

Introducing Systematic Theology

Dr. Bruce Ware



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Understanding Systematic Theology

Study 1: The Nature of Systematic Theology & the Doctrine of Revelation

I. What Is Evangelical Systematic Theology?

A. Definition of Evangelical Systematic Theology

"Evangelical systematic theology is the comprehensive study and coherent organization of what can be known primarily from Scripture, which is theology's only final and ultimately authoritative source, and secondarily from any and all other relevant sources, about God and his relation to the created universe in a matter that is understandable and applicable to contemporary audiences, to the end that God's people are strengthened and satisfied in him to the praise and glory of his name."

B. Five Areas of Elaboration

1. The Subject Matter of Evangelical theology:
2. The Sources of Evangelical Systematic Theology
3. The Structure of Evangelical Systematic Theology
4. The Setting of Evangelical Systematic Theology
5. The Satisfaction of Evangelical Systematic Theology

**"God is most glorified in us as we are most satisfied in him."
John Piper**

II. Why study Evangelical Systematic Theology?

- A. It provides a comprehensive scriptural vantage point

- B. It provides an interpretive guide for reading the Bible.

- C. It provides a way of understanding what we believe and why we believe it in the midst of religious pluralism.
 - 1. There is little sympathy toward Christian faith today

 - 2. Pressure to compromise on key doctrines.

- D. It shapes the whole person: Head, heart, hands, and habitat

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. What does systematic theology have to do with your own relationship with God? Do you think that understanding theology helps people have a better relationship with God? Why or why not?
2. Read Psalm 34:8. What does this verse have to do with studying systematic theology? How can it help you appreciate what theology is all about?
3. What does systematic theology have to do with what we actually do in church?
4. What are some questions you have about theology that you would like to learn more about as a result of this study? Why are those questions important to you?
5. What are your basic goals for this study? What do you need to do to make sure that you accomplish those goals during this study?

III. The Doctrine of Revelation

A. The Concept of Revelation

1. Defining Revelation

"He pulls away the cloth and you see the painting that was there before, but hidden. It was covered, but now it is laid bare. It is disclosed for what it is. That is revelation. God laying Himself bare before us."

2. Two key passages

a. Psalm 19

b. Matthew 11:25-27

B. Two Main Forms of Revelation

1. General Revelation

a. Definition of "general"

b. The Main Avenues of General Revelation

i. Creation (Rom 1:18-20)

ii. Conscience (Rom 2:14)

c. The Effect of General Revelation

2. Special Revelation

a. Definition of "special"

"We learn specific things about God and His purposes and His work; specific things about His will and ways; specific purposes, specific goals, specific actions of God through special revelation that we could not know just by looking at the created order or by examining our consciences."

b. The Main Avenues of Special Revelation

i. Personal encounter (Exod. 3)

ii. Mighty act (Exod 14:21-25)

iii. Propositional revelation (1 Tim 3:16)

iv. The Incarnation (John 1:14; Heb 1:1-3)

c. The Efficacy of Special Revelation

IV. The Inspiration of Scripture

A. Definition of Inspiration:

1. Definition

"the out-breathing of God's breath that results in the writing of the Scriptures as they were originally given by the apostles and prophets."

2. Verbal, Plenary Inspiration

B. Key Passages and Their Teachings

1. 2 Tim 3:16

2. 2 Pet 1:20-21

3. 1 Cor 2:13

V. The Inerrancy of Scripture

A. The Recent Debate: What Is the Issue?

B. A Definition of Inerrancy

"All that the Scripture teaches or intends to teach as true is true."

C. The Significance of Inerrancy: The Authority of Scripture

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. Have you ever had an experience where you felt that you had learned something about God from creation? What was that like? What did you learn?
2. How is learning about God through creation different from learning about God from the bible? Why are both of these important? How can you make sure that you are including both avenues of revelation in your own life?
3. Read and reflect on 2 Timothy 3:16. In what ways have you found the Bible to be 'profitable' in your own life? Have you ever found the Bible (or parts of the Bible) to be unprofitable? Why do you think that was? What are some things you might be able to do to remedy that?
4. Why is it important to affirm the inerrancy of the Bible? How can understanding increase your confidence in the Bible? How should it affect the way that we approach the Bible?

A. Introduction

1. The Importance of Knowing God

2. Classification of Attributes

a. Incommunicable vs. Communicable

b. Transcendent vs. Immanent

3. Need for Methodological Balance in the Doctrine of God

B. Incommunicable Attributes

1. God is Self-Existent (Exod 3:14)

2. God is Self-Sufficient

a. Isaiah 40:12ff

b. Acts 17

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

~A.W. Tozer

3. God is Infinite (Job 11:7-9; Ps 147:5)

4. God is Omnipresent (Ps 139:7-10; Isa 66:1-2; Jer 23:23-24)

5. God is Eternal (cf. Deut 33:27; Isa 9:6; 1 Tim 1:17)

6. God is Immutable (Ps 102:25-27; Mal 3:6; Jam 1:17)

a. Immutable in His Being

b. Immutable in His Promises

c. Responsive in Relationship

C. Communicable Attributes

1. God's Intellectual Attributes

a. God is Omniscient (1 Cor 2:7-8; Isa 40-48)

b. God is Omnisapient (Ps 104:24; Prov 3:19; 1 Cor 1:18-26; Dan 2:20; Jer 10:12)

2. God's Moral Attributes

a. The Attributes that Express God's Goodness (Rom 2:4; Ps 119:68)

i. God is Loving (Ps 106:1; Isa 43:2; Lam 3:22; John 3:16; Rom 5:8; 1 John 4:9-10)

a) God's *hesed*-love

b) God's *agape*-love

c) God's special love for his people

ii. God is Gracious (Rom 3:24; 5:15; 11:6; Eph 2:8-9)

iii. God is Merciful (Eph 2:4-5; Tit 3:5)

b. The Attributes that Express God's Holiness (Exod 31:15; Isa 6)

i. God is Righteous (cf. Deut 32:4; Mal 3:18; Rom 3:21-26)

ii. God is Just (Lev 11:44-45; Ezra 9:15; Ps 119:137-138; Rev 16:5-7)

"Love is God's unconditional and selfless commitment to seek the well-being of his creatures."

A. Scriptural Monotheism

1. **Old Testament Perspectives on God's Oneness (Gen 1:1; Isa 45:5-7; 46:9-10)**

2. **New Testament Perspectives on God's Oneness (John 17:3; 1 Cor 8:6; 1 Tim 2:5; Rom 3:30; Jam 2:19)**

B. Scriptural Trinitarianism

1. **Scriptural Affirmations of the Triune God**
 - a. Passages that suggest more than God's oneness (John 17:3; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:3).

 - b. Passages that support the deity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit (John 1:1; Acts 5:1-11)

 - c. Triadic passages (Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14)

**"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."
Deuteronomy 6:4**

2. A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity

a. The Christological Background

b. Monarchian Heresies

i. Subordinationism (Dynamistic Monarchianism)

ii. Modalism (Modalistic Monarchianism)

c. The Church's Rejection of Monarchianism

i. The Church's Rejection of Modalism.

ii. Athanasius' Opposition to Arianism.

"We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the life giver who proceeds from the Father who is to be glorified with the Father and the Son and who speaks through the prophets."

iii. The Council of Nicea (AD 325)

iv. The Council of Constantinople (AD 451)

d. Augustine on the Trinity

3. The Immanent and Economic Trinities

a. The Immanent Trinity

i. The Issue

ii. The Begetting of the Son & Procession of the Spirit

**"A good question is, "Who is God apart from creation?"
What if God had never created? Who is God then?"**

iii. Social Relationships in the Trinity

b. The Economic Trinity

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. What difference does the doctrine of the Trinity make for how we live, worship, and do ministry? In other words, do you think it has significance for everyday life?
2. Why do you think the early church reacted so strongly to different ideas about the Trinity (e.g. modalism)? Why did they think the doctrine of the Trinity was so important?
3. How important is the doctrine of the Trinity in your spiritual life? What is one thing that you can do this week to make the doctrine of the Trinity more important to you?
4. Most Christians believe that the doctrine of the Trinity is ultimately a 'mystery' (that is, we'll never really understand how God can be both one and three). How can thinking about the 'mystery' of God help us worship Him more deeply?

Study 4: The Doctrines of Humanity & Sin

I. Humanity's Origin: God the Creator of Human Beings

A. There Is a Special Place for the Formation of Humanity

B. A Brief Theology of Humanity's Creation by God

1. God is ultimate, while all of humanity is dependent upon God.
2. Humanity owes God obedience, loyalty, and worship.
3. Humanity, as created by God, was entirely (body and soul) good.
4. Humanity is invested with moral freedom and responsibility.
5. There is clearly an equality between the sexes and yet a differentiation in the creation of the man and the woman.

II. Humanity's Constitution

A. Theories on the Structure of Human Nature

1. Monism
2. Dichotomy
3. Trichotomy

"...there is an interrelation of body and soul that is undeniable and must be recognized and, in fact, has very many practical implications."

B. Transmission of the Soul.

1. Creationism

2. Traducianism

III. The Image of God

A. Major Understandings of "Image of God"

1. Structural Understanding

2. Relational Understanding

3. Functional Understanding

"Clearly, 'image of God' is meant by the author of Genesis to indicate something significant, but, here is the problem. In the history of this doctrine it is just not clear what the significance is."

B. The Image of God, the Fall, and its Renewal

1. Ancient Near Eastern Background.

2. Image of God: Structural, Relational, and Functional.

"The 'image of God' in man, as functional wholism, means that God made human beings...to be created and finite representations...of God's own nature, that in relationship with him and each other, they might be his representatives...in carrying out the responsibilities he has given to them."

3. Effects of the Fall and our Restoration into the Image of Christ.

IV. Nature of Sin

A. The Essence of Sin

1. The Urge for Independence from God

"Three kinds of urges for independence, the hedonist urge, the covetous urge, the prideful urge, all move us away from God, establish our own autonomy and bring to us our destruction."

2. Three Kinds of Urges for Independence (Gen 3:6)

a. The Hedonist Urge

b. The Covetous Urge

c. The Prideful Urge

B. Total Depravity

1. Definition

2. Support (Rom 8:5-8, Eph 4:17-18, and Gal 5:16-17, 24)

C. Total Inability

1. Definition

2. Support (John 15:5; Heb 11:6; Rom 8:5ff)

"Because every part of us is affected by sin, we are totally unable to live lives, make choices or carry out actions that are pleasing to God."

D. Acts of Personal Sin

1. Sins of Commission and Sins of Omission (Exod 20:13-17; Jam 4:17; Matt 25:41-46)
2. Outward Actions and Inward Attitudes (Matt 5; Deut 28:47-48)
3. Conscious Rebellion and Ignorance (Num 15:27-31; 1 Tim 1:12-14)
4. Greater and Lesser Sins (Matt 12:31-32; 23:23; 1 Cor 6:17-18)

E. Systemic or Social Manifestations of Sin

1. Good Structures used for Evil (Amos 5:10-15)
2. Formation of Evil Structures to do Evil (Ps 94:20-23; Isa 10:1-4)

V. Original Sin

A. Definition

"We are conceived and born in sin and come into this world with sinful natures. We are totally depraved, totally unable from the very outset, and given time and development we will express that nature in rebellious actions."

B. Theories of Original Sin

1. The Federal or Representative Theory

2. The Realist or Augustinian Theory

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. Read Genesis 1:26-28. How does it make you feel to realize that you are made in the image of God? Who is someone in your life that you have a difficult time seeing this way? How can you begin seeing them as one of God's image-bearers?
2. Can you see any tendencies toward "independence from God" in your own life? What can you do this week to increase your dependence on God in this area? Of the three kinds of sinful independence discussed, which seems most difficult for you?
3. Why is "total depravity" important for us to understand? Why do you think some people would have a hard time with this doctrine? How can you help them understand and appreciate it more?
4. Can you think of any areas in which Christians tend to be less concerned about inward attitudes than they are about external actions? What do you think about that? Do you see any signs of that in your own life?
5. Can you think of any examples of "evil structures" or "social manifestations of sin" in your city? What responsibility do you think that Christians and Christian churches have for addressing these evil social structures? What responsibility do you have?

Study 5: The Doctrine of the Person of Christ

I. Christ's Pre-Incarnate Existence

A. Jesus as the "LORD" of the Old Testament (Isa 6:3; 7:14; 9:6-7; 40:3)

B. The Testimony of Jesus about His Own Pre-existence (John 8:58; 17:5)

II. The Incarnation

A. Jesus as Prophet (Deut 18:15; cf. John 1:18; Acts 3:22)

B. Jesus as Priest (Ps 110:4; cf. Heb 3:1; 4:14; 6:20)

C. Jesus as King (Gen 49:10; 2 Sam 7:12-16; cf. Lk 1:32; Heb 1:8)

**"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."
John 1:14**

III. The Deity of Christ

A. The names of God are applied to Christ.

1. "God" (John 1:1; 20:28; Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6; Col 1:15; Tit 2:13; Heb 1:8; 2 Pet 1:1; 1 John 5:20)
2. "Son of God" (John 5:17ff; 10:33-36; Matt 26:63-64)
3. "Son of Man" (Dan 7:13-14; Matt 24:30; 26:64)

B. The attributes of God alone are applied to Christ.

1. Eternity (John 1:3-4)
2. Immutability (Heb 1:10-12; 13:8)

C. The works that only God does are done by Christ.

1. Creation (John 1:3; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15-16; Heb 1:2-3)
2. Giving eternal life (John 10:28; 17:2; 1 John 2:25)
3. Forgiving sins (Mark 2:5-12; Col 1:14; 3:13)

D. The worship belonging to God alone is given to Christ (Exod 34:14; Deut 6:13; Matt 2:11; 28:9-10; John 5:23; 9:35-39; Phil 2:10-11; Heb 1:6; Rev 5:8-14)

E. Jesus' own claims to deity are evidence that he in fact is God (Matt 26:63-64; John 8:58; 10:30; 17:5)

IV. The Humanity of Christ

A. The Old Testament teaches that the Messiah who would come would be human (Isa 7:14; 9:6; Mic 5:3)

B. Christ's own life also indicates his humanity (Mark 13:32; Luke 2:40, 52)

C. Christ remains human forever (Acts 1:9; cf. Heb 13:8)

V. The Emptying (Kenosis) of Christ: Philippians 2:6-8

A. Key terms.

1. "form" (morphe)
2. "equality" (isos)
3. "he emptied himself" (ekenosin)

B. The Meaning of Kenosis

1. Emptying by adding
2. Divine attributes "hidden" under Christ's humanity (Mark 13:32)
3. The significance of the kenosis

VI. The Sinlessness (Impeccability) of Christ

A. Meaning of the term impeccability

B. Support for impeccability

1. Christ did not sin (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 9:14; 1 Pet 2:22; 1 John 3:5)
2. Christ could not sin

"An impeccable will is one that is so mighty in its self-determination to good that it cannot be conquered by any temptation to evil however great."

W. G. T. Shedd

3. The Reality of Christ's temptations
 - a. Christ was fully and truly tempted (Matt 4:1-11; Heb 4:15)
 - b. By never sinning, he endured the full weight of temptation
 - c. Key distinction and solution

VII. Hypostatic Union and the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451

A. Erroneous views of Christ prior to Chalcedon

1. The Appolinarian view
2. The Nestorian view

B. Orthodox Decision

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. Reflect for a while on Christ's three roles of Prophet, Priest, and King. What does each reveal about who Jesus was and what he came to do? How can each be a source of comfort and an encouragement to worship?
2. Why did the early church think it was so important to emphasize both the full deity and fully humanity of Jesus? Why is it important for us to continue to emphasize both of these truths today?
3. Read Philippians 2:1-11. What "attitude" did Paul want us to see in Jesus and model in our own lives? Are there any areas of your life in which you are not modeling this attitude? What needs to change?
4. Why is it important to recognize both that Jesus never sinned and that he was tempted just like we are? How can this encourage us to greater faithfulness?

Study 6: The Doctrine of the Work of Christ

I. Past Work: Christ, The Atoning Savior

A. Aspects of the Atonement

1. Sacrifice (Jn 1:29; Eph 1:7; Tit 2:14; 1 Pt 2:24; 3:18; and 1 Jn 3:5)

a. The Necessity of Sacrifice (Heb 9:22, 26; 10:4)

b. Animal Sacrifices (Rom 3:24ff)

2. Substitution

a. Old Testament Testimony (Lev 4-7; Isa 53:4-6)

b. New Testament Testimony (Jn 10:11-15; Ro 5:6, 8; 8:32; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 2:20; 3:13; Eph 5:2, 25; 1 Tim 2:6; Tit 2:14; Heb 2:9; 7:26-27; 9:28; 1 Pt 2:24; 3:18; 1 Jn 2:2)

"No one of these can by itself communicate the fullness of the atonement, but together they provide a rich display of the various aspects that are involved in this uniform, single, atoning work that Christ accomplished on our behalf."

3. Redemption

a. The Centrality of Redemption

"They are not their own; they have been purchased by another; they now belong to Christ"

b. Key Passages (1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; Gal 3:13; 2 Pet 2:1; Rev 5:9-10)

c. The "Ransom" Metaphor (Lk 24:21; Mt 20:28; 1 Tim 2:6; Tit 2:14; Heb 9:12-15; 1 Pet 1:18-19)

4. Propitiation

a. Understanding Propitiation (Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; 1 John; 4:10)

"The term refers to the appeasement or the satisfaction of God's wrath against sin that occurs by virtue of Christ's payment for our sin and guilt."

b. God's Wrath against Sin (Rom 1:16-18; Eph 2:1-3)

5. Expiation

a. Understanding Expiation (2 Cor 5:19; Col 2:14)

b. Why did it have to be Jesus?

"It is as though he took a large marker and wrote across that piece of paper, which listed the entirety of our sin against the law, 'Paid In Full, Debt Cancelled.'"

6. Reconciliation

a. Three aspects of reconciliation

b. Key New Testament Passages (Rom 5:10-11; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 2:16; Col 1:19-20, 22)

B. The Atonement and the Resurrection

1. The Resurrection declares that the penalty has been paid in full.

2. The Resurrection defeats the power of sin.

II. Present Work: Christ as Mediator and Lord

A. Mediator (Rom 8:34; Heb. 7:25)

B. Lord (Mt 16:18; Jn 6:37-39; Eph 1:19-23)

III. Future Work: Christ as Coming Judge and Reigning King

A. Coming Judge (Mt 26:64; Jn 3:16-17; 5:22; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Cor 5:10)

B. Reigning King (2 Sam 7:13; Isa 9:7; Jer 23:5; Dan 2:44; 7:14; Zech 14:9; Rev 19:16)

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. Read and reflect on Isaiah 53. What does this reveal to you about the nature of Christ's work on the cross? If you can, meditate and pray over portions of this chapter every day this week.
2. Why is "redemption" such an important aspect of the atonement? Reflect for a while on your own life. What has Christ redeemed you from? What has he redeemed you for? How can you share your story of redemption with someone this week?
3. Why might people in our society struggle to understand propitiation as an aspect of the atonement? Why is it important? How can you help them understand and appreciate it more?
4. Read Hebrews 7:23-28. How does this passage help you appreciate Christ's continual role as our mediator? Why is this important to understand?

Study 7: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

I. The Person of the Holy Spirit

A. The Personhood of the Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit has the attributes of a person (1 Cor 2:10-11; 12:11; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 4:30)
2. The Holy Spirit performs the actions of a person (Jn 14:26; 15:26; Acts 13:14; Rom 8:14, 26)
3. The Holy Spirit is treated as a person (Mt 12:31; Acts 5:3; 7:51; Heb 10:29)
4. Personal pronouns are used of the Spirit (Jn 15:26; 16:13-14)

B. The Deity of the Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit is declared to be God (Acts 5:3-4, 9; 7:51; 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 3:16-18)
2. There are attributes that are true of God alone that are predicated of the Holy Spirit (Zech 4:6; Ps 139:7-10; Lk 1:35; Acts 10:38; 1 Cor 2:10; Heb 9:14)

3. Works of God alone done by the Holy Spirit (Gen 1:2; Ps 33:6; 104:30; Jn 3:5-6; Rom 8:11; 2 Cor 3:18; Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 2:1)

4. The Holy Spirit has prerogatives of deity (Mt 12:31; Acts 8:29; 13:4; 16:6-7; 1 Cor 12:4-11)

5. Triadic Passages (2 Cor 13:14; Isa 48:16)

II. The Work of the Holy Spirit

A. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

1. Old Testament references to the Holy Spirit

2. The Spirit's Empowerment in the Old Testament
 - a. Empowering Judges (Jdg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6; 14:19)

 - b. Empowering Prophets (2 Cor 15:1-7; 2 Chron 20:14-17)

c. Empowering Craftsman (Exod 31:3; 35:31)

d. Empowering Civil Leaders (Num 11:10-30; 1 Sam 16:13-14;
Ps 51:11)

3. Prophetic Visions about the Future Role of the Spirit (Isa. 32:15-20;
Isa 44:3; Ezek 36:22ff; Joel 2:28-29)

B. The Holy Spirit in the Life and Ministry of Jesus

1. Old Testament Expectation of the Coming Spirit-empowered Messiah (Isa 11:1-9; 42:1-9; 61:1-3)

2. The Spirit in Jesus' Life and Ministry (Mt 12:22-32; Acts 10:38)

3. Jesus and the Future Coming of the Holy Spirit (Jn 7:39; 16:7; Acts 2:33)

**"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners and to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."
Isaiah 61:1**

C. The Holy Spirit and the Church

1. Pentecost: the Age to Come Arrives!
2. Empowerment for Witness in the World (Acts 1:8; 2:38)
3. Empowerment for Service in the Church (1 Cor 12:7; 14:12; Eph 4:7-12; 5:18)

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. Do you think that it is important for Christians to understand that the Holy Spirit is a "person"? Why or why not? What difference might it make for how you relate to the Spirit?
2. Do you think that it is important for Christians to understand that the Holy Spirit is fully divine? Why or why not? What difference might it make for Christian life and ministry?
3. Both the Old and New Testaments emphasize that the Spirit empowers God's people to accomplish the tasks that God has given them. How can this be a source of encouragement to you in your own Christian life? Has God given you any tasks that seem beyond your ability? How can this be a source of encouragement to you with regard to those tasks?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 12. How has the Spirit gifted you to be a blessing to those around you? What can you do this week to use your gifts more effectively to serve others? God has also placed gifted people in your life to bless you. What can you do this week to allow yourself to be blessed by these people?

Study 8: The Doctrine of Salvation

I. Election

A. Scriptural Teaching

1. Election in the Old Testament (Deut 7:7; Isa 44:1-2)
2. Election in the New Testament (Acts 13:48; Rom 8:29-33; 9:6-29; 11:5-7; Eph 1:3-5, 11; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:1-2;

B. The Arminian Approach: Conditional Election

"Really, the freedom of men, the love of God and the justice of God are compelling reasons to the Arminians for holding the view that they do."

C. The Calvinist Approach: Unconditional Election (Rom 9:13; 1 Cor 1:26; Eph 1:11)

"It is just not the case, says the unconditional election advocate, that God's will can be hampered or harmed or thwarted. Rather, he works everything after the counsel of his will. That includes those whom he chooses to save; which means that he chooses not to save all. This is God's prerogative."

II. Calling

A. The General Call (Isa 45:22; 55:1; Mt 11:28; 28:19-20; Jn 7:37; Acts 1:8; Rev 22:17)

B. The Special or Effectual Call (Rom 8:29-30)

III. Regeneration

A. The Nature of Regeneration (Jn 1:13; Jn 3:3-8; Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 1:23; 1 Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)

"Think of regeneration as the giving of life toward God by the work of Christ, and his renewing work within us by the Spirit."

B. The Timing of Regeneration

IV. Conversion

A. Faith (Rom 4:20)

"To know the facts of the gospel is essential, but it more. It is a convicted belief, a passionate embrace of that truth that we hold on to. It involves our affections, not just our minds, and it puts our wills into action. We trust Christ, not other things. We look to Christ, not other things. We believe God's ways are right, not the ways that we have been living previously. Faith involves the mind, the emotions or affections and the will in a holistic way."

B. Repentance (2 Cor 7:9-10)

V. Justification

A. The Method of Justification (Gen 15:6; Acts 13:19; Rom 3:23-24; 4:3-9, 22; 5:1, 18; Gal 2:16)

"Justification can be understood as the declaration of God that a sinner who has believed in Christ is now declared righteous."

B. The Results of Justification

VI. Adoption

A. The Nature of Adoption

B. Key Verses (Rom 8:15-16, 23; Eph 1:5; 2:6-7)

"...to enter the Christian life is more like diving into a swimming pool than simply going through a door."

VII. Sanctification

A. Believers as Already "Holy": Positional Sanctification (Rom 6; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; Eph 5:26; Col 1:13)

B. Believers as Continually Made "Holy": Progressive Sanctification (1 Thess 4:3; 2 Tim 2:21)

VIII. Perseverance

A. An Arminian View of Perseverance

B. A Calvinist View of Perseverance (Jn 6:37-40; 10:26-29; Rom 8:28-30; 1 Cor 1:8-9; Eph 1:13-14; Phil 1:6; Col 1:23; 1 Thess 5:23-24; 1 Pet 1:3-5)

"In justification we are declared righteous before God, but in sanctification we are made righteous."

IX. Glorification

A. Definition

"Our Glorification is the complete and final perfection in holiness of the whole person, body, soul, spirit, every aspect of us, mind, heart, will."

B. Key Verses (Rom 8:23, 29-30; 1 Cor 15:35-58; Phil 3:20-21; 1 Thess 5:23; 1 Jn 3:2)

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. Read Ephesians 1:3-14. What are some of the tremendous benefits that flow from being among God's people? Spend some time this week meditating on each of these truths and being encouraged by what it means to be a part of God's elect people.
2. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, all believers become a "new creature" at salvation (i.e. regeneration). What does this mean? Where do you see this regeneration in your own life? How should this be a source of encouragement to you?
3. What is "justification" and what is the relationship between justification and faith? Why is this important? How would you explain this to someone who does not know anything about the Bible?
4. Read Romans 8:15-16. Spend some time thinking about what it means to be adopted into the family of God. When you pray this week, pray "Abba, Father" and remind yourself of what this means.
5. What things in your life might be hindering your ongoing sanctification (i.e. being made holy for God)? What can you do this week to remove some of those obstacles?

Study 9: The Doctrine of the Church

I. The Universal Church

A. The Nature of the Church

1. Jesus Christ is Lord of the Church (Mt 16:18)
2. The Church is formed by the Spirit (Jer 31:31-33; Jn 16:14; Acts 2)
3. The Church unites Jew and Gentile (Gen 12:1-3; Isa 2:2; Eph 2:11-22; cf. Gal 3:28)
4. The Church is the Community of the New Covenant (Lk 22:20; Rom 7:4-6; 8:3-4; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 6-8)
5. The Church is a testifying community (Acts 1:8)
6. The Church is a worshiping community (Heb 10:25)

"The *ekklesia* is the 'called out people.'.... We have been called out of darkness into light. We have been called out of the dominion of Satan to the kingdom of his beloved Son. We have been called out really to be citizens of another age and yet we are still in this age in order to make a difference and penetrate it."

B. New Testament Metaphors for the Church

1. The Church is the Body of Christ (Eph 1:20; 4:15-16; 1 Cor 12:4-30)

2. The Church is the Bride of Christ (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-33; Rev 19:7-9; 21:9)

3. The Church is Christ's Building (Eph 2:19-22; 3:5; 4:11; 1 Pet 2:4-7)

4. The Church is Christ's Flock (Jn 10:11; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4)

II. Local Congregations or Churches

A. Offices in the Local Church

1. The Role of Elders (Phil 1:1; Tit 1:5-9; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 5:17; Heb 13:17)

2. The Role of Deacons (Acts 6:1-6; cf. 1 Tim 3:8-13)

3. The Role of Men and Women in Ministry?

B. Organization of the Local Church

1. Episcopalianism

2. Presbyterianism (Acts 15)

3. Congregationalism (Mt 18:15-17; Acts 6:2; 13:1-3)

C. Ordinances: Baptism and The Lord's Supper

1. Baptism

a. Infant Baptism (Reformed,
Lutheran, Catholic)

b. Believer's Baptism (Anabaptist, Baptist)

"But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction."

1 Thessalonians 5:12

2. The Lord's Supper

- a. The Transubstantiation View (Catholic)
- b. The Consubstantiation View (Lutheran)
- c. The Spiritual View (Reformed)
- d. The Memorial View (Zwinglian)

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. According to Hebrews 10:25, believers should meet together regularly. Why do you think that the author thought this was so important? Do you ever think of going to church as less important, or even optional, for believers? What do you think might contribute to that? What can you do to begin changing that attitude?
2. Read Ephesians 4:1-6. According to this passage, what establishes our unity as believers? Why is this important? How should this affect the way that we view other churches?
3. Read and reflect on Ephesians 5:25-33. What does it mean to say that the church is the Bride of Christ? How does this affect your understanding of the church? How does it make you feel to know that you are a part of that "bride"?
4. Read and reflect on the qualifications for church leaders in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and 5:17-22. How can this help you appreciate and encourage the leaders in your own church? Take some time this week to pray for the leaders in your church and do something to let them know you appreciate them and their ministry.

Study 10: The Doctrine of Last Things

I. Introduction

A. The Meaning of "eschatology" (Heb 6:4-5)

B. Value of Studying Eschatology

1. It helps us understand God's cosmic purposes
2. It gives us hope
3. It gives us endurance
4. It encourages us to reassess our values (2 Pet 3:10)
5. It motivates us for holiness
6. It motivates us for witness
7. It motivates us for worship (Rev 5)

"...we understand, from a biblical point of view, that much of what was prophesied to happen in the last days is already being fulfilled, yet there is more to come."

II. Intermediate State

A. Unbelievers (Lk 16:19-31; 2 Pet 2:9)

B. Believers (Lk 23:42-43; 2 Cor 5:6-8; Phil 1:21-23)

III. Views of the Millennium

A. Postmillennialism

"The postmillennial view holds that the millennium happens in this church age, and the second coming of Christ happens after the millennium."

B. Amillennialism

"Amillennial is not denying that there is a millennium, but it is denying that there is a literal millennium in the way that premillennialists understand it."

C. Historic Premillennialism

1. Revelation teaches a literal millennial reign of Christ (Rev 20)
2. Satan is not "bound" in this age (2 Cor 4:4; Rev 20:1-3)
3. The two resurrections indicate a millennial reign (Rev 20:4-5)

D. Dispensational Premillennialism

"...dispensationalists believe that God's purposes with Israel are not fulfilled in the church exclusively."

IV. Views of the Tribulation

A. Midtribulation Rapture

B. Posttribulation Rapture

C. Pretribulation Rapture

"Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:11-12

V. Final Judgment and the Eternal State

A. Final Judgment

1. There is a final judgment for all people (Ps 96:13; Ecc 12:14; Mt 13:39-42; 25:31-46; Jn 5:28-29; 12:47-48; Rom 2:5-11; 2 Thess 1:6-10; Heb 10:26-27; 2 Pet 2:9; 3:7; Rev 20:11-15)
2. There is a judgment for believers (Rom 14:11-12; 2 Cor 5:10)

B. Hell (Mt 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:8-9; 25:41, 46; 13:41-42; 2 Thess 1:7-9; Rev 14:9-11)

C. Heaven (Isa 65:17-25; 66:22-23; Dan 12:3; Jn 14:1-3; 2 Cor 4:16-5:4; 2 Pet 3:13)

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. Eschatology is often viewed as pointless speculation about the future. This study pointed out seven values we get from studying eschatology. Which of these stands out as most significant for you to appreciate this week? Spend some time meditating on that truth.
2. More important than the timing of the rapture is the importance of being prepared so that we can endure faithfully in the midst of persecution. Read Hebrews 10:32-39. What does this passage have to say about enduring in the face of persecution? How can you be motivated and encouraged by this passage?
3. Romans 8:1 says that there will be "no condemnation" for God's people. But, this study emphasized that there will be a future judgment for God's people. How can these both be true? Why is it important for believers to realize that these are both true? What difference should this make for our life and ministry?
4. Spend a little time this week reading through the passages listed in the study about Heaven. Meditate and pray on these passages, allowing yourself to be encouraged by the hope they express.