

Ronald David Putnam's Theology

The Doctrines of Revelation (General & Special), including the Doctrine of Scripture (Bibliology)

God has revealed Himself by both general and special revelation. He is revealed to all of humanity through general revelation, which is expressed in the created order of the universe (Ps. 19:1-6), through nature (Rom. 1:18-20; Job 36:34-37), and the moral law (Ps. 14:1; Rom. 1:19-21). Providentially, He is known throughout history by His provision for basic human needs (Acts 14:15-17). Since God makes Himself known to everyone through general revelation, they are without excuse about the reality of God and His moral commands to which they are accountable (Rom. 2:14-16). While general revelation is non-salvific (Rom. 1:18-23; Eccl. 3:11), it establishes a person's accountability before God and acts as an instrument of judgement before God (Rom. 1:18-2:16) because many humans suppress the truth (Rom. 1:20-21) and replace it with a lie (Rom. 1:25).

God, however, chose to further disclose Himself and any revealed truth about Himself through special revelation for salvific purposes. It is only through His supernatural self-revelation that people understand God's true being and redemptive purposes (Heb. 2:3-4). This occurs through audible speech to individuals (Gen. 3:14-15, 6:13; Jn. 14:23-24), various miraculous acts (Ex. 14:21; Matt. 14:25-29), dreams (Gen. 37:5-9; Matt. 1:20-24), visions (Num. 22:31-35; Dan. 2:19, 31-45; Dan. 7; Rev. 9:17), theopanies (Gen. 18:1-5, Ex. 13:21-22, Lk. 1:11-20), prophets (Isa. 1:1-2; Acts 3:21), apostles (2 Pet. 3:15-16; 1 Jn. 1:1-2), Christ and His ministry of teaching (Jn. 7:15-16), miracles (Mt. 3:16-17), His relationship with God (Jn. 5:36; Jn. 10:38), and through the Holy Spirit inspired authors of the 39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament books of the Bible (1 Cor. 2:6-13; Lk. 24:44-46; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 3:15-16). These books were distinguished from other books for canonicity due to their authorship by a tested and verified prophet and their authenticity.

I believe that all Scripture is special revelation, to which Christ is the living Word (Jn. 1:1-18), and Jesus' teaching is eternal (Mk. 13:31). After Christ's earthly ministry was complete and He ascended into heaven, He gave revelation and authority to the apostles (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 6:7). I also believe that the original written documents in both the Old and New Testaments were inspired and inerrant. Subsequent copies of the original manuscripts may have minor textual variants, but objectively convey the truth of the original manuscripts factually.

The Doctrine of God as Trinity

God is one substance (Deut. 6:4), but exists in three distinct persons as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 5:7; Jn. 14:26, 15:26). Each person is eternal (Gen. 21:33;

1 Tim. 1:17; Jn. 1:1; Heb. 7:3, 9:14), omnipresent (Jer. 23:24; Mt. 28:20; Ps. 139: 7-10), and omnipotent (Mk. 14:36; Mt. 9:6). While not fully comprehensible, Scripture indicates that each person has a specific role from the other, but in complete harmony with the other persons (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5-6). They are co-equal, co-eternal, yet exhibit distinct personalities and consciousness (Matt. 28:19).

There is a subordination with each person of the Trinity, yet in complete harmony. The Father has the primary role over the Son (Rom. 8:3; 1 Cor. 15:23-24) and the Holy Spirit (Gal. 4:6; 1 Cor. 6:19), while the Son has authority over the Holy Spirit (also Gal. 4:6). The Father is the first person of the trinity, He is the originator and creator of all things (Gen. 1:1; 1 Cor. 8:6); the Son (Christ) is the mediator and redeemer (Rom. 1:5-6; Eph. 1:7); and the Holy Spirit is the one who completes the work to be performed (Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11), including salvation (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Titus 3:5-7), and sanctification, which convicts us of sin and promotes holiness (Eph. 1:13-14).

Jesus, who is the Son of God (Jn. 5:18), is not only the mediator and redeemer, but is the exact representation of God's being (Heb. 1:3) and is in the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). Christ has had eternal existence with God (Jn. 1:1), and made all things (Jn. 1:3), and carried out His atoning duties, to which the Father foreordained (Acts 2:22-24).

The Doctrine of God the Father --Nature, Attributes (Theology Proper)

The Scriptures reveal the essential characteristics and attributes of God (Ps. 145). His many attributes work in concert with one another and are not divisive in nature. Rather, they work in complete harmony.

God, in His essence, is an invisible (Job. 9:11; Jn. 4:24; 1 Tim. 6:16), self-existent being, who is not contingent on anything, but independent and transcends both the world and universe (Ex. 3:14; Jn. 5:26). He is holy and without sin (Ex. 15:11; 1 Jn. 1:5), eternal (Heb. 1:8), immutable in that He is never changing in His character (Ps. 102:24-27; 147:5; Heb. 1:11-12), omniscient in that He is all knowing (Is. 40:13-14), imperishable, incorruptible, and unbegotten (Heb. 2:10). He is also omnipresent, with no limitations (1 Kings 8:27), omnipotent and not subject to anyone (Matt. 19:26; Eph. 1:21-22).

God the Father is a relational member of the trinity (Mt. 28:2) and is actively involved in the lives of human beings (Jn. 14-16). Individually, He discloses Himself to the Psalmists (Pss. 78, 105, et al.), prophets (Is. 6:1-5; Ezek. 1), apostles (Mt. 17:1-8), to His elect by listening to their prayers (Lk. 1:13), and He forgives sins (Acts 3:19). He worked on behalf of Christians and non-Christians alike by creating the world

(Gen. 1:1) and by providing nourishing food and water to each individual (Acts 14:17), and by supplying the basic elements to life (Lk. 12:14-28). Truly, He is a personal God (Jer. 3:19).

Emotionally, has God is long-suffering, righteous (Jer. 12:1), and shows His love to a thousand generations (Deut. 7:9), just to name a few. Intellectually God is unlimited and knows everyone's thoughts (1 Chron. 28:9), secret devotions (Mt. 6:4), needs (Mt. 6:8), and actions (1 Sam. 2:3, Jn. 5:1-12). He has a righteous anger towards sin and judges all people fairly (Ex. 6:7; Jn. 3:16). His love for the elect is evident in that it is expressed to people regardless of their merit (Ex. 34:6-7) this love is further demonstrated by the work of Christ on the cross (Rom. 5:8).

The Doctrine of Christ (Christology) -- His Person (Humanity & Deity); Life (Incarnation/Kenosis); Work (Crucifixion & Resurrection)

Jesus is the second person of the trinity and equal to God in all His attributes. Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of all things (Col. 1:15-17). Due to the fallen nature of human beings, God the Father sent His Son to earth to redeem human beings (Jn. 3:16; Gal. 4:4-5). Christ was the pre-existing Word that united with a sinless human nature and became flesh (Jn. 1:1-14). He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to the virgin Mary (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-24). Throughout eternity and during His life and ministry on earth, Jesus was without sin (1 Jn. 3:5; Jn. 8:46). Although Christ left the comforts of heaven, He was still completely God here on earth (Phil. 2; Jn. 8:29; 10:30).

By Jesus freely allowing Himself to be incarnated into human form (Phil. 2:6-8), He emptied Himself of many of His divine attributes (Phil. 2:7), revealing His divinity on occasions that had redemptive purposes (Jn. 11:38-45). Because He was completely human, He experienced the full range of emotions as all humans, which included tiredness (Jn. 4:6), sorrow (Jn. 11:35), joy (Jn. 15:11), pain, and death. He also grew in wisdom and knowledge (Lk. 2:40), prayed (Mk. 1:35), and enjoyed social gatherings (Jn. 2:1-11). Being completely human, He was tempted in all the same ways that each one of us is tempted, but He was just because He never succumbed to sin (Heb. 4:15). Both John and Peter could find no sin or blemish in His life (1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:19). Furthermore, Christ claimed to be omnipresent (Mt. 28:20), our spiritual thirst quencher (Jn. 4:14), sustenance (Jn. 6:48), light by which he guides and directs us (Jn. 8:12), and forgiver of sins (Mk. 2:9-10).

As the Messiah (Jn. 1:41), Jesus was the atoning sacrifice (Lk. 19:10; Jn. 3:16) since salvation could not occur by any solely human endeavor (Rom. 10:13). Without Christ, humanity truly deserved physical and spiritual death (Rom. 6:23). Jesus was the once-and-for-all substitutionary sacrificial atonement (Rom. 3:25-26), which

occurred through His death on the cross.

After His death He was buried (Jn. 19:38-42), but because He was without sin (and also due to His divinity), He was resurrected on the third day and appeared to several individuals (Lk. 24:1-13; Jn. 20). His sacrificial death was legitimized by His resurrection so all who believe in Christ would have hope (1 Peter 1:20-21); otherwise, the Christian faith could be based on myth (1 Cor. 15).

After appearing to different individuals, Jesus ascended to be with the Father in heaven (Lk. 24:51). Shortly after His ascension, He sent the Holy Spirit to empower His disciples and followers (Acts 2:1-4). Since His ascension, Christ has acted as our High Priest (Heb. 6:19-20), and intercessor for all Christians (1 Jn. 2:1; Heb. 7:25), head of the church (Col. 1:18), and exalted to the highest place (Phil. 2:6-11). As our Savior, He will return a second time to retake His earthly rule (Mt. 26:64; Rev. 19:11-20:6).

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit -- Personality, Deity, Work (Pneumatology)

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity and has eternally co-existed with the Father and Son (Matt. 28:19; John 15:26). Since the Holy Spirit is also fully God, He also possesses all of the same divine attributes as the Father (Ps. 139; 1 Cor. 2:9-16). Being distinct in function, the Spirit is subordinate to both the Father and the Son, but equal (Jn. 15:26). He also worked in the life and ministry of Jesus (Mk. 1:12), with the inauguration of the church (Acts 2), and permanently in the lives of Christians (Rom. 8:1-17).

Besides His divinity, He has a multifaceted role in the world and with believers. Within the world He works through believers to communicate the gospel message to unbelievers (Matt. 28:19) and convicts the world of their sin (Rom. 16:8-11). All those who accept Jesus Christ receive the Spirit (Jn. 7:37-39), and He works as our comforter, counselor, advocate, teacher, reminder (Rom. 8:1-27; John. 14:16; 26; 15:26). He is the power by which God controls the complexities of life (Isa. 30:1; 63:14), He indwells all of God's people (Hag. 2:5; Isa. 63:11; Ex. 31:3), He gives endowments of special tasks (Acts 4:8-9), He is wise (Isa. 40:13), He hates sin and rebellion (Isa. 63:10), He convicts us of our sin (Jn. 16:8), He is holy (Ps. 143:10), He teaches (Jn.14:26), He can be tempted (Acts 5:3-4), resisted (7:51), and grieved (Eph. 4:30).

The Holy Spirit has been named in the Bible as Wind/breath (Gen. 2:7, Job 32:8), a dove (Matt. 3:16), oil (Lk. 4:18), Fire (Matt. 3:11), Living Water (Isa. 44:3; Jn. 4:14), and our deposit for every Christians salvation (2 Cor. 1:22), just to name a few.

The Doctrines of Angels (Angelology) and Demons (Demonology)

God created angels (Ps. 148:2,5; Col. 1:16) to bring Him glory by completing His purposes here on earth. These angels are spiritual beings (Heb. 1:14) who praise and worship God (Heb. 1:6), do not marry (Matt. 22:30), reside in heaven (Lk. 22:43), but minister here on earth to those who are to inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). They occasionally appear and interact with individuals (Acts 12:7-15), guide them towards providential encounters (Acts 8:26-39), and communicate with humans (Zec. 1:19). They provide encouragement and protection (Acts 27:23-24), they are intelligent (1 Pet. 1:12) and very powerful (2 Pet. 2:11). This power is evident when the angels of heaven sound the trumpets and pour out the bowls of wrath in the future (Rev. 8:2-11:19; Rev. 15:1-16:21). In the end times they will help gather the elect (Matt. 24:31) and shall accompany Christ's return (Mk. 8:38).

Angels also have free choice and have the capacity to sin and fall from God's glory because of their disobedience (2 Pet. 2:4). Fallen angels are called evil or unclean spirits (Mk. 5:1-2) or demons (Mk. 5:12). For those angels who are disobedient, Hell has been reserved for them (Matt. 25:41). These fallen angels are led by Satan (Matt. 25:41), who has many names, which include the enemy (Matt. 13:39), the evil one (1 Jn. 2:13), deceiver (Rev. 12:9), Beelzebub (Matt. 12:24), and the tempter (Matt. 4:3), just to name a few.

Satan is a very powerful being who is cunning (1 Pet. 5:8), disguises himself as an angel of light in an effort to deceive people (2 Cor. 11:14), brings sickness (Heb. 2:14), and destroys and kills (Job 1; Rev. 20:7-10). Satan and his demons perpetually fight against God and His redeeming purposes for humankind (Col. 1:12-13). And while God allows Satan to be the ruler of this world (Jn. 12:31), God still determines the amount of control Satan is allowed to have (Job 1:12). At the end of the thousand year millennium, Satan and his demons will be cast into the lake of fire, never to return and torture the earth again (Rev. 20:10).

The Doctrines of Creation, Humanity (Anthropology), and Sin (Hamartiology)

In His providence, He has chosen to create and sustain all things out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), which includes the universe, heaven, and the earth (Gen. 1:1). The creation of the universe was produced by what scientists refer to as the Big Bang. This action was an instantaneous act of God's free will to bring into existence (*bara*) that which was not there before. After the creation of the universe, I believe God created the earth in six epochs (*yom*) of time. Each epoch was continuing in nature until the specific task was completed by God. Each epoch is labeled as a day for our understanding (Gen. 1). Each epoch was chronological, but overlapped at various

times. Each epoch was completed in order of the chronology.

On the sixth day, God made (*bara*) human beings in His image and made Him from the dust of the ground (Gen. 1:24-31). Metaphysically, human are real, self-conscious, active beings, who have moral and intellectual capacity (Matt. 12:33-35). Human beings consist of two parts: an outer material body, which is visible, and an inner immaterial spirit/soul, which is invisible and has an everlasting existence (2 Cor. 4:16; Job 4:19); the soul can never be killed (Matt. 10:28). The body itself is not to be used for sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:13), but to be the temple for the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).

The person is not a trichotomy of body, soul and spirit, but a dichotomy (Matt. 10:28). There is no distinction between soul and spirit, but rather, they are a unity of the immaterial self.

After God made Adam and Eve, they were deceived by Satan, rebelled against God and entered into lives of sin and spiritual alienation from God (Gen. 3:1-7; 22-24). This Fall transformed the entire race into a state of depravity (Jn. 8:34) resulting in alienation and condemnation before God, which resulted in physical and spiritual death (Rom. 3; Eph. 5:6, 14; Rom. 8:10; Jn. 5:29). Yet, being made in God's image, human beings have always had the capacity to function intellectually, morally, emotionally, volitionally, and relationally (Deut. 6:4-5), but are still unregenerate and unable to please God (Rom. 2:4-5). At physical death an individual's spirit/soul separates from the body (Gen. 35:18-19) and will immediately go to an intermediate state. The righteous to paradise, the damned to Hades. At the second return of Christ to earth, the elect in Christ will receive their resurrected bodies and reign with him on earth (Rev. 20:12-15), while at the end of Christ's thousand year reign, the damned will receive their resurrected bodies and face their judgement before the throne of God and then be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8).

The Doctrines of Salvation (Soteriology) and Sanctification, including the Nature of the Gospel and Issues of Social Concern

Because God loved us and since human beings need redemption due to their fallen nature, God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be the atoning sacrifice (Jn. 3:16) so people had an opportunity to be reconciled with the Father. Jesus took upon Himself the penalty of sin (Rom. 3:23-26; Isa. 53:3-7) for all those who believe in Him. Christ's sinless life and subsequent death on the cross allowed Him to be the substitutionary sacrifice for all those who believe (Heb. 7:22-8:13). This was a one-time event for all history (Heb. 9:12). When Jesus fulfilled His obligation, the covenant was sealed forever (Jn. 19:30).

While sin continues to pervade every individual, the ministry of the Holy Spirit

continues to actively work in drawing individual to Himself (Jn. 10:26-28; 1 Thess. 1:4-5) through the proclamation of the Gospel (Acts 13:48-49). This is a joint work of God's drawing a particular person who then willfully chooses to accept Christ as his or her Savior (1 Thes. 1:9-10).

Due to the depravity of the human condition (Gen. 3; John 8:34), salvation and reconciliation cannot be achieved outside of faith in Christ as the Son of God (Jn. 1:1-3; Rom. 3). For an individual to truly be reconciled with God (Rom. 3:23-25), the person needs to acknowledge their depravity and repent from their sins (Mk. 1:5). Without a complete denial of self and turning to Christ, which is more than assenting to the facts, a non-believer still is condemned in their transgressions (Jn. 3:18). However, once a person does accept Christ as his or her Savior, the Father can now look up the person with pleasure, because Christ took away God's wrath (Rom. 3:25). Subsequently, eternal life is then provided to that individual (Jn. 3:36; Rom. 5:21).

At the moment of justification, the person is renewed, and he or she is no longer a slave to sin (Rom. 6:6), but a slave to God (Rom. 6:22). By the power of the Holy Spirit, a believer then grows in sanctification by turning away from sin to become more holy (1 Thes. 4:3-8). A few of the gifts which are bestowed upon Christians are those as teacher, leadership, prophesy, encouragement, healing, administration, etc. (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12).

The order of salvation is as follows: Election (Rom. 9:11-13; 11:5-6), verbal calling (Jn. 7:37-38), effectual calling (Matt. 22:1-14; Acts 16:14), belief in the Gospel (Jn. 3:15-18), repentance (Acts 2:38), conversion (Rom. 10:9), regeneration (Jn. 3:3), justification (Psa. 32:1-2; Rom. 8:1), sanctification (2 Thess. 2:13), perseverance (1 Peter 1:5; Rom. 8:30), and glorification (Heb. 9:15; Rom. 8:30).

The Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology), including Baptism, The Lord's Supper, Offices in the Church, and Gender Roles

A new and more glorious covenant was made due to the workings of Christ (2 Cor. 3:4-18). It is no longer based on the law, but by faith in Christ (2 Cor. 3:4-6). The Church is the visible manifestation and instrument that God uses to fulfill His purposes of reconciling people to Himself (Acts. 19:8; Col. 1:13). The church officially began at Pentecost after Christ ascended back to heaven and He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within every believer (Acts 2:1-4). The Church has continued to grow through our command to make disciples of every ethnic group in the world (Matt. 28:16-20). It is a holy institution, a living organization that is united with Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18). Within this body, each individual has been given a minimum of one spiritual gift so the body of Christ may be edified (1 Cor. 12). Membership into the body of Christ should include the outward observation of dying with Christ by undergoing baptism after they have accepted Christ as a believer (Rom 6:1-7) and by

partaking of the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of Christ's work on the cross and so Christians can be edified and encouraged (1 Cor. 11:17-34).

Since the Church is an organization, it has many different positions, which should be filled by qualified individuals, which is based on maturity and spiritual gifting. Some leadership positions are apostles, prophets, teachers, elders, and deacons (1 Cor. 12:27-31; 1 Tim. 3). However, every person is vital to the body of Christ and should use his or her spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12). Because the Church is a holy institution, everyone should seek to live holy lives. However, those who are called to be elders, deacons, and teachers must surely be above reproach and be held at a higher level of accountability (1 Tim. 3; Js. 3:1).

It is my perspective that men and women are equal in being, without distinction (Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1-2; Gal. 3:26-28). There should not be favoritism (Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 2:11; Jas. 2:8-9), because all believers are filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17-18); are inclusive in the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 5:10); and are gifted equally with the spiritual gifts and talents that were given to them by God at conversion (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col. 3:9-11). Thus, there should be no reason that women should not be allowed to pursue most, if not all, of the positions within the church since all have been given the equal spiritual gifts (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12), been called to be a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9), all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17-18), equal in being (Gal. 3:16-28), and since we are not to show favoritism (Js. 2:8-9).

The Doctrine of Last Things (Eschatology), including Personal Eschatology and God's Plan for the End of History

The second return of Christ will be personal and visible (Acts 1:11). All nations of the earth will see Him coming on the clouds with power and glory (Matt. 24:30). When Jesus returns, He will be accompanied by angels (Matt. 16: 27-28), the dead in Christ will rise, and some of us will be changed without experiencing death and meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:16; Matt. 16:27-28). Scripture references that no one will know that exact moment when Christ will return, except the Father (Matt. 24:36), but there will be various signs that precede Christ's return (Matt. 24:15). His return will be unexpected (Matt. 24:42-44), it will be immediate (Matt. 24:44-50), and it is not very far away (1 Pet. 4:7). Christians are commanded to be watchful (Matt. 24:42, 45-50), patient (Js. 5:7-8), and continue to engage in ministry (Matt. 25:14-30). While there is much controversy which surrounds the issue of whether the Church will be present during the tribulation, it is apparent that the Church will be around for at least a portion of the tribulation (Matt. 24:22). The tribulation will be seven years (Dan. 9:20-27), out of which the antichrist will emerge and make a covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:24-27). In the middle of the seven years the antichrist will proclaim himself to be God in the temple (2 Thess. 2:4) and launch in persecution (Matt.

24:15), but those who prevail will be blessed and receive their salvation (Dan. 12:11-13). During this tribulation period, God's wrath will be poured out upon the unrighteous (Dan. 8:19; 2 Thess. 1:7-8; Rev. 6:16-17; 14:10; 16:19). But Christians may be either protected from God's wrath by meeting him up in the air and being given imperishable bodies (1 Cor. 15:42, 52-54) or being spiritually protected (Dan. 12:11-13; Rom. 5:9; 2 Pet. 2:6-9; 2 Thess. 2:1-3).

Following the return of Christ, He will establish a literal thousand year reign on earth prior to the final act in the age to come (Rev. 20:1-5). The millennium will begin with Christ's powerful return to earth (Matt. 24:30). He will eliminate the antichrist and imprison Satan (Rev. 20:1-2). During this time, there will be peace among the nations (Isa. 2:2-5), Christ will rule over the entire world (Phil. 2:10-11), and the elect will rule together with Christ (Rev. 20:5).

As mentioned above, at physical death an individual's spirit/soul separates from the body (Gen. 35:18-19) and will immediately go to an intermediate state. The righteous to paradise, the damned to Hades. At the second return of Christ to earth, the elect in Christ will receive their resurrected bodies and reign with him on earth (Rev. 20:12-15), while at the end of Christ's thousand year reign, the damned will receive their resurrected bodies and face their judgement before the throne of God and then be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8).

GOD: AN ACTIVE PERSONAL SPIRIT

It is my belief that God cannot be fully known or understood by human beings, however, God does allow each of us to have an understanding about Himself. I believe God, in His essence, is invisible (Job 9:11, 23:8; John 4:24; 1 Tim. 6:16), personally, He is a separate individual (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 104; Jn. 1:1), and relationally, He is actively involved in our lives (Ruth; Is. 51:15; Jn. 6:44; Acts 17). He also makes Himself evident to us through His many attributes. Although these attributes will be discussed further in the next section, a few of God's attributes are as follows: He is holy, eternal (Heb. 1:8), immutable in that He is never changing (Ps. 147:5; Heb. 1:11-12), omniscient in that He is all-knowing (Is. 40:13-14), imperishable, incorruptible, independent, unbegotten (Heb. 2:10), unchanging in His character (Ex. 3:14; Ps. 102:26-27; 1 Sam. 15:25; Js. 1:17), and all sufficient in Himself (Ex. 3:1-6). He also has a full range of emotions and feelings (Gen. 6:6; Numb. 11:10; Deut. 12:31; Exod. 20:4-5). Some of these emotions include compassion (Pss. 103:13, 111:4), jealousy (Ps. 78:58; Nah. 1:2), anger (Job 9:13; Isa. 5:25), wrath (Job 21:20), grief (Isa. 63:10), mercy, and love.

God also makes Himself known as a relational member of the Trinity (Mt. 28; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4) and with His engagements and His involvement in the lives of human beings (Jn. 14-16). Biblical examples of such individuals are Adam (Gen. 1:27, 2:7), Abraham (Gen. 11:27-25:11), Isaac (Gen. 25:19-36:43), Jacob (Gen. 25:19-36:43), and Moses (Ex. 3:1-6). God also makes Himself known through His names (Ex. 3:13-15; Deut. 32:4; Is. 52:6), through titles (Isa. 1:4, 3:17, 7:7; Jer. 6:6; Rom. 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:1), and through His character attributes (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 32:4, 15, 18 et al.).

His active spirit is seen both individually and corporately. Individually, He discloses Himself with the Psalmists (Pss. 78, 105, 106, 136), prophets (Is. 6:1-5; Ezek. 1:1-28), apostles (Mt. 17:1-8), to His elect by listening to their prayers (Lk. 1:13), giving gifts to those who ask (Lk. 11:11-13), he works on behalf of the oppressed (Lk. 18:7-8), and He forgives sins (Acts 3:19). To unsaved individuals he makes Himself known within their hearts and by evidently showing Himself within the world in which we live (Rom. 1:18 et al.)

Corporately, He actively works on behalf of the Christian and non-Christian alike by the creation of the world (Gen. 1:1, Acts 14:15) and by bringing food and water for each individual (Acts 14:17), and by supplying the basic elements to life (Lk. 12:14-28). Thus, I believe that God is definitely Spirit (1 John 4:24) and He clearly is the sustainer and the light of the world (1 John 1:5). Through His actions we can visibly determine that God is the complete essence of love (1 John 4:8).

Because God is invisible and because of on-going spiritual warfare, there is an assortment of distorted views concerning God. There is pantheistic idealism that suggests that God is some kind of "Spirit of the universe," which I believe includes the majority of Buddhists, Deists, Process theologians, and a multitude of other beliefs. By embracing tolerance and pluralism, you diminish a correct and healthy understanding of God.

GOD'S MANY-SPLENDORED CHARACTER

I believe that God is intelligent and all-knowing. He is emotional in that He is long-suffering and compassionate with all sinners. He is also volitional in that He can do what He wants to complete.

Intellectually, God is unlimited by space and time, and He is wise. Consequently, God has complete knowledge of each person's thoughts (1 Chron. 28:9; Prov. 24:12), secrets devotions (Mt. 6:4, 6, 18), needs (Mt. 6:8), actions (1 Sam. 2:3; Ps. 90:8; Job 31:4), present going-ons (2 Kings 19:27), and future events (Ex. 9:18-20; Isa. 42:9). He knows all of the world's events before they transpire (Dan. 2).

Ethically and emotionally, God is righteous (Ezra 9:15; Neh. 9:8; Jn. 17:25) and just in His decisions. Through His righteousness, God is consistent in His holy will and character (Jer. 12:1; Dan. 9:7, 14) and He shows His love by keeping a covenant of love to a thousand generations to those who love Him and keep His commands (Deut. 7:9, 4:31; Gen. 9:16; Ex. 2:24, 20:26, Num. 14:18-19). Nonetheless, He hates sin (James 1:13-14) and He gives to each person what he or she is due pursuant to their actions (Mic. 7:9; Nah. 1:3; Mt. 25:14-29). He also becomes angry at evil (Ex. 32:10-12; Ps. 45:7) and becomes discontented with people's actions and decisions (Num. 11). Nonetheless, He is merciful (Deut. 4:31), patient, and slow to anger (Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Joel 2:13; Jnh. 4:2). Through His justice, He will give to each of us according to what we have done with our lives (Heb. 4:13).

Volitionally, God is free to do whatever He chooses to be appropriate (Gen. 1:1, 2:6-7, 3:15, 12:1-3). He is also omnipotent in that nothing is impossible with God. To our benefit and out of pure love for us, He gave us the ability to be saved through His son Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:10; Jn. 3:16).

Unfortunately, many different religions make their own truth claims, which is based on their own theology. When all is said and done, this is simple relativism, which means that truth is judged by their own criteria. We must be careful not to fall into this belief ourselves, and to instruct others that truth is subjective because God hates evil and idolatry. For God hates those who call evil good and good evil (Isa. 5:20).

GOD'S UNITY INCLUDES THREE PERSONS

It is my belief that God is one in substance (Deut. 6:4), but He has three distinct persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7; John 14:26, 15:26). Each person is eternal (Gen. 21:33; 1 Tim. 1:17; John 1:1, 8:58; Heb. 7:3, 9:14), omnipresent (Jer. 23:24; Mt. 28:20; Ps. 139:7-10), and omnipotent (Mk. 14:36; Mt. 9:6; Lk. 1:35). Each person has a specific role, and acts independent of the other, but in complete harmony with the other persons (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5-6; 1 Cor. 6:16, 12:12; Eph. 5:31).

It is apparent that there is a triune relationship within the Scriptures. In the Old Testament we see glimpses of the three persons, but the Trinity is prominent in the New

Testament. In the Old Testament, God's unity is suggested with the use of plural pronouns (Gen. 1:26, 3:22, 11:7; Isa. 6:8), plural verbs (Gen. 35:7), the use of the threefold use of His name (Num. 6:24-26).

The Father also makes Himself known through His actions and voice (Gen. 1:1; Mt. 3:16-17; Mt. 17:1-8; Rom. 1:7; Eph. 1:17). Jesus is confirmed as the second person by testimony (Acts 2:14-40; Phil. 2:6), through prophecy (Isa. 45:23), as is stated in the Psalms (Ps. 45:6-7), and in a multitude of other texts discussing Christ's eternal relationship with the Trinity prior to His taking human form (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4) and after taking human form (Heb. 1:8-9). I also believe that the Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Trinity is invisible (Jn. 14:17), eternal (Jn. 14:16), omniscient (Jn. 14:26), and true (Jn. 14:17). The Holy Spirit is seen clearly through the entire book of Acts and in the writings of the apostle Paul and John (2 Cor. 3:17-18; Jn. 10:30).

There is a subordination with each person of the Trinity. The Father has the primary role over the Son (Rom. 8:3,1; 1 Cor. 15:24, 28; Phil. 2:7-8) and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1 Cor. 6:19; Gal. 4:6), while the Son has precedence over the Holy Spirit (Gal. 4:6). I also believe that with each role, the Father is the originator and creator of things (1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 2:8, 3:15), the Son is the mediator and redeemer (Rom. 1:5; Eph. 1:7, 2:13, 18; Tit. 3:6), and the Holy Spirit sanctifies and is the one who completes the work to be performed (Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:18, 22; 2 Thess. 2:13).

Alternatively, many religions will not accept the multiplicity of God, but if they do, there is often a problem with the Son as the second person of the Trinity. Gnostics, Arians, Socinians, and Deists don't accept Jesus as the eternal Son of God. Alternatively, they believe Jesus was adopted by God and the Holy Spirit was the main influence on Him. This is very dangerous position, because I believe salvation comes through the belief that the Son alone is the Son of God and the sacrifice for all sin.

GOD'S GRAND DESIGN FOR HUMAN HISTORY

It is my belief that God is the originator, author, producer, and sustainer of life (Gen. 1:3, 6, 14, 22, 20, 24, 26). As the creator of life, He enjoys it (Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) and has a specific purpose for His entire plan (Mt. 6:10). This plan is singular (Eph. 1:9-11), it is inclusive in that it embraces all things (Eph. 1:11; Rom. 8:28), and it is eternal (Eph. 1:9). Nonetheless, I believe that God's actions, intentions, and plans are both visible (2 Sam. 7:12-16) and hidden (Gen. 37 et al.), and they are not fully understood by humans (Job 42:3). I also believe that God used the prophets of the Old Testament to explain God's divine plan for the future (Isa. 14:26).

God is not the author of evil (1 Jn. 1:5), but because God's plan allows free will to each individual (Eph. 1:9), evil has been the result of human's fallen condition. Additionally, God also gave each person the free will to make decision to love or reject Him (Ex. 4:21, 7:3, 9:12 et al.). However, with God's foreknowledge, He knew man would rebel. Thus, through His attributes of love, mercy and grace, He implemented a grand design to redeem any person who acknowledged that Jesus' suffering, sacrificial death, and

resurrection was the means to reconciliation and salvation (Mt. 16:21; Lk. 24:7, 26, 44; Acts 3:18, 17:3; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:9; 1 Peter 1:20) . God continues to reconcile the world by the proclamation of the gospel to the entire world by the Church (Mk. 13:10). Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, God gave Him the power as the judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42).

I also believe that God receives no joy in the death of any person (Mt. 18:14), but through His love, He will bless and uplift those who love Him. He will also punish and curse those who rebel against Him (Ps. 43:2; 44:9, 23; 60:1; Isa. 14:24-25, 26:21; Jer. 50:45; Mt. 25:31-46) and those who refuse to believe Christ is the way to reconciliation and redemption (Jn. 3:16; Col. 1:18-20, 2:9-10).

It is my conclusion that God ultimately wants to unite heaven and earth by having Christ as the head (Eph. 1:10). He wants all people to be reconciled to Him. Unfortunately, many pagans, Liberals, and Deists believe that each person is the master of his or her own life. God either does not exist, or supernaturally does not want to be involved in our lives. Sadly, many of these people believe that the above-mentioned views are an obstacle to freedom, creativity and growth of the individual.

The Origin of the World and Humanity

It is my belief that God has always existed and will continue to exist for all eternity (Ps. 55:19; Prov. 8:24). It is during this time period that He has chosen to create and sustain all things out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), which includes the universe, the heavens, and the earth (Gen. 1:1). The creation of the universe was produced from the Big Bang, as it is frequently labeled in the market place. Genesis 1:1 plainly depicts this as an instantaneous act of God's free will, by the use of the Hebrew word *bara*, which means 'bringing into existence,' emphasizes an immediacy rather than an evolutionary process.

After the creation of the universe, I believe God created the earth in six epochs of time, which He has chosen to label as days for our understanding. Each of these epochs were continuing in nature until the specific task was completed by God. Each epoch is as follows:

Day One (Gen. 1:2-5): There was an absence of light prior to this first day, but the Spirit of God who was hovering over the waters, was the Holy Spirit. (1:2; Deut. 32:11). The laws of entropy, which regulate forms of light, heat, and energy, may have been used in contracting gas clouds to a point that they began to heat and glow. This may have been the distinction between day and night.

Day Two (Gen. 1:6-8): During this day, God created the sky, where God made (*asah*) the earth's atmosphere from the water, which acts as our life-support system in a multitude of ways. This atmosphere provides water, oxygen, and carbon dioxide for the sustenance of life, while protecting the earth from harmful ultraviolet rays and regulating the earth's temperature.

Day Three (Gen. 9-13): By the command of God, He supernaturally made the waters separate in an effort to divide waters into seas, oceans, and dry land. This separation allowed God to produce seed-bearing plants and trees in order to populate the earth with vegetation.

Day Four (Gen. 14-19): There was the simultaneous development of the sun, moon, and uniformity of the solar system. When God finished making the sun, the earth perfectly aligned itself naturally with the sun's gravitational pull and began rotating the earth on its axis. When this process was complete, the earth received her light and darkness. During the backside of the earth, it allowed it to see the stars in the solar system.

Day Five (Gen. 1:20-23): God created (*bara*) birds and fish which were to multiply and populate the earth, according to their kind.

Day Six (Gen. 1:24-31): God made (*asah*) living creatures according to their kinds, and He instantly made (*bara*) man in His image from the dust of the ground. There was no opportunity for evolution, like other animals and wildlife, pursuant to their kind. Instead, man was made in the image of His creator.

Day Seven (Gen. 2:1-3): God rested (sabat) on this day and made it holy.

The meaning of day (yom) in the Scripture commonly designates days as longer than literal twenty-four hour periods of time (Gen. 29:14; Lev. 25:8; Josh. 24:7; 2 Chron. 15:3). Thus, I believe that each day mentioned in the Bible was an epoch. I do believe, the days were chronological, continuing, and overlapping, at various times. However, each day, or epoch, was completed in order of their chronology. Outside of the creation of man, who was made in God's image, I see evidence of micro-evolution, where plant, tree, and animal life were able to multiply according to their kind (Min), but again, they could not evolve outside of God's ordination.

Knowing that God created the universe, and that He is sovereign and all powerful, we should worship Him with all of our hearts and give thanks for His continual sustenance. We should also be good stewards of the earth, practice the Sabbath as we reflect upon His goodness.

Existence Under Providential Direction

Providence is God's wonderful, glorious, and powerful act of creation and continued sustenance and preservation of the world and universe. He continues to sustain everything for the specific purpose of achieving his pre-ordained goals and objectives, which is seen in nature and throughout human history (Gen. 8:21-22; Acts 17:28).

Due to the laws of nature, we have an awareness, through statistical probabilities, how God will respond to a particular situation. For example through nature, God impersonally works by bringing us rain for our fields (Ps. 147:8). Through time, we have been able to determine appropriate weather patterns and growing seasons. Yet, God also works through personal causes, where individuals make choices that affect their environment (Rom. 8:20). These actions by God allow human beings to make rational and logical decisions based on these laws of nature. Without God's natural order, it would be impossible for us to live outside a life of chaos.

To go into greater detail concerning personal causes, God's permissive will allows individuals the free will to make individual and corporate choices through time (kairos) while fulfilling God's will. Regenerated individuals (people who accept Christ as their Lord and Savior) are called to help in His redemptive purposes on earth through an ongoing relationship with Him, sharing His value system, and participating in His goals of redeeming the world for Christ (Matt. 28:16-20). However, due to God's allowing us the freedom to choose as individuals, the unregenerate person and our disobedience (sin and evil) leave negative ramifications that affect our lives and world.

Therefore, God providentially promotes good and restrains evil by encouraging social institutions, such as the family and nations. The family provides a stable environment to develop personal relationships, and promote faithfulness, commitment, security, stability, and love (Gen. 2:24).

God also ordained nations (Gen. 10:1-32) in an attempt to restrain evil. In an attempt to have peoples scatter, He caused linguistic differentiations (Gen. 11:5-9). It was through the development of these nations that "God authorized these nations to protect their citizens, promote justice, and restrain evil by wise legislation and equitable judicial decisions." (Rom. 13:1-5) (Lewis and Demarest, 2:100A).

However, due to the fallen nature of man, moral evil exists (Amos 5:14-15; Js. 5:1-10). This sin originated by the misuse of the free will that was given to individuals (Rom. 5:12-18; 2 Cor. 11:3). Although God is long-suffering and patient, He hates and adamantly abhors individuals who are rebellious and sinful.

Furthermore, there is the ever-present evil forces of Satan and his demons, who are fallen angels from heaven. They are God's fallen created beings that promote deception and destruction, and who perpetually fight against God's redeeming purposes (Col. 1:12-13). Individuals that are either influenced by these demonic forces or who naturally rebel against God exchange the truth of God for a lie (Rom. 1:21-27), and are filled with every kind of wickedness, that are the antithesis of God's character and value system (Rom. 1:28-31). Thus, to insure against these forces of evil, Christians are called to test the spirits to see whether they are from God or not (1 Jn. 4:1).

Although this spiritual battle is on-going, it must be understood that God is still supreme, and Jesus is ruler of all because He has redeemed us through His sacrificial death, which was done for the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13-16). Until Christ returns for His church, puts an abrupt end to evil, and reestablishes a throne of righteousness and justice (Rev. 19:11 et al.), God will continue in providentially working in redemptive and renewing purposes to accomplish His goals. This is often completed through miracles and prayer.

Miracles are used to overcome evil; authenticate the claims of Christ, which are seen in through the testimonies of the Bible; and by continuing to build and preserve the church in violent times (Acts). Prayer is a powerful vehicle which God has ordained to effectively promote change in the world through the cooperative effort of Him and Christians (Js. 5:16).

Whether it is through laws of nature, the universe, time, human decisions, corporate (families, churches, and nations) or individual interaction with God, His providence is continuing in nature until His redemptive purposes are fulfilled and evil activities are silenced forever. Thus, we should trust in God, be humble, and do the best with what God has provided us, whether that be taking care of our health, our families, praying for those close to us and the world, being faithful, a good witness, appreciating what God has given us, and keeping hope for the future.

HUMAN BEINGS IN GOD'S IMAGE

Metaphysically, human beings are real, self-conscious, active, have moral capacities (Matt. 12:33-35), distinct, dependent, unique, and are created in the image of God. Human beings consist of two distinct parts: We have an outer material body, which is

visible, and an inner immaterial spirit/soul, which is invisible and has an everlasting existence (2 Cor. 4:16; Job 4:19; Ecc. 4:7). The body itself is not to be used for sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:13), but to be the temple for the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). Despite the fact that women and men do have fleshy differences, internally, both reflect God's image, which is Spirit (Jn. 4:24).

Although the soul is in perfect harmony with our body (2 Cor. 5:1,4; 12:7; Rom. 6:12), there are innumerable ways to kill the body. Yet, it is impossible to kill the soul, which is never-ending in existence as its own personal identity (Matt. 10:28; 1 Tim. 6:16). After the physical death of individuals, every souls will initially go to either Hades or paradise depending on their relationship with God (2 Chron. 34:28; Lk. 16:19-31). We, however, can have confidence knowing that the physical death of Christian's body does not separate us from love of Christ (Rom. 8:38-39).

The soul is not a trichotomy, which some Reformed theologians argue (Deut. 6:5), but a dichotomy (Matt. 10:28; Acts 7:59). There is no distinction between soul and spirit, but rather, they are a unity of the immaterial self. When some argue that Jesus speaks about a division of the soul and spirit, but I believe Jesus was stressing the totality of the being (Heb. 4:12; 1 Thes. 5:23).

Human beings' souls also have the capacity to function intellectually, morally, emotionally, volitionally, and relationally. (Deut. 6:4-5). Intellectually, individuals are self-conscious, have the ability to learn (Rom. 1), transcend ourself (Rom. 2), learn language, think critically, are creative, rational, and store all we have learned in our memory and unconscious.

Morally, we have a conscience that, if not abused (1 Tim. 4:2), may be sensitive and be used to operate effectively with moral principles. For example, we are called to love people with a pure heart and a good conscience (1 Tim. 1:5). When a person keeps a clear conscience before God (Acts 24:16), that individual will have an easier time searching for God and rest in Him when He is found (Ps. 42:2; 62:1).

Emotionally, humans have the ability to experience and elicit feelings from other people. A few emotions that we may experience are love, joy, happiness, pride, fear, anxiety, neglect, sorrow, anger, insecurity, etc.

Volitionally, individuals have the capacity to choose by being self-determining, while also having the ability to plan, set goals, and take action. Our will is free from outside manipulation, but sadly, many people use their volition for evil purposes. Nonetheless, each person has the ability and is responsible for acting wisely and in love.

Knowing that we are made in God's image, we should see the value of every individual, respect human rights, have a healthy self-worth of ourselves, overcome our sins, and attempt to achieve as much as we can for the Kingdom of God.

GOD'S IMAGE-BEARERS IN REBELLION

Mankind began with Adam and then Eve. They were the highest of God's created order due to them being made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). They were upright in character, worshiped God, had an unbroken relationship with Him, and they loved each other by having a mutual relationship which was based on respect, love, and trust (Gen. 2:18, 20; 1 Cor. 11:11-12).

However, Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-7; 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9); they inwardly rebelled against God; and externally, they ate the forbidden fruit that was from tree in the Garden (Gen. 3). The consequences of this actions are far-reaching. This sin caused a break in the continual fellowship with God and each other. As a result of this action, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden and judged by being cursed. The man's curse was to work and have painful toil which produced thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:17); the womans was increased pain in child-bearing and a desire for equality and equal submission with her husband (Gen. 3:16). This act of rebellion is considered sin and caused the Fall of mankind (Rom. 5:12, 16, 18), which is the result of on-going temptation to sin which affects every aspect of life for each generation (Heb. 7:10). Through Adam and Eve's actions, God condemned man to physical death (Rom. 8:10), spiritual death (Eph. 5:14), and eternal death (2 Thess. 1:9).

With our ability to have free will, regenerate believers have the freedom to choose spiritual things, but we still are clothed with our fallen nature. Thus, the regenerate are holistically depraved, which is best defined as a person who exhibits godly characteristics and loves God, but is completely unable to justify oneself before a holy and righteous God. The Christian is totally unable to save himself or herself by any amount of human effort. It is only by the grace of God that human beings are saved.

Unregenerate people always come short of pleasing God because they have the inability to please or serve Him. They have an unrepentant heart (Rom. 2:4-5) and cannot understand the things of God because they have been blinded by Satan concerning the light of the Gospel (1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4). Rather, they exhibit many evil acts, such as, sexual immorality, idolatry, hatred, jealousy, selfish ambition, etc. (Gal. 5:19-21).

There may be a special atonement to infants and children who die before the age of accountability, which was the age of twenty (Num. 14:29-31), because they are not considered to be individuals who have moral and legal standing, and have the inability to discern spiritual things. There is a strong possibility that those who dies prior to this age do not suffer eternal penalty and condemnation for their sins (Deut. 1:39; Matt. 19:14).

The practical implications are that as sinners, we cannot be saved outside the grace of God. Therefore, we should accept Christ as our Lord and Savior; allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify us so we can become more like Christ with each passing day; and through discipline, attempt to diminish sin in our lives and retract the manipulations of Satan.

GOD'S ETERNAL SON INCARNATED

Since human beings need redemption because of the Fall, God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ into the world for redemptive purposes. The incarnation is the actual event when the eternal, pre-existent Word united with a sinless human nature and became flesh (Jn. 1:1-14). It may refer to Christ's entire life and ministry, which encompasses His resurrection and ascension into heaven. But first, let us begin with His birth.

Christ was an actual baby born to Mary and His foster father Joseph. Mary's pregnancy was extraordinary because Jesus was virginally conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-24). This sign of the virgin conception was first provided to God's people (Isa. 7:14) as an acknowledgement of their future redemption, and is multi-faceted in scope. First, Jesus' birth signifies His holiness and deity (Lk. 1:35), sinlessness (1 Jn. 3:5; Jn. 8:46), redemptive purposes (Matt. 1:21), and confirms Isaiah's prophetic reliability (Matt. 1:22-23).

Mary, although completely human, was highly favored by God (Lk. 1:28). She is not Christ's mother, since Jesus is eternal and self-existent, but Mary was the caretaker in Jesus' human incarnation as a child. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, belonged to the line of David and Abraham (Lk. 2:1-2; Matt. 1:1, 16), which is the lineage that the Savior was predestined to be born. Joseph, demonstrated his goodness and righteousness by listening to the angel when he was considering divorcing Mary due to her pregnancy (Matt. 1:19). He also had Jesus consecrated in Jerusalem (Lk. 3:22-24); obeyed the Lord by travelling to Egypt and back at the appropriate times (Matt. 2:13-14, 19, 23); and, took the family to worship at the Feast of the Passover every year (Lk. 2:41). Although Joseph is not a widely examined biblical character, it is apparent that he exhibited wise discernment and godly character, which included justice and kindness. Both he and Mary are excellent models for biblical parenting.

The Father incarnated His Son because of His love for us, and His desire for us to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 9:15; Jn. 3:16). Jesus' descent from heaven was to defeat Satan (Gen. 3:15), break the power of sin, and bring blessing to the entire earth (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). Once His ministry was complete on earth, He would rule God's people forever (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6).

When Jesus began His ministry, He was quite clear on His origin and purpose. He often used titles, such as, the "Christ," "Lord," "Son of God," and "Son of Man." He unwaveringly claimed that He alone had come from heaven (Jn. 3:13). He frequently taught His disciples about His mission on earth (Jn. 5:22-23), which was to come as a servant and ransom for many (Mk. 10:45).

By Jesus freely allowing Himself to be incarnated into human form, He emptied Himself of many of His divine attributes (Phil. 2:7). But, He still had the miraculous power to heal the sick, exhibit complete wisdom, holiness, and love to other individuals. Thus, He did not give up his divine essence and identity, but in order to be obedient to the Father, He gave up His heavenly position for a period of time. More specifically, while He was in His human form, He was without complete omniscience, omnipresence, and

omnipotence. Rather, being completely human, He learned to grow and become strong as a human being. During the years of His ministry, He taught that He came as a sacrifice for all and that He would taste death for everyone (Heb. 2:9). Furthermore, He came to make us holy (Heb. 2:11-12), He came as a prophet (Heb. 1:2), and to reveal God's grace to those who love Him (2 Tim. 1:10; Gal. 4:4-5).

The practical relevance of the incarnation is that God loves us enough to send His only Son, who is not of this world, but cares enough for us to be obedient to the Father. Thus, we can rejoice knowing that each one of us is here for a purpose and are considered of high value and significance to God. Thus, we should always attempt to focus on eternal things, not temporal ones. Let us do our part to fulfill the Great Commission.

THE MESSIAH'S DIVINENESS AND HUMANNESS

The complexity of Christ is best described as the hypostatic union of two natures. Both of the natures of being completely divine and completely human were with Him from the time of His human conception, and remained until His death.

As a fully human being, Jesus experienced all of the same qualities that we experience. Physiologically, He experienced the full range of emotions, including feeling joy (Jn. 15:11), sadness (Jn. 11:35), hunger, weariness, pain, and death. Intellectually, He grew in wisdom and knowledge (Lk. 2:40); spiritually, He prayed (Mk. 1:35); socially, he enjoyed the company of others (which included participation in special occasions) (Jn. 2:1-11; Matt. 9:10-11); and politically, He was devoted to obey authority (Matt. 22:21). In fact, He was tempted in all the same ways that each one of us is tempted, but He was just, because He never succumbed to sin (Heb. 4:15).

There is both human and divine testimony to support this notion of a sinless existence. Two of His disciples, John and Peter both could not find any sin or blemish in His life (1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:19). The Father also was very pleased with Christ. This was quite evident at His baptism (the beginning of His human ministry) (Jn. 5:30) and at the transfiguration (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). To those who attempted to refute such claims of sinlessness, Christ charged those to prove His guilt, but no one could (Jn. 8:46).

As a fully divine person He claimed to both Satan and man of His authenticity as God (Matt. 4:7; Jn. 8:58; 10:30, 38). He claimed to be omnipotent, omnipresent (Matt. 28:20), and being the complete spiritual provider. This is seen by His portrayal as quenching our spiritual thirst (Jn. 4:14), our sustenance (Jn. 6:48), and our light by which He guides and directs us (Jn. 8:12). He also had the power to forgive people their sins (Mk. 2:9-10) and performed miraculous works of healing (Jn. 5:1-15). After His death, the ultimate proof of His divinity was through His resurrection (Lk. 24:1-12), post-death appearances (1 Cor. 15:1-8), and ascension (Lk. 24:50-53).

Christ, in His perfection, is a supreme model for us to try to imitate. We can become better individuals and more reflecting of God's characteristics, if we heed His advice and teachings. Christ also being human exhibited mercy, compassion, a sense of right and

wrong. We also should be like-minded.

CHRIST'S ONCE-FOR-ALL ATONING PROVISIONS

Do to the Fall of humankind, we are all inherently inclined to participate in evil activities, and follow our natural instinct, which is to be disobedient to the Will of God. We all lack moral integrity and are spiritually bankrupt due to our sinful nature. We are all proceeding in a downward spiral of perversity and corruption, and there is no way that our present state of affairs can be cured by any type of human endeavor (Rom. 10:1-3). Thus, we all should receive the due penalty of our sins, which is death (Rom. 6:23).

Yet, by the loving mercy of the Father, He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ (Jn. 6:39) to pay our penalty by dying on the cross like a grievous criminal (Lk. 19:10; Jn. 3:16). He was the once-and-for-all sacrificial atonement (Rom. 3:25-26). Why would the Father give the life of His only Son? Purely for the fact that God the Father loves us so much (Rom. 5:6-8; 1 Jn. 4:9-10).

It should be mentioned, however, that Christ descended from the glory of heaven by His own accord (Phil. 2:6-8). His death was not annihilation, but a separation from the Father for a short period of time. This separation was seen in a physical death (Jas. 2:26) and spiritual death, with the separation of relationship with the Father. This became most evident while on the cross Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

The reason the Father chose Jesus as our sacrifice was because He is the only one who is without sin. The sacrifice of Christ was both representative, that is acting on our behalf, and substitutionary, which is one who takes the place of another. He was punished for our own sake so we would not have to do so (Isa. 53:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:14; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24). This substitutionary sacrificial atonement was a one time event for all history (Heb. 9:12). When Jesus fulfilled His obligation, the covenant was sealed forever (Jn. 19:30).

With Christ's sacrifices, we now will face no condemnation if we trust in Him as our Lord and Savior (Rom. 8:1). That is because the cross bore our penalty of sin. When we become Christians we have died to sin (Rom. 6:2). Does that mean we will sin no more? No. We are a new creation, but we still live in our corruptible flesh. What does this mean then? Well, Christ's sacrifices provides freedom from our addictions. We will sin, but we should no longer be slaves to sin (Rom. 6:6-7). His redemptive work allows us no to be perpetually dominated by external pressures that the world offers (Gal. 1:4).

Christ's sacrifice also provides personal reconciliation with God and others. Since Christ's death took away God's wrath, the Father can now look upon us with pleasure, and not with anger (Rom. 3:25; Col. 1:19). Concerning our relationships with others, it is easier to sacrifice our lives for others knowing Christ sacrificed His life for us. It must be stressed that Christ's death was not for all people, but only those who accept Him as their Savior. Those who are unredeemed have the availability to seek God's forgiveness

through Christ, but without a complete denial of self and a whole-hearted turning to Christ, a non-believer still is condemned in their transgressions (Jn. 3:18).

The practical implications allow us to have security in our forgiveness, while still being an agent of forgiveness in the lives of other people. Through the on-going sanctification of the Holy Spirit, which is the process of becoming more Christ-like through the process of time, we are also able to conquer specific addictions. We can see the fruit of our transformation as we give over more of our lives to Christ, which gives us the continuing hope that God loves us and desires to transform us into Christ image with the progression of time.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, AND PRESENT EXALTATION

The resurrection is an essential element to the Christian faith. Without such an event, Jesus' ministry and death would be without meaning, and the entire Christian doctrine would be invalid. If Christ had not risen from the dead, our faith would be nothing more than a myth (1 Cor. 15). No one saw Jesus' actual resurrection, but there is enough empirical evidence to refute any claims to the contrary. The first sign was the empty tomb that was still sealed and guarded. After he came back to life (1 Cor. 15:35, 42-44), He abandoned His grave clothes, departed from the tomb, and appeared to individuals over 40 days, including a crowd of over 500 (1 Cor. 15:5). During these appearances He also talked to His disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:37-39), ate with them (Acts 10:41), and gave proof to Thomas of His existence, in material form (Jn. 20:25).

During the entire sequence of events in Jesus' life on earth, Christ was both humiliated and exalted. In Christ's humiliation (Phil. 2:6-8) the eternal Word (Jn. 1:1) departed from His heavenly sphere, which limited Him from using some of His divine powers. In the process, He was born as a human being to a woman, lived a holy life that was without sin, ended up dying for sinners, and was buried.

Yet, the resurrection has enormous theological significance. First, it confirms Jesus' earlier claims of deity (Jn. 8:23; Rom. 1:4). Second, it confirms the Father's approval of the Jesus sacrifice as the atonement of sin for those who believe and are reconciled (Isa. 53:10-11; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45). Third, Christians can truly believe they are justified through Christ's work (Rom. 4:25), and can have surety of their salvation when they appear before the Judgement seat of God (2 Cor. 5:10). Fourth, it proves that all people will be resurrected at the appropriate time (Acts 24:15). Fifth, it signifies that all power and authority have been given to Christ (Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:27-28), including being the Judge of all people (Acts 10:42). And sixth, it assures us that ruling from heaven, Jesus will continually be present in the church (Eph. 1:19-23). Thus, we can determine that Jesus was exalted (Phil. 2:9-11) in that He was not defeated by death.

We also know that after His resurrection, Christ ascended to the Father in heaven because He departed from His disciples right before their very eyes (Acts 1:9; Lk. 24:51). This event also signifies theological importance. First, it marked the end of His appearances

to human beings prior to His second coming. Second, being back in heaven, He once again assumed full authority and all of His divine attributes. Third, it proved how everyone must now submit to Him, including angels, demons, and humans (1 Pet. 3:22). Fourth, now being the Head of the church, He was given the authority to unleash the Holy Spirit onto the church. In so doing, He has continued to build up the church (Jn. 7:39; Matt. 16:18), while also interceding on behalf of its members (Rom. 8:34; 1 Tim. 2:5).

Due to Christ's resurrection and ascension, He now has complete authority in heaven and earth; was given the power to commission His disciples to go into all the earth; and has been actively redeeming humankind for almost two thousand years!

I believe that the relevance of this subject matter is quite important. Due to Christ's work, those who accept His love and grace can live under the cross in such a way that we can know that we are forgiven of our sin, can conquer sinful addictions, and be an agent of reconciliation to others who are seeking the Lord in their life. What an awesome opportunity we have in front of us!

Salvation & the Ordo Salutis

Since the Fall of Adam & Eve (Gen. 3), all people are depraved (John 8:34; Rom. 8:7), and are alienated from God (Gen. 3:1-7). God allows individuals to have free choices (Rom. 1:24) or people groups make (Josh. 11:20), he allows their hearts to become hardened.

Rom. 8:7: "The sinful mind is hostile to God. It doesn't submit to God's laws, nor can it do so.

John's gospel was written so sinners may believe (John 20:31), but even after Jesus did many miraculous signs many did not believe in him (John 12:37). The Spirit does not call all equally (Isa. 6:10, cited in John 12:39-40). He allows some people to continue in increasing unbelief and disobedience while effectually calling others.

John 8:34: ""Everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

John 20:31: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

John 12:37 "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him."

John 12:39-40: "They could not believe because as Isaiah says elsewhere: He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes nor understand with their hearts, nor turn - and I would heal them."

Salvation theologically denotes deliverance from sin, death and the devil and the bestowal of spiritual blessing both temporal and eternal.

Because God loved us and since human beings need redemption due to their depravity (Eph. 4:17-19), God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be the atoning sacrifice (Rom. 3:25-26) so people can be reconciled with the Father. He was our substitutionary sacrifice for all those who believe (Heb. 7:22 - 8:13). Those who do not accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior receive everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:41, 46).

Eph. 4:17-19: "So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more."

Rom. 3:25-26: "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed before hand unpunished - he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."

Heb. 7:22- 8:13: "Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant... He saves completely...high priest who sacrificed Himself..."

Matt. 25:41, 46: "Then he will say to those on his left, 'depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels...Then they will go away to eternal punishment but the righteous to eternal life.'"

Q: Who is the author of salvation?

1. The Father is the source, planner and initiator (Eph. 1:3-6)

Eph. 1:3-6: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will, etc..."

2. Christ provided redemption through his obedient life and death (Eph. 1:7-12)

Eph. 1:7-12: "In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...In him we were also chosen having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity and purpose of his will."

3. The Holy Spirit applies and makes effective and preserves the redemption of those who believe (Eph. 1:13-14)

Eph. 1:13-14: "...Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession.

Q: But how does a person obtain salvation? Who makes the first move - the Holy Spirit or the sinner? Can calling, regeneration, and conversion all occur at the same time?

Armenians: Prevenient Grace precedes conversion, which precedes regeneration.

Calvinism: Regeneration precedes conversion.

Demarest: Call precedes conversion, which precedes regeneration.

1. ELECTION

By grace the Father chose to call out of the world a people to be his moral and spiritual children to complete His purposes. It rules out any human merit, but is a high responsibility based on privilege and service (Gen. 12:2-3). At the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to Jews and later to Gentiles (Acts 1:4, 2:38, 10:45).

Rom. 9:11-13: "Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad - in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by his who called - she was told 'the older will serve the younger. Just as it is written, Jacob I loved, Esau I hated.' "

Rom. 9:20: "Who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?' Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common purposes?"

Gen. 12:2-3: "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Acts 1:4: To apostles Christ said, wait for me in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:45: "The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles."

Q: Isn't that unfair? God owes grace to no one. No pardons are obligatory. Gracious gifts must not always be equal (note the parable of the workers in Matt. 20:1-16).

God's Grace is not in the same ball game as fairness (Rom. 11:5-6).

Rom. 11:5-6: "So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it is by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace."

God did not call everyone to salvation. Rather, the promise is for you and your children.

Acts 2:39: "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Q: Who does God call?

Those in accordance with his pleasure and will (Eph. 1:5-6). Salvation is by faith. So unconditionally God designated many to receive the free gift of salvation to those He foreknew who would believe because he knew those he had given to Christ and those are the ones the Spirit will effectually call and enable to believe and repent. Thus, the Father elects and the Holy Spirit calls persons who together make up the body of Christ.

The elect will listen the Jesus' voice (Jn. 10:26-29), because He has chosen a select few (Jn. 13:18). Jesus said that I chose you to go and bear fruit (Jn. 15:16). It is the children of promise who are Abraham's offspring (Rom. 9:8).

John 10:26-29: "But you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; not one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father's hands. I and the Father are one."

John 13:18: "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen." Re: Jesus betrayal.

John 15:16: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last..."

Rom. 9:8: "In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring."

2. VERBAL CALLING

A verbal calling is a general call to everyone. However, only specific people were called (Rom. 10:29).

Rom. 10:29: "The sheep are those people whom the Father has specifically

given to the Son."

John 7:37-38: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

Rom. 10:14: "How can they hear [about the cross] without someone preaching to them?" Thus, the Holy Spirit has invites us to work with him.

Rom. 1:14: Christians are to preach to "both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish."

Matt. 28: Great Commission to make disciples.

Matt. 22:14: "Many are invited (by words externally), but few are chosen (enabled internally)."

Ex. 7:13; 8:15, 32: Pharaoh hardened his own heart. After many times, God hardened pharaoh's heart (Ex. 9:12)

Rom. 1:24 Thus, there is precedence of God giving people over to their minds to which they naturally become hardened after a period of time. "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

3. EFFECTUAL CALLING & BELIEF IN THE GOSPEL

It is necessary for the Spirit to internally renew lost capacities for knowing, loving, and serving God because depraved sinners are both persistently unwilling and unable to respond to spiritual things. Effectual calling means eternal calling by the Holy Spirit. Evidence for an effectual call is with the wedding banquet (Matt. 22:1-14) and Lydia (Acts 16:14).

Matt. 22:1-14: Wedding banquet

Acts 16:14: Lydia (which is also general call to other women)

Q: Why does the Spirit do this?

Salvation is never based on obedient works. If it were, grace would no more be grace.

Rom. 1:6-7: "And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints."

Rom. 11:5-6: "At the present time there is a remnant chose by grace. And if by

grace then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace."

Predestination to service does not violate the free will of Christians. God calls people to be something in order that they may do something (Gen. 12:1-3).

Gen. 12:1-3: "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; *and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*"

Rom. 9:25: "I will call them my people who are not my people; and I will call her my loved one who is not my loved one."

Eph. 1:4-5: "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will."

1 Tim. 4:10: God saves all those who believe in him.

John 6:44: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."

John. 3:15-18: "Everyone who believe in Christ may have eternal life and not perish or be condemned."

John 17:2: "For you granted him [your son] authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him."

The internal call of the Spirit renews the sinner's abilities (mind, emotions, and will) and secures a positive response to the Gospel. There is no Scriptural support for a renewal of all sinners' ability to believe the Gospel prior to the special work of the Spirit with the elect because of their fallen condition.

Rom. 8:7: "The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."

Q: Are sinners able to believe apart from a special work of the Spirit? Are they able to convert? What do Armenians say about prevenient grace?

Prevenient Grace

This grace suggests that God sets aside the penalty of the guilt inherited from Adam and giving every person a fresh start, and convicting the person of being a sinner, and a minor degree of salvation because of the cross. It deadens the effects of depravity, thus, all sinners are enabled to respond to the Gospel by of their free wills. God started the process, but the individual cooperates. Salvation, however, can be lost by one's free will.

Response to Prevenient Grace

A general call (Gospel proclamation) may be resisted (Matt. 11:28), but not an effectual call (Jn. 10:3-4). Prevenient is not an acceptable option because depraved sinners cannot perceive Gospel truth if left to themselves (1 Cor. 2:14)

Matt. 11:28: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

John 10:3-4: "The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep list to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. The sheep will follow him because they know his voice."

1 Cor. 2:14: "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Hence, God foreknew that none would seek him or trust Christ. Thus, the Father predetermined that many would be enabled by the Spirit to repent and believe the Son. It is made up of inclusive members, not just an entity where anyone can proceed if they choose.

4. *REPENTANCE & CONVERSION (TRUST IN CHRIST)*

God the Father is the source, planner & initiator of salvation (Eph. 1:3-6). The Son provides salvation through His obedient life and sacrificial death (Eph. 1:7), and the Holy applies salvation (Eph. 1:13-14).

Thus, there needs to be conviction, repentance and acceptance to Christ and His ways. Repentance is a change of mind, ultimate loyalty of behavior whereby pre-Christians turn from sin to God, the spirit convicts us of our moral guilt and persuades us of the truths of the Gospel (Jn. 20:30-31). Thus, those who repent from sins (Acts 2:38) will be converted because they are able to have belief in the Gospel (Jn. 20:30-31), and trust the living Christ (Jn. 16:8-11) because they acknowledge their guilt (Jer. 3:13), remorse over sins (Jer. 31:19), and turn completely to the Lord (Isa. 55:6). They completely commit themselves to Christ (Rom. 10:9)

John 16:8-11: "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgement, because the price of this world now stands condemned."

Acts 2:38: "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the

Holy Spirit."

John 20:30-31: "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Jer. 3:13: "Only acknowledge your guilt - you have rebelled against the Lord your God..."

Jer. 31:19: "After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth."

Isa. 55:6: "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while his is near."

Rom. 10:9: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

I also believe in Lordship salvation where someone who has repented and been converted will display the following four qualities:

1. Discipleship
2. Repentance
3. Faith and obedience
4. Confess Christ as Savior

5. REGENERATION & JUSTIFICATION

This occurs immediately following repentance and conversion. Regeneration allow Christians to be made into a new creation. When this occurs Christians have a change in one's standing before God, but not a change in their nature. Justification is when a person's sin is not counted against the individual. It is to acquit or declare someone to be right. The means of Justification is by faith in Christ (Rom. 3:21-26), and forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, which allows for regeneration (Rom. 8:1).

To teach that regeneration must precede faith seems to contradict the teaching that we must believe in Christ to receive eternal life. This moderately Reformed position agrees with Arminianism in holding that human conversion preceded divine regeneration. However, in conflict with Arminianism is that only sinners who convert to Christ are effectually called by the Spirit. The results of justification are forgiveness of sins, condemnation is annulled, receive the gift of eternal life, spiritual peace, and positional sanctification.

Regenerated

John 3:3: "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." - Nicodemus

1 Cor. 2:12: "We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us."

1 Cor. 5:17: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone,, the new has come."

Justification

Ex. 23:7: "Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty."

Gen. 15:6: "Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness."

Psa. 32:1-2: "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit."

Rom. 3:21-26: "But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify....for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through Jesus Christ..."

Rom. 4: Paul uses faith 16 times in this passage re: Abraham being justified by faith.

Rom. 8:1: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

6. SANCTIFICATION

Those e who would relate to God and be his special people must be holy in character. Sanctification, then, is God's means of actualizing in forgiven sinners his original purposes. Sanctification means holiness of life. It is the progressive uprooting of sin and is the conquering energy of the Holy Spirit. Christians cannot obtain absolute perfection in this life (Phil. 3:12), but comes in our life with Christ (1 John 3:2-3).

Phil 3:12: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."

I Jn. 3:2-3: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be

has not yet been made know. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as the is pure."

2 Thess. 2:13: "But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth."

2 Tim. 1:9: "Who has saved us and called us to a holy life -not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace."

7. PERSEVERENCE

People may sin for a season, but unbelief is temporary. Divinely, due to the Father's election and the Son's intercession and the Spirits sealing, the individual will not fall away. Humanly, believers must actively look to Christ and depend on Him alone.

1 Peter 1:5: "You who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time."

Rom. 8:30: "Those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."

Matt. 13:1-23: The parable of the sower talks about some falling away, but if they had an effectual call, this person will persevere and proceed towards glorification (Rom. 8:30). There may be back sliding, but it will be for a limited period of time.

John 10:26-29: "But you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; not one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father's hands. I and the Father are one."

John 6:37: "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away."

8. GLORIFICATION

This is the final event in the salvation of true believers that began in eternity past with God's elective decision. It is the conclusion to a Christians spiritual journey in which God's glory for us is completed in our redemption. This occurs in a disembodied state in heaven until we are reunited with our perfected resurrected bodies when Christ returns.

Heb. 9:15: "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance."

Rom. 8:30: "Those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."

9. SUMMARY

Q: Why present the Gospel to sinners?

Acts 1:8:	Humans have no knowledge who is called.
Matt. 28:18-20:	Great Commission
John 15:16:	Christ chose us to bear fruit
Luke 24:46-48:	Repentance and remission of sins be preached to all people
1 Cor. 3:5-7:	Obedience: We water and cultivate the ground, but God makes it grow.