.89:7, Is.29:23), “dread” (Dt.1:29, Is.8:13), “afraid” (Josh.1:9, Is.8:12), “terrified” (Deut.20:3), “be affrighted” (Dt.7:21).

The Hebrew verb חָלַל (*chul*) is found twice in the MT, and it means to tremble, writhe, and fear (I Chron.16:30, Ps.96:9).

The Hebrew noun חֲרָדָה (*charada*) is found nine times in the MT, and it means anxiety, tremble, quake, fear. See Genesis 27:33. Prov.29:25, Isaiah 21:4, Jeremiah 30:5).

The Aramaic verb דַּחַל (*dechal*) is found twice (Dan.5:19, 6:26).

The Greek noun φόβος (*phobos*) is found 42 times in the Received Text (TR). See Matthew 14:26, 28:4, Luke 1:12, and John 7:13, 19:38. The Greek verb φοβέω (*phobeo*) is found 58 times in the TR. See Matthew 10:26, 28, Mark 6:20, Luke 12:5.

The Greek word δειλός (*deilos*) means cowardly fear and it is found three times in the TR (Mt.8:26, Mk.4:40, Rev.21:8).

New Testament references include: Luke 1:50 & 74, Luke 12:5, 32, Acts 9:31, Romans 3:18, 8:15, II Corinthians 5:11, II Timothy 1:7, I Peter 2:17, I John 4:18, Jude 1:23.

### ***The role of good systematic theology in discipleship:***

- What: What is this person’s unique struggle?
- Why: Why does this person struggle in this unique way?
- Shaping Influences + Heart Motives
- Teach: Aim specific knowledge toward the deepest needs of their heart
- Apply: Spirit-empowered heart-change within the context of the local church over a long period of time.

### ***Theology Proper is a core component in any counseling situation:***

- Assess the individuals relationship with their earthly father
- Assess the individuals fear of man
- Assess the individuals self-reliance and practical unbelief

### ***Case Studies:***

#### **I. Applying Theology Proper in a counseling situation:**

- Melody struggled with obsessive thoughts about not being saved and would pray the sinners prayer incessantly; subsequently, she compulsively picked at her skin, rocked back and forth, bang her head, and consult the internet for assurance of salvation. Every sermon was seen through the lens that her testimony of being born again was invalidated because of major subsequent sins there was no way she could be forgiven. She would consistently and abruptly leave these sessions in tears and despair. Her husband was frustrated and her children learned to manage their own homeschool sessions because of her preoccupations.

- Upon closer assessment, Melody felt she was “second chair” to her sister in her father’s eyes during her teenage years. Nothing she did ever pleased him. She tried compliance and still felt disapproval so she rebelled by sleeping around to gain his attention. She indicated that she learned how to manipulate her father and others by acting out; however, she claims and her husband testifies that Melody was born again with subsequent fruit one Summer during college. Both would agree that after a year their sanctification was inconsistent and not diligent. Sadly, her shaping influences and old man baggage of fear of man and practical unbelief continued.

- We reviewed a brief theology of God and His attributes. One assignment was to compare her earthly Father’s negative attributes to the heavenly Father’s immutable attributes. The goal was to learn the truth of God’s nature. In particular, 1) God is self-sufficient and cannot be manipulated by us, 2) God is holy, faithful, and good. The goal was to help her rest in God’s immutable ability to forgive sins and to help her understand her inability to get God to change (Job 23:13).

**II. List five doctrines and relate them to a counseling situation. E.g., How would you relate God’s sovereignty to a person struggling with why they were adopted?**

- Omnisapience - God knows best (Pr.3:5-6, Is.55:8; Ps.40:5, Rom.11:33-34). Resting in God’s definition of “good” and “best” for us when it usually entails suffering. Learning to trust and discern the good that the LORD is bringing out of a situation instead of taking matters into our own hands.
- Christ payment for sins on the cross (I Pt.1:19; Is.53:10) – Understanding this truth is helpful for those from legalistic & performance backgrounds, which can bring the dread of God’s wrath for making a mistake. Subsequently, some will try to punish themselves through privation or self-harm. This is another ST area that helped Melody above.
- Theology of Sin (Jms.1:13-15) – this is key to helping people have a biblical understanding of the continual struggle we all have with sin (we are uniquely fallen). For instance, the soul noise of fear, guilt, and shame (Gen.3:7-11) must be tied back to our sin, the sin of others, and the consequence of all creation groaning (Rom.8:20-24).
- Adoption in Christ (Rom.8:15, Jn.1:12) – another great ST for the former legalist who struggles with being accepted and good enough; they can rest in Christ’s righteousness that brings the tremendous blessings of being adopted into the family of God.
- Image bearers (Gen.1:26) – those struggling with pride, respect of persons, anger, and hatred can benefit from understanding this ST. We are all made in God’s image – how we relate to others in His image matters.

**III. Talk about how you would counsel a person with depression by using ST.**

- Doctrine of Sin (Rom.8:23) – there is a degree of normalcy in depression in a fallen world...much to be sad about.
- Doctrine of Suffering (Job 23:13-16) – God appoints suffering for us that can bring depression.
- Doctrine of God’s goodness (Gen.50:20, Rom.8:28, Is.53:10) – we can trust God’s good purposes at work in the things that bring depression.
- Doctrine of Christ – our identity in Christ brings us peace with the Father (Rom.5:1)

- Doctrine of Holy Spirit – the indwelling Spirit gives power to overcome sadness and live out the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-25)
- Doctrine of Church – find a healthy church and small group to love and point one to scripture (Gal.6:1-3, Phil.2:1-3).