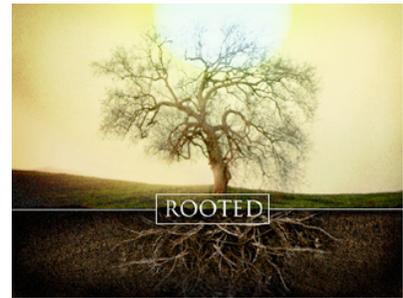


ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

A Course in Basic Theology



THE IMPORTANCE Welcome to a course of study that will help us become more sure of our faith and more devoted to our Lord. Colossians 2:7 pictures the Christian life as a tree with roots growing down for nutrients and as a building with a firm foundation to withstand the pressures and storms of life. As we study the doctrines of God's Word, we don't want to err on the side of cold intellectualism or on the side of mindless emotionalism. God wants our minds and our hearts, our understanding and our affections, our intellect and our emotions. The Holy Spirit's ministry is absolutely essential to open our understanding to learn and then to enflame our affections with love, worship, and obedience.

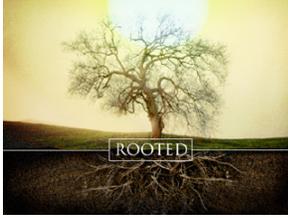
THE APPROACH Proverbs 12:11 says "He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who pursues vain things lacks sense." Diligent, prayerful Bible study will reap an abundant harvest of living bread. As we enter this course of study, take the time to look up each reference and write down in your own words what the verse or passage is saying. Jot down any questions or concerns you might have about the particular doctrine we are studying. Each week's study will follow the same basic outline: 1. Wrong views of the doctrine. 2. What the Scripture teaches about this doctrine. 3. Why is this doctrine important?

THE CREDITS The content of the following studies have been drawn primarily from the Scriptures. Other sources have also been used in the development of the outlines, including *Light on the Heavy* by Jerry Jenkins, *Foundations of the Christian Faith* by James Boice, *More than Redemption* by Jay Adams, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* by R. C. Sproul, *Systematic Theology* by Capitol Hill Baptist Church, *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem.

THE SCHEDULE The following schedule is tentative. Studies will be handed out in increments as they are prepared over the months ahead.

September 5	The Bible - Why these 66 books? (Bibliology)
September 12	The Bible - Is it really all we need? (Bibliology)
September 19	God - How can there be three Persons and one God? (Theology Proper)
September 26	God - How great is He? (Theology Proper)
October 3	God - How good is He? (Theology Proper)
October 10	Christ - Was He really God? (Christology)
October 17	Christ - Was He really a human just like us? (Christology)
October 24	Christ - What happened on the cross? (Christology)
October 31	Christ - How do we know He arose from the dead? (Christology)
November 7	Christ - What is He doing now? (Christology)
November 14	Holy Spirit - Is the Holy Spirit a Person or a Force? (Pneumatology)
November 21	Holy Spirit - What does the Holy Spirit do? (Pneumatology)
November 28	Angels - What are they like? (Angelology)
December 5	Satan - How did Satan become the devil? (Satanology)
December 12	Man - What is unique about man? (Anthropology)
December 19	Man - What happened in that garden? (Anthropology)

December 26 Salvation - How do we get to God? (Soteriology)
January 2 Salvation - Is predestination true? (Soteriology)
January 9 Salvation - Does it change a person's life? (Soteriology)
January 16 Church - What is the church to be and do? (Ecclesiology)
January 23 Church - How does the church function? (Ecclesiology)
January 30 Future - What happens when you die? (Eschatology)
February 6 Future - What happens when Christ comes back? (Eschatology)
February 13 Future - Is there really a hell? (Eschatology)
February 20 Future - What will heaven be like? (Eschatology)
February 27



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

September 5, 2010

Bibliology - How do we know the Bible is God's Word?
(Reliability and Canonicity)

Wrong views...

What books other than the Bible claim to be a revelation from God?

What's wrong with saying the Bible contains the Word of God?

How do you answer the person who says the Bible is man's ideas about God?

What books does the Roman Catholic church include that we reject as being part of the canon of Scripture?

What Scripture teaches...

God has revealed Himself and His truth in numerous ways.

General Revelation - Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20

Special Revelation: Direct messages - e.g. dreams, visions, direct verbal communication
(Matt. 1:20) The Living Word - Hebrews 1:1-3 The Written Word - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible claims to be the Word of God. What do these references say about the Scriptures?

2 Timothy 3:16

Galatians 3:8

Hebrews 3:7

2 Peter 1:21

2 Peter 3:15,16

Christ affirmed the divine authority of the Word of God. In Matthew 4:1-11, how did Jesus use the Word of God? What were the results? What was Jesus attitude toward the Old Testament?

What books of the Old Testament does Christ refer to or what comments did Christ make about the Old Testament in these passages? Luke 20:27-40 -

Matthew 26:53-54

John 10:35

Matthew 19:3-6

Matthew 22:41-45

Luke 24:44-45

Jesus chose apostles to be the human means through whom the New Testament would be revealed. How do these verses promise this?

John 14:26

John 16:12-14

The Church recognized the 66 books of our Bible as the inspired Word of God. This is called the “canonicity” of the Scripture. “Canon” means a measuring rod or standard. The “canon” of the Scriptures refers to those books which God has impressed with his authority in the hearts of men.

Old Testament Canon - The final collection of the Hebrew Old Testament was probably completed by Ezra “the scribe” (Ezra 7:6). The 15 books of the Apocrypha were never included in the Hebrew canon. At the Council of Jamnia (AD 90) the Jews acknowledged Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon as belonging to the Old Testament. The Jews in Jesus’ day regarded the OT as the Law, the prophets, and the writings (Torah, Nebhi’im, and Kethubhim - See Luke 24:44)

New Testament Canon - The 27 books of the New Testament were finally fully recognized as authoritative and part of the canon by the third Council of Carthage (AD 397). These 27 books were acknowledged as 1) apostolic in nature, 2) universally received by the churches, 3) of a spiritual nature, and 4) having the stamp of authority by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The early Christians did not “create” the canon, but rather simply recognized the 27 books of our New Testament as carrying divine authority and submitted to them.

There are amazing marks attesting to the divine source and reliability of the Bible.

- The unity of the Bible’s message - 66 books written over a period of at least 1500 years by over 40 people, and yet one continuous story from creation through the nation of Israel to the coming of Christ, the building of the church, and the final culmination of history. What accounts for this unity?
- The accuracy of the Bible’s message - externally verified by archeology, internally verified by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

- Fulfilled prophecy - Detailed prophecies were made hundreds of years before they were fulfilled, especially in the coming of Christ. Boice notes: "Their cumulative witness is devastating. These are facts. They demand an accounting. What will account for them? The only fact that will account for such evidence is the existence of a sovereign God."
- The Bible's indestructibility or preservation - Men have tried to destroy its message by heresy, by force, by church traditions, by restricting its being read by the common people, by downgrading it through destructive criticism, and by many modern schemes of Satan, but God has faithfully preserved His Word. See Matthew 24:35.
- The Bible's power to change lives - Psalm 19:7-9; Hebrews 4:12-13.

The Holy Spirit authenticates the Word of God in the hearts of believers. Ultimately, the reason we believe the Bible is the Word of God is because of the Holy Spirit's ministry in our hearts.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16

1 John 2:27

"To know God we must be taught from the Bible by the Holy Spirit. It is only then that a full awareness of the nature of the Bible and its authority is borne home upon our minds and hearts, and we find ourselves taking a firm stand upon that cherished revelation."
(Boice)

Why is this important?

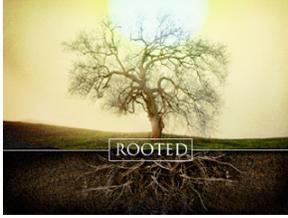
The only way to know God and His message for us is through the Bible.

God's authority over our lives is communicated to us through the Bible.

God's standards for human life and behavior are expressed in the Bible.

We will be held accountable for what God has revealed to us in the Bible.

The Bible gives us the content of our faith. We need to know that we are believing the right doctrines.



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

September 12, 2010

Bibliology - Is the Bible really all we need? (Inspiration and Sufficiency)

Wrong views...

Evaluate and respond to these statements about the Bible: "The Bible has lots of historical and scientific errors, but it is accurate in matters of faith."

"God speaks to us in many different ways, not just through the Bible."

"All truth is God's truth."

"We need more than the Bible to help us deal with all the problems we face in this modern world."

"I know the Bible forbids it, but I just don't feel God would condemn me for doing it."

What Scripture teaches...

REVELATION - How has God revealed Himself in the following verses? Romans 1:20 - Through _____ Genesis 1:26-27 - Through _____ John 1:18; Heb. 1:2 - Through _____ Heb. 1:1 - Through _____

INSPIRATION - How has God revealed His message through the Bible? How does Paul describe the Scriptures in 2 Timothy 3:16?

How does Peter describe the Scriptures in 2 Peter 1:20-21?

Inspiration does not mean 1) natural, 2) partial, 3) thoughts, not words, 4) existentially "becomes" the Word of God, or 5) dictation as if the authors were secretaries taking down messages.

Verbal inspiration - not just thoughts but actual words - 1 Corinthians 2:13

Plenary inspiration - not just parts but all the Bible - 2 Timothy 3:16 _____ Scripture....

The inspiration of the Bible is a miracle much like the virgin birth of Christ. The Spirit of God superintended each of the human authors, keeping them free from errors in what they wrote, and yet using their individual styles and circumstances, to produce a book

that is as much God's Word as if He had spoken it audibly by means of breath (theopneustos - God-breathed).

INERRANCY - How accurate is God's message through the Bible? John 17:17 -

Proverbs 30:5-6

Titus 1:2

If the Bible is "God-breathed", and God cannot lie, the deduction is that God has given us an inerrant Book called the Bible.

Inerrancy is true of the original autographs or the documents as the original authors wrote them down under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. However, the manuscripts we have today are almost identical to the original writings, and any questions about the text are of no doctrinal consequence. (See, for example, Rom. 5:1. Is it "let us have peace with God" or "we have peace with God?" One letter in the Greek word "have" differs in some manuscripts.

INFALLIBLE - How certain can we be that what the Bible says will come to pass? Isaiah 55:6-11 -

AUTHORITY - What authority does the Bible have over our lives? John 12:48-50

2 Timothy 4:1-2

1 Thessalonians 2:13

2 Thessalonians 3:14

If God never lies, and He is faithful and trustworthy in what He says, then His Word carries authority, fulfilling all of His promises and warnings. We must respond to His Word or reap the consequences. There is no escaping the authority of God's Word.

SUFFICIENCY - But is the Bible all we need (sufficient) to live a life that pleases God?

2 Timothy 3:16 assures us that the Bible is not only "God-breathed" but also

_____ for _____, _____, _____,
and for _____ in _____.

What does vs. 17 promise us? _____

The Word of God is all we need for evangelism:

1 Peter 1:23

2 Timothy 3:15

The Word of God is all we need for growing in life and godliness (sanctification):

2 Peter 1:3-4

Ephesians 4:20-24

The Word of God is all we need for guidance:

Psalm 119:105

Matthew 7:24-25

Boice: “God has given us all the guidance we need in the Bible. So if there is something we want or think we need that is not in the Bible--what job shall I take? where shall I live? whom shall I marry?--after having prayed for God’s providential guidance, we are free to do whatever seems best to us, knowing that God, who cares for us always, will certainly keep us on his path. It does not matter what specific action we take as long as we are obeying God and trying to live a godly life.”

The Word of God is all we need to handle every area of life:

Psalm 119:128

1 Corinthians 10:11-13

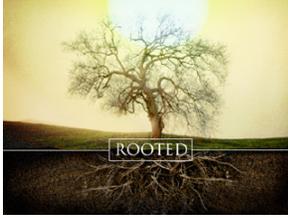
Why is this important?

If the Bible contains errors in some areas, how could we be sure it is without error in others places? For example, if Genesis 1-2 contains errors, how do we know what Christ said in Matthew 19 about marriage is true, since He quotes Genesis 1 & 2?

God’s glory is bound up in the sufficiency of Jesus Christ and His Word.

Were Jesus and Paul and the Reformers and martyrs and Puritans and other godly believers missing something that modern psychology has discovered to help us live more faithfully for God? How could Christ be the “Wonderful Counselor” if He didn’t have the “insights” of modern psychology?

The only way we know that we are pleasing God is as we delight ourselves in the Word and seek to obey Him for His glory. See Psalm 1



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

September 19, 2010

Theology Proper - How can there be three Persons and One God?

Wrong views...

Atheism believes...

Agnosticism believes...

Pantheism believes...

Polytheism believes...

Deism believes...

Islam and Judaism believe...

Many cults accuse Christians of believing in three gods.

Some cults hold to a view called modalism, which says while there is only one Person in God, this one Person appears in different modes, such as the Father, the Son, or the Spirit.

What Scripture teaches...

The Bible teaches that there is one God. Deuteronomy 6:4 - Here the word "one" is the Hebrew word "echad". See how it is used in Genesis 2:24.

John 17:3

1 Corinthians 8:4

Ephesians 4:6

The Bible also teaches that there are three individual Persons that are also God. Jesus Christ has attributes of deity (we'll see this more in a future study)

John 1:1-2

John 8:58

Philippians. 2:5-8

The Holy Spirit has attributes and works of deity.

Hebrews 9:14

Psalm 139:7-10

Romans 8:11

Acts 5:3ff

The Trinity is hinted at in the Old Testament.

Genesis 1:26 indicates a plurality of Persons

Isaiah 48:16

The Trinity is fully revealed in the New Testament.

At Christ's birth Luke 1:35

At Christ's baptism Matthew 3:16-17

At the transfiguration Luke 9:35

In Christ's High Priestly prayer John 17:1-5

At the cross Hebrews 9:14

In the Great Commission Matthew 28:19-20

In the Apostle Paul's benediction 2 Corinthians 13:14

In the upper room teaching John 14-16

In the salvation teaching of Ephesians...

1:3 -

1:7 -

1:13 -

In 1 Peter 1:2

How do you interpret Jesus' statements in John 10:30 "I and the Father are one." In what sense are they one?

John 14:28 "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I." In what sense is the Father greater than Christ?

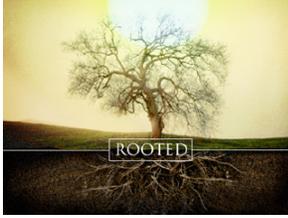
Why is this important?

God has revealed Himself as both One God and yet three persons. As we worship God, we worship Him in truth, as He has revealed Himself, and at the same time remember that He is far beyond our finite understanding. As A. W. Tozer prayed, "When we consider the fearful mystery of Thy Triune Godhead we lay our hand upon our mouth. Before that burning bush we ask not to understand, but only that we may fitly adore Thee, One God in Persons Three. Amen."

If Christ and the Spirit were not God, there would be no atonement for sin and no impartation of the divine nature and eternal life through regeneration and no bringing us into that eternal fellowship Christ described as "knowing God" in John 17:3. Only God can accomplish these things.

"In the New Testament, God revealed that He is not only one but a family of persons—an eternal, inexhaustible, and dynamic triune family of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are one in will and purpose, love and righteousness."

We cannot comprehend this Triune God, but we do know that He is a Father who loves us, a Son who died for us, and a Spirit who comforts us.



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

September 26, 2010

Theology Proper - How great is God? (Attributes of greatness)

Wrong views...

God is subject to the will of man.

God is helpless in the face of evil.

God is evolving right along with everything else.

God doesn't ordain or know what the future holds.

God needs us

What Scripture teaches...

The essence of God is distinct from His attributes. His essence is His basic being or existence. His attributes are those qualities that are characteristic of His essence. In the next two studies we will study God's attributes under two categories, attributes of His greatness and attributes of His goodness. But we are not dividing God into two parts, one part great and one part good. Just as a man might be physically strong and also kind, so God is both great in His goodness, and good in His greatness. Every attribute is in perfect harmony with every other attribute. Also, while God is one in essence, He is three in Persons, so that whatever is true of God the Father is also true of God the Son and God the Spirit.

GOD'S BASIC ESSENCE

God is spirit - John 4:24 _____

God is personal - Genesis 1:26-27 _____

God is living - Psalm 42:2 _____

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES OF GREATNESS

God is self-existent. Either something created God, or God created Himself, or God exists from all eternity and has within Himself the power of being. The first two possibilities are absurd. God exists of Himself eternally. He is the source and fountainhead of all being and depends on nothing for His continued existence.

Genesis 1:1

Acts 17:22-25

What attitude should this truth produce in us as God's created beings?

God is eternal - God is infinite or without bounds in relation to time. There never was a time when God wasn't and God will exist forever. Time itself was created by God.

Psalm. 90:2

Isaiah 40:28

Deuteronomy 33:27

What encouragement do you draw from God's eternity?

God is immutable - God has never changed to become better or worse. He will never become more sovereign or more loving or more holy or more powerful. Any change would indicate imperfection, and God is perfect.

James 1:17 -

Psalm 33:11

Hebrews 13:8

Why are you glad God is immutable?

God is omnipresent - God is not only present everywhere, but is fully present in every location. How can this be?

Psalm 139:7-10

Matthew 28:20

How is God's omnipresence a reason both for comfort and for restraint?

Joshua 1:9

Proverbs 5:21

God is omniscient - God is infinite (without boundaries) in His knowledge and wisdom. He knows Himself and all other things perfectly from all eternity, whether they be actual or merely possible, whether they be past, present, or future. He knows things immediately, simultaneously, exhaustively, and truly. (Theissen) God never learns anything new. He is surprised by nothing. (Sproul)

Psalms 147:5

Romans 11:33-36

When are you especially glad God knows everything? When does this truth bother you?

God is omnipotent - God is able to do whatever He wills. Consider a being with enough inner, self-caused power to create a universe! His power is limited only by His nature. He cannot lie, deny Himself, or tempt people to sin (James 1:13).

Revelation 4:8

Jeremiah 32:17

Matthew 19:26

What aspects of your spiritual life depend to some degree on God's omnipotence?

God is sovereign - God has absolute authority and rule over all His creation. God is all-knowing, all-powerful and absolutely free to do whatever He wills. God is free to exercise all of His attributes because He is sovereign. There is nothing greater than God that limits God. God sovereignly does all that He does. Nothing outside of God compels Him to do anything.

Psalms 103:19

Daniel 4:34-35

Ephesians 1:11

1 Corinthians 10:13

Why do men and women not like the doctrine of God's sovereignty?

"When individuals rebel against God, they don't achieve freedom. They fall into bondage, because rebellion is sin, and sin is a tyrant." (Boice) Can you think of any examples?

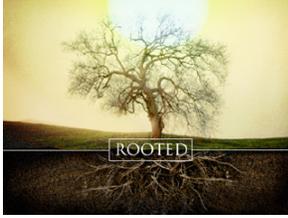
How does God's sovereignty encourage you when you are going through a heavy trial?

Why is this important?

The more we see God as He really is, the more we realize how great He is and how utterly small and sinful we are. These truths humble us into submissive, loving dependency and trust.

As we understand the greatness of God, we worship God as He really is and not as we imagine Him to be. Therefore our worship of God is in spirit and in truth.

If a God like this be for us, who could possibly be against us?



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

October 3, 2010

Theology Proper - How good is God? (Attributes of goodness)

Wrong views...

How could a good God send innocent people into an eternal hell?

If God were so good, why doesn't He stop all the evil in the world?

God loves everyone and will finally bring everyone to heaven.

I don't believe there is any hope for me. I've done so many evil things, I just don't believe God could forgive me.

What Scripture teaches...

The greatness of God humbles us in fear and wonder in worship. The goodness of God melts us to worshipful love and adoration. We will never participate in the attributes of God's greatness, but God communicates His attributes of goodness in some degree to His people through His Son. That's why they are often called God's communicable attributes.

How does Psalm 73:1 describe God? _____

What is the writer's response in verse 28? But as for me, _____ I have made _____, That I may _____.

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES OF GOODNESS

God is holy - Holiness means separation or set apart in both Hebrew and Greek. God is set apart from all of His creation as well as set apart from all moral evil and sin. The word "saint" and "sanctification" comes from the same root word for holy.

Isaiah 6:1-7

Lev 11:44-45

Hebrews 12:10

1 Peter 1:14-16

How does a correct view of God's holiness affect our view of ourselves and how we approach God?

God is righteous and just - God's righteousness is His holy standard, known as His law, applied to human beings. In His justice He judges us based on our conforming to or failing to conform to His righteous law, declaring us righteous or guilty.

Psalm 89:14

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Romans 2:5-6

James 2:10

2 Corinthians 5:21

Why are these two attributes of God important for a right understanding of the gospel? How can God justify (declare righteous) anyone who has failed to conform perfectly to His righteous standard? See Romans 3:21-26

God is love - God's love is His eternal giving or sharing of Himself and His goodness. All three Persons of the Trinity have loved each other perfectly. God has a general love for His creation and also a special love for those people He has chosen to give to His Son.

Luke 6:35-36

Ephesians 2:4

Romans 8:35-39

Why does God love sinners?

God is gracious - God's grace is His freely bestowing favor to sinners who not only don't deserve it but in the face of their deserving His wrath because of their guilt.

Ephesians 1:6

Ephesians 2:7

Ephesians 2:8-9

Would grace still be grace if God was obligated to extend His grace to us? Is God's saving grace God's offer to save, or God's determination to save?

God is merciful and compassionate - God's mercy is His pitying us in our distress and moving to relieve us of the consequences of our sin. Grace brings us forgiveness from the guilt of our sin; mercy brings us relief from the misery of our sin.

Psalm 145:9

Mark 1:40-41

Mark 6:34

Romans 9:22-23

Why has God shown eternal mercy on people who deserved His wrath?

God is kind, forbearing, and patient - God puts up with us in our sins and allows us to benefit from His goodness even though we deserve His wrath.

Romans 2:4-5

2 Peter 3:9

How does God demonstrate His patience toward guilty sinners every day? Read Jonathan Edwards' sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" for a gripping insight into how sinners presume on God's patience.

God is truth - Not only is God Himself the one true God, but God always tells it the way it is! God cannot lie.

1 Samuel 15:29

Hebrews 6:17-18

How does truth affect your willingness to trust? Why is God supremely trustworthy?

God is faithful - Because God is truthful, He is also faithful to His promises. You can trust Him!

1 Corinthians 10:13

1 John 1:9

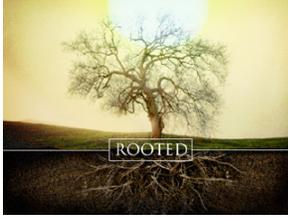
Hebrews 2:17

Why is this important?

Without God's goodness, we would never be able to come into His presence.

List all the ways you can think of that God has demonstrated His goodness to you. What is the greatest and grandest display of God's goodness to you?

God's goodness defines for us what godliness is in our own lives. Consider how your life is reflecting each of these attributes of God's goodness.



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

October 10, 2010

Christology - Was Christ really God? (Deity of Christ)

Wrong views...

Christ was a good man and a great teacher but certainly not God.

The “Christ” spirit came upon the historical Jesus of Nazareth at the baptism and left before his crucifixion.

Christ was a prophet, much like Mohammed, Buddha, and other great religious leaders.

Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that Christ in his “pre-human” state was created as “a god” but was not equal with God. He was a being with “a godly quality.” The New World Translation reads “...and the Word was a god” in John 1:1.

Why would people want to deny the deity of Christ?

What Scripture teaches...

How are these Old Testament references applied in the New Testament?

Isaiah 6:1-3 – John 12:41

Isaiah 40:3 – Matthew 3:3

Isaiah 44:6 – Revelation 1:17

Isaiah 8:13, 14 – 1 Peter 2:8; 3:14-15

Isaiah 45:23-24 – Philippians 2:10-11

Psalm 102:24-27 – Hebrews 1:8, 10-12

How do these comparisons prove that Christ is God?

Appearances of the *Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament.

Genesis 22:15-16

Judges 13:17-18

Exodus 3:2-4

* These are called Christophanies, or pre-incarnate (before His human birth) appearances of Christ.

“The proof [of Christ’s deity] is so abundant that no one who accepts the Bible as the infallible Word of God can entertain any doubt on this point.” Louis Berkhof

What attributes of God are demonstrated by Jesus Christ?

John 1:1

Matthew 28:20

Philippians 3:21

John 2:24-25

What works of God were done by Jesus Christ?

Matthew 8:24-27

John 10:17-18

Mark 2:7,10

What did Jesus receive from men that only God is worthy to receive?

John 9:35-39

Acts 7:59

John 14:1

How do these references prove Christ’s deity?

John 1:1, 14,18

Titus 2:13

John 20:28

2 Peter 1:1

Romans 9:5

Philippians 2:6-11 is one of the most important texts teaching the nature of the Person of Jesus Christ. List each step of Christ's existence described by Paul:

6a _____ 8b _____
6b _____ 9a _____
7a _____ 9b _____
7b _____ 10 _____
8a _____ 11 _____

Matthew 26:63-64

Colossians 1:15

John 5:18

Colossians 1:17

John 5:25-27

Colossians 2:9

“In him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and in him also is realized the ideal of human virtue and piety. He is the eternal Truth, and the divine Life itself, personally joined with our nature; he is our Lord and our God; yet at the same time flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. In him is solved the problem of religion, the reconciliation and fellowship of man with God; and we must expect no clearer revelation of God, nor any higher religious attainment of man, than is already guaranteed and actualized in his person.” (Philip Schaff)

A MAJOR QUESTION: If the references in this study do not prove the deity of Christ, what do they teach? If Christ was not God, that is, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father, then what kind of being was He?

Why is this important?

“We believe in...one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made.” (Part of the Nicene Creed, 325 AD)

“You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not

come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 41).

See Steve Lawson’s message, *Who is Jesus Christ?* (Resolved, 2010)

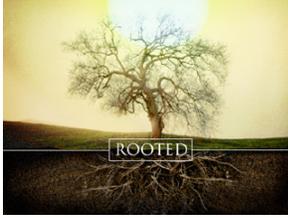
THINK ABOUT IT:

If Christ were not God, would we have any personal understanding of what God was really like? John 14:9-10

If Christ were not God, would His sacrifice on the cross be of infinite value to save people who have sinned against an infinitely holy God? What other kind of being could possibly bear the infinite guilt and satisfy God’s infinitely holy demands against sin?

If Christ were not God, could there possibly be reconciliation between God and man? Only God could cross the chasm between a holy God and guilty sinners.

If Christ were not God, would He be worthy of our worship and praise and adoration?



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

October 17, 2010

Christology - Was Christ fully human, just like us? (Humanity of Christ)

Wrong views...

Is the popular Christmas hymn “Away In a Manger” right when it teaches, “The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes?” Did Jesus never cry as a baby when he was hungry or needed his diaper changed?

Jesus of the New Testament is loving and kind and not a God of wrath and punishment like the God of the Old Testament.

What Scripture teaches...

While the deity of Christ is more often denied by unbelievers, we believers have a harder time grasping the reality that God became an actual human being just like us.

Pre-existence of Christ - What does Christ mean in His answer to the Jews in John 8:56-59?

Humiliation of Christ - Christ’s humiliation speaks of His willingness to lay aside His rights as God and humble Himself to become a man. What reasons do these verses give for His humiliation?

Romans 15:8-9

Hebrews 9:26

Hebrews 2:14-15

1 Peter 2:21

Hebrews 2:17

John 1:18

Hebrews 9:28

How does Paul use the example of Christ’s humiliation to encourage believers to give in 2 Cor. 8:9?

Incarnation of Christ - What does the phrase “made flesh” mean in John 1:14?

According to Luke 1:31, 35, how was Christ conceived and born?

How does Galatians 4:4 emphasize the humanity of Christ?

How does Luke trace Christ's human ancestry in Luke 3:23-28?

How does Matthew trace Christ's human ancestry in Matthew 1:1-17?

A Real Man - According to Luke 2:40, 52, what kind of childhood and youth did Christ experience? In what areas of human life did Christ grow?

What phrases in Hebrews 2:14-18 speak of Christ's humanity?

What did Jesus experience that proves He was a real man in these verses?

Matthew 4:2

John 19:28

Matthew 8:24

Hebrews 4:15

John 4:6

Hebrews 5:7-8

Christ's Character - What do these verses teach about the moral and spiritual character of the man Christ Jesus?

Luke 19:41

John 15:10

Luke 23:34

John 13:1

Matthew 11:29

2 Corinthians 5:21

John 7:18

Hebrews 7:26; 4:15; 9:14

John 8:46

THINK ABOUT THIS - If Christ was a perfect man, without a sinful nature, how could He be tempted?

Christ's Prayer Life - The Gospel of Luke emphasizes the humanity of Christ. Does it surprise us then, that Luke often refers to the prayer life of Jesus? Check out these verses:
Luke 5:16

Luke 6:12

Luke 9:18

Luke 9:28-29

Luke 11:1

Luke 22:41-44

The Mystery of Two Natures in One Person - The Westminster Confession of Faith says of the God-Man: “The Son of God...did...take upon him man’s nature.... So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. (WCF, 8.2)

Confusion over Christ being one Person with two natures in the early church included: Monophysitism (mono = one / phusis = nature) said Christ only had one nature. This error was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451 Monothelitism (mono = one / thelema = will) said Christ only had one will. This error was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in AD 681

KEY TERMS

Deity - The fact of being God. Sometimes the word “divinity” is used this same way.

Incarnation - Christ became flesh or fully human without ceasing to be God.

Hypostatic Union - Christ’s two natures, humanity and deity, are mysteriously joined in One Person.

Theanthropic Person - Theologians often use this phrase in describing Christ, meaning the “God-man”.

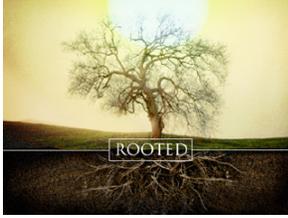
Why is this important?

As the last Adam, Christ did for the human race what the first Adam failed to do. As a man he obeyed the law perfectly on behalf of all those for whom He came and represented before God and as a man He also died a substitutionary death in their place - See Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22..

Because Christ became a man, He thoroughly understands us and is supremely qualified to help us as our High Priest at God’s right hand - Hebrews 4:16.

Christ is not only our Savior, but our example of godliness and the pattern to which our lives will ultimately be conformed - 1 Peter 2:21-24; Romans 8:28-29

What are some practical situations in which the reality of Jesus’ humanity would be helpful to you?



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

October 24, 2010

Christology - What happened on the cross? (Atonement)

Wrong views...

Christ's teachings were rejected by the Jews of his day so they killed him, an unfortunate and accidental fact of history (Victim of Injustice theory).

Christ died as a martyr, an example of fidelity to truth and duty (Martyr theory).

Christ's death was an expression of God's love for mankind, intended to soften hearts and lead people to repentance (Love of God theory).

Christ's death showed how much God hates sin and that God will punish sin if it is not repented of (Governmental theory).

Christ paid a ransom to Satan to release men from his power (Ransom theory).

Christ came into the world with the intent of being the substitutionary sacrifice for each and every human being, even those who would reject Him (Universal Atonement theory).

What Scripture teaches...

The cross of Jesus Christ is the focal point of God's revelation to us. Remove the cross of Christ and you have essentially gutted the entire message of the Bible. Let's ask several pertinent questions about the work of Christ on the cross.

How did the Old Testament promise a Savior?

Genesis 3:15

Isaiah 53:10-12

Psalm 22:1

How did the Old Testament picture God's future provision for man's sin?

Genesis 3:21

Exodus 12:21-28

Genesis 22:9-14

Leviticus 16:15-19

What motivated God to send His Son to die for sinners?

Colossians 1:19

John 3:16

Why was Christ's death necessary?

Exodus 34:7

Romans 6:23

Romans 3:24-26

Hebrews 9:22-26

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER: Why couldn't God just simply save people without the cross? What is the true nature of sin and why is sin so evil? How does the cross demonstrate God's love and God's justice at the same time? Was God bound by any obligation to demonstrate His grace and love in saving sinners?

What actually happened when Christ died on the cross? Find definitions or explanations for the highlighted words:

Christ's death was *substitutionary* - _____

Romans 5:6-8 2

2 Corinthians 5:21

Galatians 3:13

1 Peter 2:24

Some object to this doctrine of the substitutionary death of Christ. They say it is wrong for God to punish an innocent man. It has even been called "cosmic child abuse!". The answer to this is that the substitute is God Himself. The Judge Himself paid the penalty for the guilty ones.

Christ's death was a *propitiation* (NIV - atoning sacrifice)

John 3:36

Romans 1:18

Romans 3:25

1 John 2:2; 4:10

From Romans 3:25 - Hilasteurion (propitiation) carries the basic idea of appeasement, or satisfaction. In ancient pagan religions, as in many religions today, the idea of man's appeasing a deity by various gifts or sacrifices was common. But in the New Testament propitiation always refers to the work of God, not of man. Man is utterly incapable of satisfying God's justice except by spending eternity in hell. The only satisfaction, or propitiation, that could be acceptable to God and that could reconcile Him to man had to be made by God. For that reason, God in human flesh, Jesus Christ, "gave Himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6). He appeased the wrath of God.³

Christ provided *redemption* through His death

Galatians 3:13

1 Peter 1:18-19

Ephesians 1:7

Acts 20:28

From what has Christ's death on the cross set you free?

Christ's death on the cross accomplished *reconciliation*.

Romans 5:10-11

Ephesians 2:16

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Colossians 1:20

For whom did Christ actually die on the cross? Some teach that Christ died for everyone and therefore everyone will be saved - Universal atonement. Others teach that Christ by His death provided the possibility of salvation for everyone but only those who receive Him will be saved - Potential atonement. We teach that Christ died specifically for all those God would give to Him through faith and repentance - Definite atonement. According to the following verses, for whom exactly did Christ die?

Matthew 20:28

Acts 20:28

Matthew 26:28

Romans 5:19

John 6:37-40

Romans 8:32-34

John 10:14-15; 25-29

Ephesians 5:25

A few passages teach that Christ died for all men or for the whole world (See John 1:29; 1 John 2:2; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 2 Pet. 2:1). If these references mean each and every person in the world, then every person would be saved. Otherwise God would unjustly require a double payment for sin, Christ's and the lost man's. But since we know many will not be saved, we conclude that Christ didn't actually pay the penalty for the sins of each and every human being that ever lived. He didn't come hoping some would believe in His as

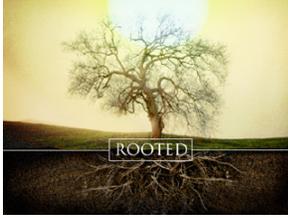
Savior. He came to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21) His people includes all kinds of people, Jews and Gentiles, slave and free, throughout the whole world. The Spirit was sent to give the gift of faith and repentance to all those for whom Christ died. None for whom Christ died will ultimately be missing in heaven - Romans 8:28-30!

Why is this important?

There is no salvation apart from the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We are called to preach Christ and His work on the cross as sufficient to save anyone who believes.

Jesus stated with absolute assurance: "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. John 6:37

The love of God toward us as sinners in sending His Son to bear God's wrath in our place should melt out hearts in constant gratitude and compel us to live fully for Him. Paul said it perfectly in Galatians 6:14. Look it up



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

October 31, 2010

Christology - How do we know Christ arose from the dead?

Wrong views...

Christ's resurrection really means His spirit or attitude lives on through His followers.

The swoon theory - Christ never actually died on the cross. He only fainted and when he revived in the tomb, he moved the stone and went forth to appear as resurrected. Your answer:

The wrong tomb theory - The women and disciples actually got confused about which tomb Christ was laid in and went to the wrong one and announced that He arose. Your answer:

The hallucination or vision theory - Christ only arose in the imagination of the disciples. They took a subjective vision or dream or hallucination for actual reality and went forth determined to preach the resurrection even if it meant death. Your answer:

The fraud theory - The apostles stole and hid the body of Jesus, and deceived the world. Your answer:

"I believe that many of the people who came up with these theories must have had two brains--one lost, and the other one out looking for it. Historians have to become anti-historical to invent some of their ideas." (Josh McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, p. 76)

What Scripture teaches...

THE EVIDENCES OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

What did Christ promise his disciples in these references?

Mark 9:9-10

John 10:17-18

John 2:19

John 11:25-26

Who were some of the eye witness accounts of the resurrected Christ?

Matthew 28:16-17

John 20:26-28

Luke 24:13-31

John 21:1-14

Luke 24:34

Acts 7:56

Luke 24:36-39

1 Corinthians 15:6-7

John 20:14-16

1 Corinthians 15:8

THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION BODY

How do you know it was an actual resurrection and not just a resuscitation?

Mark 15:45

John 19:34

How do you know it was a bodily resurrection and not just a spiritual resurrection?

Mark 16:6

Luke 24:41-43

Luke 24:39

John 20:25-28

In what sense was Christ's resurrection unique from other resurrections recorded in the Bible, such as Lazarus and the others Christ raised from the dead?

John 20:19

Romans 6:9

Revelation 1:18

WHAT DID CHRIST'S RESURRECTION PROVE?

Romans 1:4 That Christ was _____

Romans 4:24-25 That Christ's work on the cross was _____

Romans 6:4 That believers might _____

Ephesians 1:19-20 That believers have the same power _____

1 Thessalonians 4:14 That God will _____

Hebrews 7:25 That Christ _____

1 Corinthians 15:12, 19, 20-26 That _____

Acts 17:31 That Christ will _____

THE HISTORICAL IMPACT OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

What was the theme of the apostles' preaching in the book of Acts?

Acts 2:24

Acts 13:32-37

Acts 2:31-32

Acts 17:31-32

Acts 3:15

Acts 26:22-23

Acts 4:10

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

How many of the apostles were willing to die for their confidence in the resurrection of Christ?

How does the existence of the church of Jesus Christ over these 20 centuries verify the reality of the resurrection of Christ?

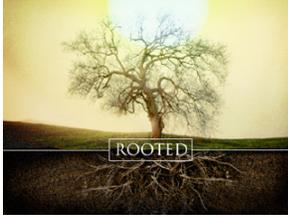
How did the resurrection of Christ affect the day on which Christians gather for worship and instruction? See John 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2

Why is this important?

The doctrine of the resurrection is central in the Christian faith, not peripheral. To deny it is to remove the keystone of the arch of Christianity. Without it, the crucifixion of our Lord would have been in vain, for it was the resurrection which validated and gave saving value to the atoning death. (J. Oswald Sanders, *The Incomparable Christ*)

“Again, I’m held by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Were it not that I believed that Jesus was seen of men and proved Himself to be supernatural in outwitting death, I would throw the whole system back to the troubled skies and take a raft down the Mississippi today. But the fact is founding, settling, establishing. It holds as nothing else, and gives the sense that there are answers, not yet discovered, for which I must wait.” (Jim Elliot, missionary martyr).

The miracle of the resurrection and the existence of Christianity are so closely connected that they must stand or fall together. If Christ was raised from the dead, then all His other miracles are sure, and our faith is impregnable; if he was not raised, he died in vain, and our faith is in vain. . . without his resurrection, his death would be the grave of our hopes; we should be still unredeemed and under the power of our sins. A gospel of a dead savior would be a contradiction and a wretched delusion (Schaff - Vol. I, p. 172-173).



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

November 7, 2010

Christology - What is Christ doing now?

Wrong views...

Christ is dead but His cause continues through people who are dedicated to world peace and harmony.

Christ is fighting against Satan and trying to win the spiritual conflict over the earth.

Christ is working through the church to reconstruct the moral, political, economic, social, and religious realms of this world according to the law of God. He will return from heaven after the entire world has been brought under the authority of the gospel. (This view is known as theonomy or reconstructionism, also a form of postmillennialism).

Evaluate this favorite Easter chorus: "He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."

What Scripture teaches...

We have not only a risen Savior and returning King, but a ruling Lord of His Church. We don't just look back at a historical Jesus or ahead to a future Messiah, but we look up to a present Savior who is alive right now at God's right hand. In this study we'll think about seven aspects of Christ's present ministry.

First is Christ's *ascension*. What do the following verses teach?

Luke 24:50-51

Acts 1:9-12

John 6:62

1 Timothy 3:16

How long was it between Christ's resurrection and his ascension?

What did Christ do during this time?

Where did Christ go?

What does Zechariah 14:4 seem to indicate about the place from which Christ ascended?

What spiritual truths does Christ's ascension teach you?

Next is Christ's *exaltation* at the Father's right hand. What is the importance of this position?

Ephesians 1:20-21

Philippians 2:9-11

Hebrews 1:3

Christ ascended and was seated at the Father's right hand not only as God but also as man. He is there as our representative - our Man in heaven. What does Paul say about this in these verses?

Ephesians 2:4-7

Colossians 3:1-4

How does Christ's position at the Father's right hand assure us of our acceptance by God?

Hebrews 10:11-12

How did Christ's exalted position encourage Stephen in Acts 7:54-56?

He has raised our human nature
In the clouds to God's right hand;
There we sit in heavenly places,
There with Him in glory stand: Jesus reigns adored by angels;
Man with God is on the throne;
Mighty Lord, in Thine ascension
We by faith behold our own.
(Quoted by J. Oswald Sanders, *The Incomparable Christ*)

Then consider that Christ is *building His church*. Why was it to our advantage that Christ left earth and ascended to heaven?

John 16:7

Acts 2:32-33

Acts 1:4-8

1 Corinthians 12:13

What is Christ using to build His church today?

Matthew 16:13-18

Ephesians 2:19-22

Ephesians 4:10-12

During this age Christ is *making intercession* as our High Priest. While Christ's sacrifice for sin on the cross was a finished work, Christ now represents us at God's right hand as our High Priest. We need and want no earthly high priest. How does Christ serve as our High Priest according to these verses.

Romans 8:33-34

Hebrews 7:24-27

Hebrews 2:17-18

Hebrews 8:1-2

Hebrews 4:14-16

Hebrews 9:11-12, 24

Hebrews 6:19-20

1 John 2:1

Based on these references, what is Christ doing for you right now?

As He promised, Christ is also *preparing a place* for His people.

John 14:1-3

And finally, Christ is *waiting for the time when He returns* to set up His kingdom.

Hebrews 10:37

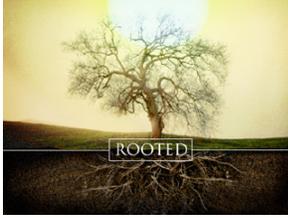
Rev. 22:7

2 Peter 3:8-9, 15

Rev. 22:20

Why is this important? List some of the ways Christ's present position and ministry at God's right hand encourage you as a Christian:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

November 14, 2010

Pneumatology - Is the Holy Spirit a Person or a force?

Wrong views...

“May the force be with you.”

The Holy Spirit sets us free from the restraints of the written Word of God.

The Holy Spirit is working through many religions of the world to bring people to the Father of us all.

What Scripture teaches...

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.

Genesis 1:2

2 Samuel 23:2

Judges 6:34

Isaiah 11:1-2

1 Samuel 16:13

Micah 3:8

Isaiah 42:1–9 summarized the redeeming work of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the salvation of the lost, as God spoke through the prophet: “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles” (Is. 42:1). No clearer reflection of the intimate inter-working of the persons of the Trinity can be found in the Old Testament than in this prophecy. It ties God’s grace in Old and New together in remarkable harmony.

The Holy Spirit in the life of Christ.

Matthew 1:18-20

John 20:22

Matthew 3:16

Romans 8:11

Luke 4:1

Hebrews 9:14

The Holy Spirit in the Church (More next study on the works of the Spirit)

How do we know the Holy Spirit is God?

Psalm 139:7-8

Romans 8:2

Acts 5:3-4

1 Corinthians 2:10-11

Isaiah 40:13

2 Corinthians 3:18

The Holy Spirit has been involved in four great works that only God could accomplish:

Genesis 1:2

Romans 8:11

Job 26:13

2 Peter 1:21

John 3:6

How do we know the ***Holy Spirit is a Person*** as well as God, i.e., one of the three Persons of the Godhead?

John 16:13 (what kind of pronouns are used of the Spirit?)

1 Corinthians 12:11

Acts 28:25

Ephesians 4:30

Romans 8:27

Hebrews 10:29

The Holy Spirit has ***abilities*** that demonstrate His personal nature.

John 14:26

Romans 8:14

Acts 8:29

Romans 15:13

Acts 13:4

What ***titles and ministries*** does Christ assign to the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room discourse?

John 14-17

John 15:26

John 14:16-17

John 16:7-11

What is the *unpardonable sin*?

Matthew 12:31-32 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come."

The people in view in this passage heard Jesus teach and preach God's truth, yet refused to believe. They saw the divine power of the Holy Spirit working in and through Him, healing every kind of disease, casting out every kind of demon, and forgiving every kind of sin; yet they accused Him of deceit, falsehood, and demonism, attributing His power to Satan. God can do nothing for those who reject Christ as God in that manner and in the face of such overwhelming evidence. Commentator William Hendriksen says of such people: Their sin is unpardonable because they are unwilling to tread the path that leads to pardon. For a thief, an adulterer, and a murderer there is hope. The message of the gospel may cause him to cry out, "O God be merciful to me, the sinner." But when a man has become hardened, so that he has made up his mind not to pay attention to the ... Spirit ... he has placed himself on the road that leads to perdition.⁵

Why is this important?

How would your Christianity be different if the Holy Spirit were only a force and not the third Person of the Godhead? What personal characteristics of Christ does the Spirit bring into our lives? Could a force such as electricity or gravity communicate these?

"If we once grasp the thought that the Holy Spirit is a divine person of infinite majesty and glory and holiness and power, who in marvelous condescension has come into our hearts to make his abode there and take possession of our lives and make use of them, it will put us in the dust and keep us in the dust. I can think of no thought more humbling or more overwhelming than the thought that a person of divine majesty and glory dwells in my heart and is ready to use even me." (R. A. Torrey, quoted by Boice in *Foundations of the Christian Faith*).

"That which searches, knows, speaks, testifies, reveals, convinces, commands, strives, moves, helps, guides, creates, recreates, sanctifies, inspires, makes intercession, orders the affairs of the church, performs miracles, raises the dead--cannot be a mere power, influence, efflux, or attribute of God, but must be a person." (Augustus Strong, *Systematic Theology*).



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

November 21, 2010

Pneumatology - What does the Holy Spirit do?

Wrong views...

The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin but doesn't actually impart spiritual life or the new birth until a person chooses Christ.

The Holy Spirit may be so grieved by a believer's sin that He will reverse His work of salvation and leave a genuinely saved person to be ultimately lost in hell.

The Holy Spirit mainly leads believers to find God's will for their lives through phenomena like revelations, visions, dreams, an inner voice, unusual circumstances, intense feelings and strong desires.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit leads us to do things that the Bible forbids.

What Scripture teaches...

We have seen that the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Godhead was directly involved in the works of creation and the inspiration of the Bible and in the life of Christ. In this study we want to look more closely at the role and work of the Spirit in our spiritual lives and in the life of the church.

Because the Holy Spirit is the power by which believers come to Christ and see with new eyes of faith, He is closer to us than we are to ourselves. Like the eyes of the body through which we see physical things, He is seldom in focus to be seen directly because He is the one through whom all else is seen in a new light. This explains why the relationship of the Father and the Son is more prominent in the gospels, because it is through the eyes of the Holy Spirit that the Father-Son relationship is viewed.

What promises did Christ make about the Holy Spirit's work?

John 3:5-8

John 14:16-18

John 6:63

Acts 1:4-8

John 7:37-39

What happened when the Holy Spirit came to the early church?

Acts 2:1-4

Acts 9:31

Acts 2:38

Acts 10:44-45

Acts 4:8-13

Acts 13:2-4

Acts 4:31

Acts 20:28

Could the early believers in the book of Acts possibly have seen the church of Christ grow without the Holy Spirit? How crucial is the Holy Spirit in the life of the church?

What are the Holy Spirit's works in bringing a person to salvation in Jesus Christ? Remember, the primary work of the Spirit is to _____ (John 16:14).

CONVICTION - The Holy Spirit draws sinners to Christ.

John 6:44

John 16:8-11

John 14:17

1 Corinthians 2:14

Why can no one come to Christ apart from the inner working and drawing of the Spirit?

This drawing is also spoken of as an effectual calling, as, for example, in Romans 8:28-30. What does "effectual" mean?

REGENERATION - The Holy Spirit imparts new life, the life of Christ, to sinners.

John 3:3-8

Titus 3:5

What two things can no one do without the Spirit according to John 3:3-8? While we will study more about the condition of man in sin and the nature of salvation in later studies, Ephesians 2:1-3 says as unbelievers we were not only under Satan's authority but also dead in our sins. This is why we believe the Spirit works in and through the message of the gospel as it is given out, but that before a lost person can believe in Christ, the Spirit must impart that new life that enables him to believe. Without that new life from the Spirit we can neither see, hear, or even desire to come to Christ. Man doesn't regenerate his own dead heart by his decision or prayer or commitment. He comes to

Christ in faith because the Spirit has drawn him and imparted that new life. Even his faith is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9). This is what is meant by sovereign grace in salvation. The Spirit gives new life to all whom God the Father chose to give to His Son, and to all for whom the Son purchased salvation.

SPIRIT BAPTISM - The Holy Spirit brings every new believer into eternal union with Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13

Romans 6:1-4

INDWELLING - The Holy Spirit comes to live in every believer at the moment of salvation.

Romans 8:9-11

1 Corinthians 3:16

SEALING - The Holy Spirit seals and guarantees the eternal security of every believer at the moment of salvation.

2 Corinthians 1:22

Ephesians 1:13-14

What are the Holy Spirit's works in and through believers and the life of the church?

The Spirit ***illuminates*** our minds to _____ 1 Corinthians 2:11-12

The Spirit ***fills*** our lives to _____ Ephesians 5:18-21

The Spirit ***leads*** or motivates us to _____ Romans 8:13;
Galatians 5:17-22; Phil. 2:13

The Spirit ***helps*** us to _____ Romans 8:26

The Spirit ***equips*** us with _____ in order to _____ 1
Corinthians 12:7,11

Notice that the Spirit is called the "Holy" Spirit. What does this passage teach about the impact of the Spirit in your life? 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

What ***grieves*** the Spirit? See the context of Ephesians 4:30

Why is this important?

How does this teaching on the Holy Spirit impact your thoughts...

About sin and temptation?

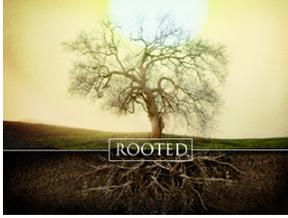
About serving in the body of Christ?

About personal holiness and growth?

About your weakness and inability?

About evangelism?

While we often ask God for more power and strength, actually, God has already given us all the power and strength we need. Our real need to is yield our lives to the Spirit's control so that He can manifest the life and character of Christ through us.



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

November 28, 2010

Angelology - What are angels like?

Wrong views...

What's behind the angel craze of our day? From John MacArthur's book *The Glory of Heaven* -- "'Angelmania' has swept popular culture and is the hottest New Age trend at the moment. Recently five of the top ten books on a list of religious best-sellers were books dealing with the subject of angels."

From the publishers of books on angels: "The authors teach you nine specific ways your personal angel protects you, how to call out to your guardian angel, and how to get your angel to answer your cry for help and assistance in matters big and small. You'll also find out about the Angelic Hierarchy and learn the actual language of the Angelic Kingdom!"

(See MacArthur's book for much more on this current obsession with angels.)

Does everyone have a guardian angel? Are guardian angels found in the Bible?

Should we pray to angels? Example prayer to a guardian angel: "My good Angel, Thou comest from heaven; God has sent thee to take care of me. Oh, shelter me under thy wings. Lighten my path, direct my steps. Do not leave me, stay quite near me and defend me against the spirit of evil. But above all come to my help in the last struggle of my life. Deliver my soul so that with thee it may praise, love and contemplate the goodness of God forever and ever. Amen."

Do you ever hear angels' wings softly swishing past you?

What Scripture teaches...

Angels are involved in most if not all religions, ancient and modern. One of Satan's ploys is to disguise himself as an angel of light. Only the Bible gives us infallible truth about angels. Both the Hebrew word (ma'lak) and the Greek word (angelos) mean "messenger". The words for angel are used over 250 times in the Bible.

When did God create the angels? While the Bible isn't explicit, from the following verses, what is your opinion?

Job 38:7

Nehemiah 9:6

Genesis 1:1

Col. 1:16

Psalm 148:2-5

How many angels are there? Add them up if you can:

Daniel 7:10

Hebrews 12:22

Luke 2:13

Revelation 5:11

Matthew 26:53

Scientists say there are multiplied billions of stars in the universe. Could there be such a large number of angels?

What are angels like? Christ points us in the right direction in Luke 20:35-36 - Angels don't _____ and neither do they _____, like us humans.

Since they don't reproduce, they are not a race, like humans, but individually created.

Hebrews 1:7 indicates that God can use angels like _____ or even _____.

Hebrews 1:14 says they are ministering _____, in contrast to what?

What level of intelligence do they have?

2 Sam. 14:20

Luke 4:34

1 Peter 1:11-12

What are the ranks of angels?

Cherubim – Genesis 3:24, Exodus 25:17-22, Compare Ezekiel 1:5 and 10:1

Seraphim - Used only twice, in Isaiah 6:2 and 6:6. What do they do?

(Seraphim comes from a root word that means “burning”. They could be translated “burning ones.”)

Along with different kinds of angels is a hierarchy of angels.

Dan 9:21

Ephesians 6:12

Daniel 12:1

Colossians 1:16

Luke 1:19

EVIL ANGELS

Some angels followed Satan in their revolt against God - See Revelation 12:7-9. When do you think this great angelic revolt took place? (Think carefully here).

These fallen creatures are given different titles and sometimes are described as under God's judgment. Look up these references for a sampling:

Luke 8:2

1 Timothy 4:1-3

Mark 9:25

2 Peter 2:4

Matthew 25:41

Jude 6

GOOD ANGELS

Other angels remained true to God. They are called _____ 1 Timothy 5:21

“The grandeur and complexity of the angelic world is enough to pique us to study it. But in addition, such study enhances our sense of God's glory.” (Boice)

What do angels do? They certainly have a full agenda. What do you find them doing in the following verses?

Psalm 91:11

Acts 8:26

Daniel 7:16

Acts 12:23

Matthew 13:39

1 Thessalonians 4:16

Matthew 18:10

2 Thessalonians 1:7

Matthew 24:31

Hebrews 1:6

Luke 1:19

Hebrews 1:14

Luke 1:26

Revelation 5:11-12

Luke 16:22

Rev. 21:12

What else do you remember angels doing in the biblical account?

How did they especially minister to Christ during His incarnation?

Matthew 4:11

Luke 22:42-43

What does Hebrews 13:2 mean? Has this ever happened to you? How would you know?

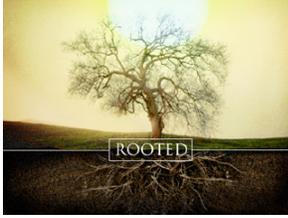
Why is this important?

God created angels for His glory, but also to teach us something of His power and might.

If angels came and strengthened Christ when He was here on earth, how might angels minister to you?

While angels are glorious creatures, Christ didn't become an angel, but He became a man, to raise us up above the status of angels. See Hebrews 2:9, 16-17.

A few further questions: Do all angels have wings? Are all angels male? Do angels ever sing?



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

December 5, 2010

Satanology - How did Satan become the devil?

Wrong views...

He's just an imaginary "bogy man" authorities use to scare their subservients into obedience.

In the Middle Ages preachers pictured Satan as a hideous looking creature with horns, a tail, and a pitch fork in hand.

Satan casts people into hell and torments them there.

Christ and Satan are fighting over you and you determine who wins.

What Scripture teaches...

Satan is real. You can fall off the wagon on both sides here: a superstitious fear of Satan or a secular denial of Satan. Satan was the highest of God's angelic creations until he fell under God's judgment from pride and arrogance. God has not revealed everything about this Satanic plot and the demonic conflict that apparently rages throughout the ages until Satan and his entire horde of demons are safely consigned to the lake of fire. But somehow God's plan of redemption demonstrates to Satan how wrong he is and how gracious and merciful God is. One thing we know for certain. Satan hates God and every believer and does all he can to destroy God's work in this world.

Satan's creation - While Satan's creation and fall are not explicitly taught in the Bible, these messages from Ezekiel and Isaiah, to the king of Tyre and the king of Babylon, seem to have more in them than would apply to mere mortals. What indicates these may be speaking of Satan?

Ezekiel 28:12-15

Satan's fall

Ezekiel 28:15-17

Isaiah 14:12-15 List the “I wills” of this passage.

I will _____

Then, in verse 15, you will _____

Satan’s titles - What aspect of Satan’s character or work does each title reveal?

1 Peter 5:8

1 Thessalonians 3:5

Matthew 13:19

John 12:31

Matthew 12:24

Ephesians 2: 2

Revelation 12:9-10

John 8:44

John 8:44

1 Timothy 3:6-7

Satan’s career - Revelation 12 & 20 sketch the further stages in Satan’s work of evil and his destruction:

Revelation 12:3–4 Satan persuaded _____ to join him in his rebellion

Revelation 12:4–5 When the Messiah became a man, Satan tried to _____.

Revelation 12:7–12 During the future period of tribulation before the Messiah’s second coming, Satan will be _____.

Revelation 12:13–17 Then he will direct his animosity toward _____.

Revelation 20:2 He will be bound for _____.

Revelation 20:10 He will then finally be _____.

Satan in the life of Christ - List times when Satan tried to destroy Christ throughout his life, beginning as an infant:

Matthew 4:1-11 According to verse 9, what did Satan really want? How does he finally get it in the tribulation period?

Revelation 13:4

John 13:1

John 13:27

Compare Hebrews 2:14-15 with Revelation 1:17-18 - What is Satan's final tool? How did Christ destroy it?

Satan's methods - Look up these verses and list Satan's various methods to accomplish his purpose:

Genesis 3:4-5

Job 1:6-12

Matthew 13:19

John 8:44

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

2 Corinthians 2:10-11

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18

2 Thessalonians 2:9

1 Timothy 4:1-3

2 Timothy 2:26

Our victory over Satan through Christ

Romans 16:20

James 4:8

Eph. 4:25-27

1 Peter 5:8-9

Eph. 6:10-18

Revelation 12:11

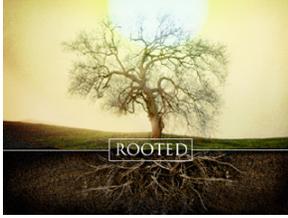
“We have been forewarned that an enemy relentlessly threatens us, an enemy who is the very embodiment of rash boldness, of military prowess, of crafty wiles, of untiring zeal and haste, of every conceivable weapon and of skill in the science of warfare. We must, then, bend our every effort to this goal: that we should not let ourselves be overwhelmed by carelessness or faintheartedness, but on the contrary, with courage rekindled stand our ground in combat.” (John Calvin, *Institutes*)

Why is this important?

The creation, career, and collapse of Satan and his demonic followers remind us of at least the following truths:

1. There is a spiritual realm and warfare in this universe far bigger than we can imagine.
2. God is glorified through his judgment and condemnation of Satan.
3. We face a daily enemy who wants us to defect from Jesus Christ and follow him.
4. We have all the resources we need in Jesus Christ to resist Satan and stay true to Christ.

Your thoughts:



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

December 12, 2010

Anthropology - What is unique about man?

Wrong views...

Four questions to challenge the theory of evolution:

1. How do you get something from nothing?
2. How do you get life from non-life?
3. How do you get higher forms from lower forms?
4. How do you get man from animal?

“The evolutionary history commonly taught in the schools suggests that man and the apes were both derived from an unknown common ancestor that existed somewhere between 30 and 70 million years ago. The line leading to man proceeded through various evolutionary stages culminating in true man somewhere between one and three million years ago. Since that time, man’s physical evolution has given way to a cultural and social evolution.” (Henry Morris, *Scientific Creationism*, p. 171)

Theistic evolution asserts that God ordered and directed the evolutionary process.

Threshold evolution teaches that man evolved but at some point God broke into the process and directly created the soul, bringing man into being.

What Scripture teaches...

First of all, to believe in any theory of the evolution of man is to stand in absolute opposition against two very important people:

The Apostle Paul - 1 Timothy 2:13 It was Adam who was _____, and then _____.

Jesus Christ - Matthew 19:4 “Have you not read, that He who _____ from the beginning _____ MALE AND FEMALE...?”

David asked the question, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:4) What a question! Let's explore what the Bible says about man and his uniqueness as God's creation.

Man's origin: Three key passages in the first two chapters of Genesis instruct us about the origin of man and woman. Read these eye-witness accounts (God's) carefully and list everything they teach you about the origin of man:

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

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Genesis 2:7 the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Genesis 2:21-23 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

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| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |

Did Adam have a belly-button? Straight from Christiananswers.net:

“Ken Ham once put it this way: Lack of a belly-button on Adam and Eve would be one of the biggest tourist attractions in the pre-Flood world, as the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren would come up and say, "Why don't you have a belly-button?" And they could recount again and again, to generation after generation, how God had created them special by completed supernatural acts, and yet had designed them to multiply and fill the Earth in natural ways that are equally a part of God's continuing care for what He created.”

The image of God in man: We can know something of what the *image of God in man means when you contrast a human being with an animal such as a dog or donkey. But we can better understand what the image of God means when we compare man with God. How does man reflect or “mirror” God in these areas:

- Personality?

- Morality?

- Spirituality?

- Relationships?

*The words “image” and “likeness” are used interchangeably - see Genesis 5:1-3.

TWO ISSUES you don't need to thoroughly understand (no one else does, either) -

The origin of the soul - By “soul” we mean that immaterial aspect of man that is made in God's image and lives forever. There are three views on this:

1. **Preexistence** - that man's soul exists in some previous state and at some point is placed in the developing body of the person.
2. **Creationism** - that God creates each soul, probably at the point of conception.
3. **Traducianism** - that the soul as well as the body is passed along through natural reproduction of humans. This is closest to what the Bible teaches, since the guilt of Adam's sin is passed along to all his offspring. Adam is the head of the human race. See Romans 5:12.

Man's constitution or parts - Theologians have debated this for centuries. The two views are:

1. **Dichotomous** - Man is essentially two parts, material and immaterial, or body and soul/spirit. (See Matthew 10:28; 16:26; 1 Corinthians 5:3).
2. **Trichotomous** - Man is three parts, body, soul, and spirit. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12).

While the Bible is not precise in referring words like spirit and soul to distinct aspects of our immaterial part, the fact is that man is a unity of body and soul unique from animals. God's redemption of His people includes both the immaterial part (soul/spirit) which goes to heaven at death and the material part (body) which will be resurrected and rejoined to the immaterial part when Christ returns (Romans 8:23).

Man's perfection: What does Genesis 1:31 imply about the moral condition of Adam and Eve? How would you describe their condition before they sinned against God?

Man's moral responsibility: God created man with a mind to perceive, a conscience (literally "with knowledge") to make inner judgment, and a will to choose. He also revealed His will to Adam and Eve. Part of the uniqueness of man is his accountability to God for all of his behavior in habit, deed, word, thought, and motive.

Modern man seeks to deny human moral responsibility with the myth of "determinism" or "I just couldn't help myself. That's the way I am." James Boice writes: "It may be a physical, mechanical determinism ("human beings are the product of their genes and body chemistry") or it may be a psychological determinism ("human beings are the product of their environment and past history"). In either case the individual is excused from responsibility for what he or she does." (*Foundations*, p. 154)

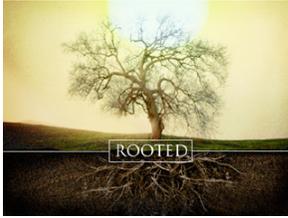
What moral responsibility did God place on Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:15-17? What excuses did God allow in the garden for disobedience?

Being a human being in God's image and likeness is both a glorious privilege and an awesome responsibility. Adam had the choice: obey and live or disobey and die.

Why is this important?

What are the practical implications of the image of God in man in these areas:

- Hatred, murder, abortion, and capital punishment? - Genesis 9:6
- Respect and honor? - James 3:9-10
- Marriage and divorce? - Matthew 19:4-9
- Fornication and adultery? - Genesis 2:24
- Salvation? - 2 Corinthians 3:18 / Romans 8:29



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

December 19, 2010

Anthropology - What happened in that garden?

Wrong views...

The Garden of Eden is a myth. It is a fairytale to help explain the mystery of evil.

Man fell upward toward self-actualization and realization of his own god-like nature.

Man fell as an independent person, not representing the entire race. He only influences others by his poor example (Pelagius).

Man fell, but not to the point where he can't pick himself up.

Man fell into a spiritual unconsciousness that needs fanning to awaken spiritual desires.

Psychological views of man in his present condition include:

- Man is not responsible for his sin - Sigmund Freud
 - Man is essentially good and needs no outside help - Carl Rogers
 - Man is only an animal without ultimate value, freedom, or dignity - B. F. Skinner
-

What Scripture teaches...

Like an exquisite building that gets blasted with a huge bomb or like a computer hard drive that gets infected by a virus and crashes, man by his own sin fell from his pristine perfection into the morass of sin and depravity. But what does this mean? How did Adam fall, how far, and what were the consequences to the human race?

In the Garden - Let's study the Genesis 3 account of man's temptation and fall:

What was God's original counsel to Adam and Eve? (Genesis 2:16-17)

Who comes along and challenges that counsel? (Genesis 3:1)

How does Satan lure Eve into disobeying God's counsel? What were his methods? (vss. 1-5)

What persuaded Eve to take the fruit of the forbidden tree and eat it? (vs. 6)

Why did Adam eat the fruit along with Eve? See 1 Timothy 2:13-14

What were the immediate consequences of their sin in verse 7?

What did the guilty couple do when God came walking in the garden? (vss. 8-13)

From this account, how would you describe sin in its essence? What exactly is sin? See 1 John 3:4 for a biblical definition.

Man as a fallen being:

Guilt - Sin makes us guilty before God. Guilt is the liability to suffer the consequences of disobedience. The sense of guilt which comes from our offended conscience reminds us that we need God's forgiveness. To stifle the feelings of guilt with more sin or medication is dangerous. It is like turning off the carbon monoxide alarm instead of dealing with the cause of the alarm--a deadly mistake.

Ezekiel 18:20

Romans 6:23

Total Depravity - Sin brought guilt and corruption to the human race. This condition is known as total depravity. Total depravity doesn't mean we are all as evil as we can be; that would be "utter depravity", kind of like Hitler, even though he could have been worse. It means that sin and its power have affected every part of our lives, to the very core of our being, our hearts. How do these verses teach our total depravity:

Genesis 6:5

Romans 3:10-12

Jeremiah 17:9

Ephesians 2:1-3

Matthew 15:19

Colossians 1:21

Original Sin - Through Adam and Eve's sin, the entire race was infected with sin. This is known as the doctrine of original sin. All are born guilty because Adam stood as the representative of the human race in his rebellion against God. Romans 5:12-21 focus on this representative aspect of Adam's sin. What do these verses teach?

Romans 5:15

Romans 5:18

Romans 5:17

Romans 5:19

Also, check out 1 Corinthians 15:22, Psalm 51:5 and Psalm 58:3. Do we become sinners when we sin, or do we sin because we are sinners? "The original sin of Adam and the guilt of sin in some inevitable way passed upon the entire human race. The biblical view is that God holds the entire race to be guilty because of Adam's transgression." (Boice, *Foundations*).

THE ABOUNDING GRACE OF GOD - Before you decide it's just not fair to be held guilty for Adam's sin, check out what Paul says about Christ's obedience to God's will in Romans 5:15-19. On the basis of whose obedience does God justify or save us?

From Adam we received:

From Christ we receive:

Bondage of the Will - Is man a free agent to choose to do whatever he wants to do? Yes, man always chooses freely according to his nature or his desires. That's just the problem. Man as a sinner never desires to choose God on God's terms. He is a slave to sin while at the same time completely responsible before God for the choices he makes. That's why God must give sinners a new heart that desires to choose God on His terms. These verses show man's bondage in sin.

Jeremiah 13:23

Romans 8:5-8

John 8:34

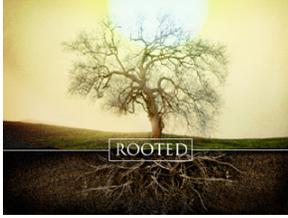
Ezekiel 36:26-27

Why is this important?

God decreed to allow sin to enter the human race ultimately for His glory and to magnify both His justice and His mercy - Romans 9:22-23 (See Jay Adams, *The Grand Demonstration* for a helpful discussion of the so-called “problem of evil.”)

Deep in our hearts, we all know something is desperately wrong with us. Our conscience constantly confronts us with our own sinfulness. Try as we might to blame others or seek psychological explanations for how we feel, we cannot escape reality. We cannot ultimately deny our own consciences. We all feel our guilt, and we all know the horrible truth about who we are on the inside.

The entrance of sin into the human race explains why men have trouble with God, others, and themselves. Every psychological theory is based on a wrong understanding of man. Only with a biblical understanding of man do we see man’s real problem and God’s only answer to man’s problem--Jesus Christ. Only when a person admits his or her sinfulness and guilt before God is he or she ready to receive the grace of God in Jesus Christ.



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

December 26, 2010

Soteriology - How do we get to God?

Wrong views...

List the mistaken notions you have heard about how we get to God:

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What Scripture teaches...

The doctrine of salvation (Soteriology) is the heartbeat of Scripture. Salvation was not plan B after Adam and Eve blew plan A. God was not taken by surprise by sin. God's plan is to magnify His mercy and grace in the salvation of sinners. In this study we will look at how God applies the work of Christ in the salvation of sinners.

SALVATION - The word is used 160 times in the Bible. It means deliverance from danger or enemies. It's deepest meaning, however, is deliverance from the consequences of sin. Of the 49 times the word is used in the New Testament, what do these few verses teach about salvation:

John 4:22

2 Thessalonians 2:13

Acts 4:12

Hebrews 2:3

GOD CALLS SINNERS TO SALVATION - There is a general, external call of the gospel which goes out whenever the gospel is proclaimed. But there is an inner call that actually brings a sinner to the foot of the cross in saving faith. This is known as the effectual calling. What do these verses say about God's calling:

Matthew 22:14

2 Timothy 1:9

Romans 8:28,30

1 Peter 2:9

1 Corinthians 1:9

1 Peter 5:10

Regeneration is the immediate result of the effectual call. Why does God have to give spiritual life to sinners before they respond in faith to God's calling?

John 3:3-5

James 1:18

Ephesians 2:4-5

1 Peter 1:3

Regeneration is at the basis of all change in heart and life. It is a stupendous change because it is God's recreative act. (John Murray)

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL - We don't save ourselves but rather God saves us through the gospel and His inner working of calling and regeneration. Our conscious response to the gospel in faith and repentance is the immediate evidence of regeneration.

Faith - What do these verses say about faith? Give your own definition of saving faith.

Acts 15:9

Romans 10:17

Romans 4:5

Galatians 2:16

Romans 5:1

James 2:14

Faith is _____

Repentance - Is it possible to place your faith in Jesus Christ without repentance? What does repentance mean according to these verses?

Luke 5:32

Romans 2:4

Luke 13:3

2 Timothy 2:25

Acts 11:18

Repentance means _____

THE RICHES OF DIVINE GRACE FOR ALL BELIEVERS - God is rich in grace to all who call upon Christ. Jot down the leading thoughts in each reference.

Justification - God declares believers righteous on the basis of faith alone in Christ alone. Included in justification is the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner's account. Martin Luther said the church stands or falls based on this doctrine. What did he mean?

Romans 3:24

2 Corinthians 5:21

Romans 5:9

Philippians 3:9

Union with Christ - God places every new Christian into an eternal union with His Son.

Romans 6:1-4

1 Corinthians 12:13

Romans 8:1

2 Corinthians 5:17

Adoption - God adopts every believer into His family as a son or daughter with full rights of inheritance in Christ. Our adoption is presented in two phases:

Romans 8:17, 23

Galatians 4:5-6

Ephesians 1:5

Sanctification - God begins the work of sanctification in the life of everyone who comes to Jesus Christ in faith. To divorce justification from sanctification is to separate what God clearly has joined together. To sanctify means to set apart - from sin to God. Sanctification is a progressive or on-going work of God in our lives.

John 17:17

2 Thessalonians 2:13

Romans 8:29

Philippians 2:12-13

1 Thessalonians 4:3

Hebrews 12:14

Perseverance - God enables every Christian to persevere through trials and difficulties all the way to heaven. While every believer is eternally secure, we should not get the impression that everyone who makes a profession of faith is genuinely saved and therefore secure for heaven.

John 10:28-29

Hebrews 7:25

Romans 8:37-39

1 Peter 1:5

Glorification - God assures every believer of his future glorification and perfect conformity to the image of His Son. The Bible teaches that God will complete the work He began at salvation.

Romans 8:30

Philippians 1:6

Ephesians 5:25-27

Philippians 3:20-21

GOD SAVES US IN THREE PHASES:

Phase One (Justification): From the penalty of sin - We have been saved.

Phase Two (Sanctification): From the power of sin - We are being saved.

Phase Three (Glorification): From the presence of sin - We will be saved.

To which phase of salvation do these verses refer?

John 5:24 _____

Romans 5:10 _____

Romans 8:24 _____

1 Cor. 1:18 _____

Ephesians 2:5 _____

2 Tim. 1:9 _____

Titus 3:5 _____

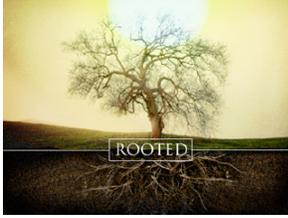
James 1:21 _____

1 Peter 1:9 _____

Why is this important?

Wrong directions to an earthly destination can be frustrating and potentially harmful. But wrong directions on how we get to God are eternally fatal. Of all things that we must know correctly, it's the directions on getting to heaven.

A biblical understanding of salvation cuts a careful path between a self-righteous legalism on the one hand and a careless carnality or antinomianism on the other hand.



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

January 2, 2011

Soteriology - Is predestination true?

Wrong views...

God has limited His sovereignty to man's free will.

God has preplanned everything and man really doesn't have a choice.

God looks down through the corridor of time to see who will choose to believe in His Son and then elects those whom He sees will believe for salvation.

Other wrong views -

What Scripture teaches...

No doctrine has stirred so much controversy as this one within the church of Jesus Christ. From our human perspective we have a hard time seeing how the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man for his actions can both be true. But the biblical teaching clearly teaches both. Again, what God has joined together (divine sovereignty and human responsibility) we must be careful not to tear asunder.

KEY WORDS - Let's begin by understanding the key words involved in this doctrine:

Sovereignty - To be sovereign means to have the power, authority, and wisdom to rule and implement one's will.

Psalm 103:19 The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; And His

Predestination - (pro-oridzo) to determine ahead of time; to mark out the goal beforehand.

1 Corinthians 2:7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God _____ to our glory;

Purpose - (pro-thesis) to have a definite plan with all the means needed to carry it out.

Ephesians 1:11 we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined

_____ after the counsel of His will,

Foreknowledge - (pro-ginosko) a debated word in the Bible. It either means to know someone intimately beforehand or to be aware of something before it happens. The idea of “knowing” in the Bible often has the element of intimate personal relationship. God knew in eternity past in an intimate way those people He would choose to be saved. God foreknows people, not just their decisions.

1 Peter 1:20 For He was _____, but

has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.

Election - (eklegomai) means to select or choose out from among a larger number.

Luke 6:13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him; and _____

_____, whom He also named as apostles:

KEY ILLUSTRATIONS OF GOD’S PREDESTINATION AND MAN’S RESPONSIBILITY

Joseph and his brothers:

Genesis 50:20 "And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God

_____, to preserve many people alive.

Jesus and the crucifixion:

Acts 2:23 this Man, delivered up by the _____ of God,

_____ by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

Acts 4:27-28 "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant

Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles

and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever _____

_____ to occur.

According to these references, what did God predestine to happen? What were men responsible for?

KEY PASSAGES ON PREDESTINATION FOR SALVATION - Study the following passages and simply answer the questions and jot down anything else they teach about God's sovereignty in salvation. We will draw conclusions based on what the Bible says.

John 6:37-39, 44

Who comes to Jesus?

Whom will Jesus never cast out?

What is the Father's will?

What does the Father have to do for someone to come to Jesus?

Romans 8:28-33

Who loves God?

Whom did God foreknow?

What did God predestine them to?

What are God's five saving actions or links toward His people?

Does anyone get lost between the beginning and the end of these five links?

Romans 9:10-18

On what basis did God chose Jacob?

Was God unjust in not choosing Esau?

Was God unjust in chosing Jacob?

What is God's prerogative in dealing with sinners?

Romans 9:19-23

What right does the potter have?

With whom does God endure with much patience?

What will His judgment on the wicked demonstrate?

Who did God prepare beforehand for glory?

What will God make known or demonstrate in his treatment of these vessels?

Romans 11:2, 5-6

Whom will God never reject?

Why is there still a remnant of Jews?

On what basis does God choose (vs. 6)?

Ephesians 1:4-5

When did God choose believers in Christ?

What is his plan for those He chooses?

What did God predestine believers to?

Why?

2 Thessalonians 2:13

Why should we always give thanks?

What did God choose you for?

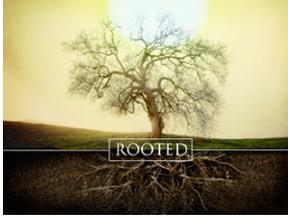
What means did He use to accomplish this purpose?

2 Peter 1:10-11

How can you be certain that God has called and chosen you?

Why is this important?

1. This truth causes us to acknowledge God's rightful place as sovereign and awesome.
2. It makes us realize that we do not deserve salvation in any way and are totally dependent on God.
3. It humbles us to know that for reasons only in Himself, God has chosen to save us.
4. We should be thrilled that God included us in His eternal plan and motivated to love God with all our hearts.
5. This doctrine gives us confidence in our evangelism that God is able save anyone. And anyone who wants to be saved Christ will save. John 6:37 is the best verse to teach both God's choosing people to be saved and that any who come to Christ He will not cast out!



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

January 9, 2011

Soteriology - Does salvation change a person?

Wrong views...

Repentance is not required for salvation. All you need to do to be saved is believe in the facts of Christ and His work on the cross and you can be sure you are on your way to heaven.

The Bible teaches “once saved, always saved.” Once a person makes their decision to believe in Christ, they will be saved, regardless how they live in this world. If they follow Christ, they are spiritual Christians. If they live for themselves, they are carnal Christians.

What Scripture teaches...

Does salvation actually change a person’s life? Can a sinner receive Christ as Savior but not as the Lord of his life? Can faith be divorced from repentance? Lewis Sperry Chafer, Charles Ryrie, and especially Zane Hodges have popularized the teaching that faith does not include repentance and a person can decide for Christ without becoming a follower of Christ. Several words are important in understanding this issue:

Antinomianism is the view that since Christians are under grace, we are no longer under the law of God in any way - see Jude 4.

Legalism is the view that by keeping certain laws and regulations we will earn God’s grace and acceptance. Paul strongly denounced this as another gospel - see Galatians 1:8.

Decisionism is the view that a person’s salvation depends on their decision to believe in Christ. This human decision is often expressed in a prayer of accepting Christ. God then responds to this decision and saves the person. The personal worker then tries to “give assurance” to the person who has made this decision.

TRUE CONVERSION IS A WORK OF GOD IN THE HEART OF A SINNER

The real issue is whether salvation is simply a human decision that God responds to, or is salvation God's work that brings a person to repentance and faith in Christ that begins a life of following Christ out of a new heart. How do these references speak of salvation?

Romans 6:1-4

Romans 6:17-18

2 Corinthians 5:17

Ephesians 2:8-10

Philippians 1:6

Philippians 2:14

THINK ABOUT THIS: What is the relationship between justification and regeneration? Is it possible to be justified by God without being regenerated by God?

CHRIST WARNED US ABOUT A FAITH THAT DOESN'T RESULT IN A CHANGED LIFE OF BEARING FRUIT OR SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL

Read Matthew 7:13-23 and explain the differences between the two gates:

THE NARROW GATE

THE WIDE GATE

Read Matthew 13:18-23 and explain the differences between the four soils:

Soil #1 -

Soil #2 -

Soil #3 -

Soil #4 -

What principles do you glean from Christ's parable of the soils?

DEAD VS. GENUINE FAITH - James 2:14-26

What does James say about a faith that has no works?

How does James use the demons to illustrate a dead faith?

How does James use Abraham and Rahab to illustrate genuine faith?

Compare James 2:24 with Romans 4:4-5. How do you harmonize these two verses?

TESTS TO DETERMINE THE GENUINENESS OF OUR FAITH - 1 John

Why did John write this letter according to 1 John 5:13?

How do we know we have eternal life according to these passages in 1 John?

1 John 2:3-6

1 John 4:4-6

1 John 3:1-3

1 John 4:15-16

1 John 3:4-10

1 John 5:1-5

1 John 3:14-15

1 John 5:19-12

ADMONITIONS TO EXAMINE OURSELVES TO SEE IF WE ARE GENUINE BELIEVERS

2 Corinthians 13:4-5

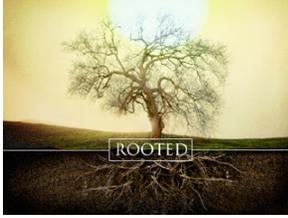
2 Peter 1:10-11

GOD'S FATHERLY DISCIPLINE - What does God promise to all of His children in Hebrews 12:7-11?

Why is this important?

1. One of the marks of a false prophet in the Old Testament was to give the Israelites a false assurance about their condition before God. Their message was, "Peace, peace!" when there was no peace - Jeremiah 6:14. We would not want to be guilty of giving people a false assurance of their eternal salvation.
2. We want to be sure that we ourselves have the evidence of genuine conversion in our lives. If we get irritated or angry when questioned about our faith, this should be a sign to us that all is not well with our souls. Genuine believers are willing to examine themselves. However, we must be careful not to make judgments about other people's hearts. Only God knows the heart.
3. There are multitudes of religious, professing Christians who have no genuine fruit of repentance and faith, no spiritual desires or love for Christ. Yet they think they are on their way to heaven. These people are often the hardest to be won to Christ. They are like many of the Jews of Jesus' day. The warnings of the Scriptures are designed by God to bring them to a conviction of their sins and a sense of their need for Christ.

4. Parents sometimes defend the salvation of their children based on a childhood decision and prayer to “ask Jesus into their hearts,” even when these children have no spiritual desires or love for Christ. As they grow older, they need to hear the gospel and be challenged about the genuineness of their salvation and their need to repent and come to Christ as their Lord and Savior.



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

January 16, 2011

Ecclesiology - What is the church to be and do?

Wrong views...

The church is a place where people go to listen to sermons and give their money.

The church is a denomination.

The church is to be involved in helping to solve the moral and social ills of society.

Other:

What Scripture teaches...

Why do you go to church? What do you expect to happen as Christians gather in your local church Sunday after Sunday? What is the church to be and do?

WHAT IS THE CHURCH? How do these passages describe the church? What does each description teach you about the church?

Acts 20:28 _____

Ephesians 5:25-27 _____

Meaning -

Meaning -

1 Timothy 3:15 _____

1 Peter 2:4-5 _____

Meaning -

Meaning -

Romans 12:4-5 _____

Meaning -

WHY DOES THE CHURCH EXIST?

Note what these passages teach regarding the purpose and mission of the church:

Matthew 28:19-20

Acts 2:42-47

Ephesians 4:11-13

1 Corinthians 14:3,26

Exaltation - The church's highest mission is doxological - to bring glory to God through God-honoring worship.

Evangelism - The church's mission to the world is evangelistic - to bring the saving message of Christ to lost sinners.

Edification - The church's mission to God's people is edificational - building believers up in the faith of Jesus Christ.

Equipping - The church's mission for the perpetuation of the body is equipping believers for the numerical and spiritual growth of the body of Christ.

WHY BE FAITHFUL IN ATTENDING CHURCH? List as many reasons as you can in this space before looking up the references.

"I should be faithful in attending church because..."

Hebrews 10:24-25 says:

1 Peter 2:2 says:

Acts 2:42 says:

1 Corinthians 11:26 says:

Romans 15:4-5 says:

1 Corinthians 14:26 says:

Luke 4:16 says:

Colossians 1:28-29 says:

Matthew 12:30 says:

1 John 3:14 says:

2 Timothy 4:2-4 says:

1 John 2:19 says:

Don Whitney in his book *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church* gives several other considerations regarding faithful church attendance:

1. Attending church doesn't make you *a Christian*.
2. Attending church is vital for Christians.
3. Not attending church is self-centered and foolish - Proverbs 18:1
4. Not attending church is willful disobedience to the authority of God - Heb. 10:25
5. No church will be perfect or free from offensive things - 1 Cor. 11:2

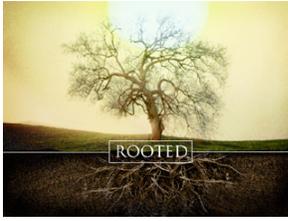
WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES DOES THE CHURCH HAVE IN AND TO THIS WORLD? Some believe the church's responsibilities include being politically active and laboring to bring about moral and social change beyond the simple preaching of the gospel. The church's responsibilities to the world are especially captured in Titus 3:1-8. What are they?

Why is this important?

The local church is God's agency on earth through which He is gathering and building up His blood-bought people. However, the local church is not a high priority for many Christians. How is this lack of commitment demonstrated in practical terms?

What is your level of commitment to the local church?

List ways that you could honor Christ by becoming more faithful to His people and involved in the local church:



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

January 23, 2011

Ecclesiology - How is the church to function?

Wrong views...

The church doesn't need leaders or pastors. Everyone should be able to share with the body what he or she thinks the Bible says.

The church doesn't need organization. Any group of believers meeting for Bible study is a church.

A true church must be able to trace its heritage back to the apostles.

Women should be free to become pastors in the church. God says that in the body of Christ there is neither male nor female.

What Scripture teaches... Some of the following material can be found in John MacArthur's study on *The Anatomy of the Church*.

WHAT MAKES A CHURCH BIBLICAL?

Leadership:

Elders - Titus 1:5-9

Deacons - 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Faith Bible Church is committed to leadership by a plurality of elders called by God to serve the body of Christ and deacons appointed to help in administering various tasks for the effective functioning of the church. Other forms of church government are:

Ordinances:

Baptism - Matthew 28:19-20

Communion - 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Faith Bible Church is committed to baptism based on a profession of faith (believer's baptism, also known as "Credo-Baptism") and communion as a memorial service of Christ's death for believers. Other interpretations of baptism and communion include:

Discipline: Matthew 18:15-20

Regular meetings:

Hebrews 10:25

1 Corinthians 5:4

A BIBLICAL CHURCH SHOULD BE STRONGLY COMMITTED TO:

A high view of God - Romans 11:33-36

The absolute authority of God's Word - Matthew 4:4

Sound doctrine - 1 Timothy 4:6

Personal holiness - 2 Corinthians 7:1

Spiritual leadership - Hebrews 13:7,17

How does Faith Bible Church demonstrate these commitments in practical ways?

WHAT ARE THE KEY FUNCTIONS OF A BIBLICAL CHURCH? Look up each reference and define or describe each function in your own words. Then rate your own involvement in each of these functions between 1 and 10 (10 as most positive):

Preaching and teaching - 1 Timothy 4:6-13 Your involvement _____

Evangelism and missions - Acts 1:8 Your involvement _____

Worshipping - John 4:23-24 Your involvement _____

Praying - Ephesians 6:18 Your involvement _____

Discipling - Colossians 1:28 Your involvement _____

Shepherding - 1 Peter 5:1-3/Acts 20:28 Your involvement _____

Building up families - Ephesians 5:18-6:4 Your involvement _____

Training - Mark 3:14 Your involvement _____

Giving - 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 Your involvement _____

Fellowshipping - Phil 2:1/1 John 1:3 Your involvement _____

THINK ABOUT IT - What should be happening in your life if your church is functioning in a biblical, God-honoring way?

Why is this important?

In his message “Marks of an Effective Church” John MacArthur gives the following twelve characteristics of an effective church. In which areas do you see Faith Bible Church as strong and in which areas are we weak? Give reasons why each characteristic is important. Be sure to turn your evaluations into prayer and gratitude and not into pride, criticism, or blame.

Godly Leaders

Functional Goals And Objectives:

Discipleship:

An Emphasis On Penetrating the Community:

Active Church Members:

Concern For One Another:

Devotion To The Family:

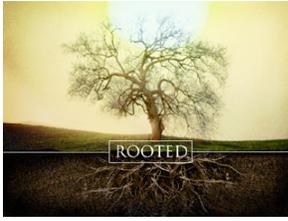
Bible Teaching And Preaching:

A Willingness To Change:

Great Faith:

Sacrifice:

Worship:



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

January 30, 2011

Eschatology - What happens when you die?

Wrong views... There are many!

1. Annihilationism
2. Restorationism
3. Reincarnation
4. Nirvana - the loss of all individual consciousness and existence by absorption into the impersonal all. A state of freedom from all desire, pain, suffering.
5. Universalism
6. White tunnel, bright light, life's "significant person" welcomes the departed soul. For example, Betty J. Eadie's book, *Embraced by the Light*.
7. Hell is for all the really wicked people; heaven for the "good" people. E.g., "No flames will be too hot for that miserable monster."
8. Purgatory - According to the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, "all who die at peace with the church, but are not perfect, pass into purgatory." Bellarmine, *De Purgatorio*, 2:14 — "The pains of purgatory are very severe, surpassing any endured in this life." Here they make satisfaction for the sins committed after baptism by suffering a longer or shorter time, according to the degree of their guilt. (Strong's theology)

Other:

Listen to Irwin Lutzer's excellent series of messages, "One Minute After Your Die."

What Scripture teaches... One of Satan's most important targets for deception is in the area of death and the afterlife. If he can deceive people about death and what happens after death, he has accomplished much. The latest book on someone's "out of the body experience" (OBE) is a sure seller. MacArthur wrote: "People who draw their opinions about life after death and other spiritual matters from the stories of such experiences are playing with fire—hellfire! That is Satan's goal for them." Even Christians buy up books about an author's supposed "tour of hell" and return to warn us all. Experiences do not determine truth. Only God's Word is reliable on this subject.

What is death? There are three kinds of death in the Bible:

Spiritual death - “Sin separates man from God, and that means death, for it is only in communion with the living God that man can truly live. In the state of death, which resulted from the entrance of sin into the world, we are burdened with the guilt of sin, a guilt that can only be removed by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.” (Berkhof)

Ephesians 2:1, 5

John 5:24-25

Physical death - the separation of the body from the soul. It is not a cessation of existence, but a change of relationship. The body decays in the grave and the soul continues on. How is physical death described in these references:

Genesis 3:19

Acts 7:59

Luke 9:31

2 Peter 1:15

Eternal death - the culmination and completion of spiritual death

Revelation 20:10

Revelation 20:14

Why do we die?

Was Adam subject to death before he sinned? See Genesis 2:17

What causes do these verses give for the fact of death?

Romans 5:21

Romans 6:23

1 Corinthians 15:56

What happens after death? The state of a person’s existence after death is called the intermediate state - in between life on earth and the final state in eternity.

Soul-sleep - Seventh Day Adventists teach the view that after death the soul lapses into a state of sleep or unconscious repose. 1 Thess. 4:13 speaks of those who sleep in Jesus. This is the language of appearance. A dead body looks like a sleeping person. Other references clearly refute the idea of soul-sleep.

Conditional immortality - God imparts immortality only to those who believe in Christ, denying the eternal existence of the souls of the lost. They use Matthew 10:28. However, to destroy doesn't mean to annihilate. It means to punish. The story of the rich man and Lazarus refutes the conditional immortality of the soul, as well as the references that teaching everlasting punishment of the wicked. The warnings about God's wrath coming upon the unrepentant in the future judgment clearly imply the immortality of all men's souls.

Romans 2:5-6

Matthew 12:41.

The intermediate state for the believer:

2 Corinthians 5:8

Phil. 1:23

Luke 23:43

Luke 16:22,25

The intermediate state for the unbeliever:

Luke 16:22-24

John 8:21

2 Peter 2:9

Christ used the word "gehenna" to describe eternal punishment, synonymous with the lake of fire in Revelation 20:15. The Greek word "Hades" is used of the place of the dead for unbelievers. The rich man lifted up his eyes "in Hades", not in gehenna. The punishment of gehenna awaits the future Great White Throne Judgment.

Is salvation possible after death? This is a false hope many have, called "second probation."

Hebrews 9:27

2 Peter 2:9

Romans 2:12

Hebrews 2:3

What is our victory over death?

Hebrews 2:14-15

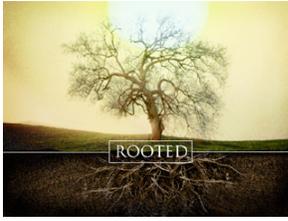
1 Corinthians 15:56-58

Revelation 1:17-18

While the Scriptures represent the intermediate state to be one of conscious joy to the righteous and of conscious pain to the wicked, they also represent this state to be one of incompleteness. The perfect joy of the saints and the utter misery of the wicked begin only with the resurrection and general judgment. (Strong's Systematic Theology)

Why is this important?

1. We must all face the fact of our coming physical death (unless Christ returns for us). Following Paul's example, we should determine to use our personal death to bring glory to God. Phil 1:20 "According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death."
2. As believers we can be assured that death is a doorway into Christ's presence.
3. Unbelievers must be warned that it is only in this life that Christ welcomes sinners to Himself for forgiveness and eternal life.
4. Our culture has trivialized everything, including death. However, death still brings heart wrenching tears of grief and despair at the loss of a loved one or even the report of the deaths of others. Death is a message from God that we were made for eternity. As Ecclesiastes says, 'He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.' (Eccl 3:11)



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

February 6, 2011

Eschatology - What happens when Christ comes back?

Wrong views...

Christ isn't coming back at all.

Christ returned in AD 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem (Full Preterism).

Christ returned in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Amillennialism - Christ will return to earth, judge all mankind, and usher in the eternal state.

Postmillennialism - Christ will not return to earth until He has conquered the world through the gospel. While this takes many forms, those who hold this view believe the world will gradually be evangelized until the whole world is brought under the authority of Jesus Christ. Some who hold this position are called "theonomists" (law of God) and/or "reconstructionists" since they believe the church should work to reconstruct society along the lines of the Mosaic law.

What Scripture teaches...

THE IMMINENT RETURN OF CHRIST - There are many exhortations in the New Testament epistles to look for and be ready for the Lord's return. The epistles clearly teach that Christ could return at any moment. Since Paul didn't know when Christ was going to return, he assumed He might come in his own lifetime! His coming is described by three Greek words in different contexts:

Parousia - His presence

1 Thessalonians 2:19

James 5:7-8

Epiphaneia - His glorious appearing

Titus 2:13

2 Timothy 4:1,8

Apocalypsis - His unveiling or revelation

1 Corinthians 1:7

1 Peter 1:7,13

THE PREMILLENNIAL RETURN OF CHRIST

There are many interpretations regarding the details of the second coming of Christ. Based on literal, historical, and grammatical principles of interpretation (hermeneutics), we believe Christ's return will be premillennial and also pretribulational. This study will not take us into the details of the books of Daniel and Revelation, which are certainly crucial to a right understanding of the end times. Here we will simply look at the broader outline of Christ's return.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST FOR HIS PEOPLE (Pretribulation rapture)

Christ's return will take place in two phases - His return in the air for the church and His return to the earth to bring judgment on the Antichrist and to set up His kingdom.

The rapture of the church -

John 14:1-3

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Revelation 3:10

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

The tribulation period -

Based on Daniel's seventieth week prophesied in Daniel 9:24-27, Christ's warnings to the Jews about an unparalleled time of tribulation in Matthew 24, and the chronological references in Revelation 12:6,14; 13:5. God's purposes for the tribulation period include:

Restoration of Israel

Ezekiel 20:33-40

Daniel 12:1

Jeremiah 30:7-9

Revelation 7:4-8

Redemption of Gentiles - Revelation 7:9-14

Revelation of the Anti-Christ

Matthew 24:15

2 Thessalonians 2:3-10

Revelation 13:1-8

Judgment on the nations - The three series of seven judgments in the book of Revelation - the seals, trumpets, and bowls of wrath. See Revelation 16:1-12

THE RETURN OF CHRIST TO EARTH

Judgment on the Anti-Christ and His armies - Revelation 19:11-21

Judgment of the Goats and Sheep - Matthew 25:31-46

MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

Establishment of the Millennial Kingdom (the promised Davidic Kingdom)

Isaiah 11:1-9

Ezekiel 37:24-28

Luke 1:31-33

Zechariah 14:9-11

Revelation 20:1-6

Romans 11:25-27

Why is this important?

The imminent return and reign of Jesus Christ presents believers with powerful incentives to serve Christ faithfully. Check out these references to see how your life should be impacted by the “blessed hope” of Christ’s return:

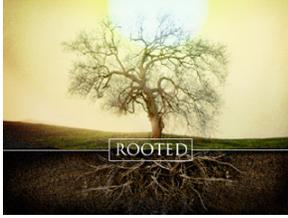
Mark 13:33-37

1 John 2:28

Titus 2:11-14

1 John 3:2-3

2 Peter 3:13-14



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

February 13, 2011

Eschatology - Is there really a hell?

Wrong views...

We have already dealt with many of the wrong views in the lesson “What happens when you die?” Based on a search on the internet on the subject “eternal punishment”, hell is definitely not in favor. There is a concerted effort on the part of many so-called biblical scholars to tone down the biblical teaching on the idea of torment in the afterlife, and especially eternal torment. For example:

Clark Pinnock: “It just does not make sense to say that a God of love will torture people for ever for sins done in the context of a finite life.”

John Stott: “It would be easier to hold together the awful reality of hell and the universal reign of God if hell means destruction and the impenitent are no more.”

Hell is just a state of mind.

Hell is the suffering people experience in this world.

What Scripture teaches... Gehenna (also translated hell at times) and the lake of fire refer to the final place of the damned. For the sake of our study, we will use the word “hell” to refer to the final state of lost people.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE FOR THE LOST - Hades is the temporary place where unsaved people go to await the resurrection and final judgment.

How does Christ describe the lost man’s experience in Hades in Luke 16:22-26?

RESURRECTIONS - The Bible clearly teaches the bodily resurrection of all people. While physical death is the separation of the soul from the body, resurrection is the reuniting of the soul with a resurrected body.

John 5:28-29 speaks of two kinds of resurrections -

Revelation 20:5-6, 12 indicates these resurrections will take place at different times.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT - Revelation 20:7-15

What happens to Satan?

Who sits on the throne?

Who is brought before the throne?

From what were they judged?

How is the lake of fire described in vs. 14?

Who is thrown into the lake of fire? (See Revelation 21:8 for a detailed list)

THE ETERNAL CONDITION OF LOST PEOPLE

How do the following passages describe hell?

Matthew 8:11-12

Matthew 25:30

Matthew 10:28

Matthew 25:41, 46

Matthew 13:41-42

Mark 9:43-48

Matthew 23:33

How do these passages teach the eternal, conscious punishment of lost people?

Matthew 25:46

Revelation 14:9-11

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

Revelation 19:20 & 20:10

“The ceaseless, hopeless, conscious suffering of those who die impenitent, both during the intermediate state before the resurrection and in the final state after the resurrection and judgment, is asserted over and over again in every form, in the most definite language, and with the greatest emphasis possible.... There is nothing in the Scriptures which, even by the most remote implication, suggests that the sufferings of the lost shall ever end.” (A.A. Hodge).

“Again, in this condition thou must be for ever, and that is as sad as all the rest. For if a man were to have all his sins laid to his charge, and communion with the devils, and as much wrath as the great God of heaven can inflict upon him, — I say, if it were but for a time, even ten thousand years, and so end, there would be ground of comfort, and hopes of deliverance: but here is thy misery; this is thy state for ever; here thou must be for ever. When thou lookest about thee, and seest what an innumerable company of howling devils thou art amongst, thou shalt think this again, This is my portion for ever. When thou hast been in hell so many thousand years as there are stars in the firmament, or drops in the sea, or sands on the sea-shore, yet thou hast to lie there for ever. **O this one word, EVER, how will it torment thy soul!**” (John Bunyan, Sermon: *Sighs from Hell, the Groans of a Lost Soul*).

Is God just in punishing sinners forever?

Genesis 18:15

Psalms 96:13

Acts 17:31

Romans 2:2,5-6

Romans 9:14, 22

Hebrews 10:26-31

“The continuous nature of guilt necessitates the endlessness of retribution.... The whole infinite guilt of...sin against God lies upon the sinner at each and every instant of time.... The transgressor at any and every point in his endless existence is infinitely guilty, and

yet cannot cancel his guilt by what he endures at a particular point.” (Shedd, Doctrine of Endless Punishment).

“No theological tenet is more important than eternal retribution to those modern nations which, like England, Germany, and the United States, are growing rapidly in riches, luxury, and earthly power. Without it, they will infallibly go down in that vortex of sensuality and wickedness that swallowed up Babylon and Rome.” (Shedd)

What about people who never heard the gospel?

Romans 1:18-20

Romans 10:13-14

“There is sufficient knowledge for each person after the fall to be criminally liable for sin...they have suppressed the truth they have both received and understood.” (Ron Blue, Bibliotheca Sacra).

One evening at L’Abri someone asked Francis Schaeffer, “What will happen to those who have never heard of Christ?” Everyone around the dinner table waited for the great theologian to deliver a weighty, intellectual answer. None came; instead, he bowed his head and wept. (Blanchard, Whatever Happened to Hell, p. 115).

What about infants and the mentally handicapped?

Some use 2 Samuel 12:22-23 to support the idea that those who die in infancy go to heaven.

The Westminster Confession of Faith says: “Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved.... So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.”

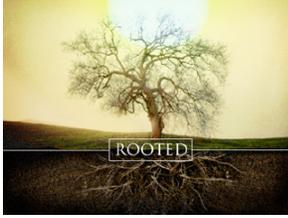
Why is this important?

This doctrine and awful reality is extremely important, since Scripture clearly teaches the eternal, conscious punishment of all those who die outside of Jesus Christ. It is especially important in our day, since the preaching of hell is almost non-existent in churches in America.

Here are several more quotes from W. G. T. Shedd in his excellent book *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment*, written in 1885:

The doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement logically, stands or falls with that of endless punishment. Historically, it has stood or fallen with it. The incarnation of Almighty God, in order to make the remission of sin possible, is one of the strongest arguments for the eternity and infinity of penal suffering.

The unsubmitive, rebellious, defiant, and impenitent spirit prefers hell to heaven.... The lost spirits are not forced into a sphere that is unsuited to them. There is no other abode in the universe which they would prefer to that to which they are assigned, because the only other abode is heaven. The meekness, lowliness, sweet submission to God, and love of him, that characterize heaven, are more hateful to Lucifer and his angels, than even the sufferings of hell. The wicked would be no happier in heaven than in hell.



ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

February 20, 2011

Eschatology - What will heaven be like?

Wrong views...

Heaven is a place where people sit around on clouds strumming harps...booooooring!

The dual compartment theory that says that before Christ accomplished redemption on the cross believers went to a temporary holding place, often referred to as Abraham's bosom or Paradise. There is scant if any biblical evidence for this view. Regarding Ephesians 4:7, Hodge writes: "These captives thus led in triumph may be either the enemies of Christ, Satan, sin, and death, which is the last enemy which shall be destroyed; or his people, redeemed by his power and subdued by his grace."

What Scripture teaches...

According to the Bible there are three heavens:

1. The earth's atmosphere - Genesis 2:19.
2. The starry heavens or outerspace - Matthew 24:29.
3. The third heaven or the presence of God - 2 Corinthians 12:2.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE FOR BELIEVERS

2 Corinthians 5:6-8

Revelation 6:9

THE JUDGMENT AND REWARDS OF BELIEVERS

Romans 14:10-12

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Matthew 5:12

The Bible describes the rewards of believers as crowns:

1 Thessalonians 2:19

2 Timothy 4:8

James 1:12

1 Peter 5:4

Revelation 2:10

Revelation 4:10 indicates what we will do with our crowns when we stand in Christ's presence -

The most wonderful reward from our Lord in that day will be the words recorded in Matthew 25:23 -

HOW IS HEAVEN DESCRIBED?

Psalm 16:11

Hebrews 9:15

Isaiah 57:15

Hebrews 11:13-16

Matthew 8:11-12

Hebrews 12:22-23

Luke 23:43/ 2 Corinthians 12:4

1 Peter 1:4

John 14:2

2 Peter 1:11

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH - Isaiah 65:17; 66:22 and Revelation 21:1 all speak of God creating a new heaven and earth. Whether God will thoroughly purge this present universe or actually create a completely new and different heaven and earth is hard to determine. How does Peter describe the great transition from the old universe to the new one in 2 Peter 3:10-13?

THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM - Revelation 21-22

Vs. 2 - Where does it come from?

Vs. 3 - Where will God be?

Vs. 4; 22:3 - What will no longer be experienced there?

Vs. 6-7, 27b; 22:14, 17 - What is required to live there?

Vs. 8, 27a; 22:15 - Who will be missing?

Vs. 22 - Will there be a temple there?

Vs. 23-25 - How will it be illumined?

22:3-5 - What will God's people do there?

Luke 19:15-19 is a parable but Christ may be hinting that our rewards for faithfulness in this life will be the privilege of greater responsibilities in heaven.

WHAT WILL WE BE LIKE IN HEAVEN?

Luke 20:34-36

Philippians 3:20-21

1 John 3:2

Matthew 17:2 (?)

WHAT WILL BE THE MOST WONDERFUL THING ABOUT HEAVEN?

Revelation 5:9-14 gives us a foretaste -

Heaven wouldn't be heaven without...

Will we recognize one another in heaven?

Numbers 27:12-13

Luke 9:33

Matt. 8:11

MacArthur on Revelation 21-22: "John's description concentrates on the Holy City, which has streets, and walls, and gates. John also mentions a high mountain, water, a stream, and trees. Best of all it is populated with the people of God—real people we will know and with whom we will share eternal fellowship."

Why is this important?

There are only two eternal places -- heaven or hell. Both are eternal, but the contrast is beyond human comprehension. In hell unbelievers will endure the wrath of God forever, without hope of any cessation, knowing they are justly under punishment for their guilt, yet remembering the many times they heard the gospel call to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior. In heaven believers will experience the infinite bliss of God's presence and love and joy, knowing they are there only by the mercy and grace of God in Jesus Christ, now completely perfected in Him, to spend an unending eternity with Christ and all His people. Is anything more important than this subject? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved!" Acts 16:31

Our present earthly life is a mere wisp, a vapor that will quickly evaporate. We will spend an eternity of eternities in the very presence of God and our Lord Jesus Christ and all of God's people. If we were moving to another location in this world, we would want to know as much as possible about it before making the move. We ought to think much about our eternal home.

“Many winters, after the pressures of the Christmas and New Year’s services at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, my family and I would take a four-day vacation to the Pocono mountains in eastern Pennsylvania, vacationing at an immense lodge, beautifully situated on a large mountain estate. We looked forward to this greatly as the vacation days approached. When the time eventually would come, we would drive for about three hours and arrive in the evening as dusk was settling over the mountain landscape. We would park and approach the door. The doormen, who have been there in some cases for twenty or thirty years, would come to greet us and take our bags. Then they would say, “Welcome home! Welcome home!” It was not home (regrettably). It was only a clever device on the part of the lodge to make its guests welcome. But one day we are going to glory where those words will be spoken by our own blessed Lord, the One who has prepared our home for us. “Welcome home!” he will say. And we really will be home. Forever. (James Boice, Foundations of the Christian Faith, final words, p. 720. Dr. Boice was welcomed home by Jesus on Thursday morning, June 15, 2000!).