

# FOOTPRINTS INTO AFRICA

## CHRISTIAN RESOURCES



### SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 1. (DOCTRINE)

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## **Bibliography**

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# SCRIPTURE OUR FINAL AUTHORITY

## 1. What is the meaning of authority?

Authority is the right or power to require obedience. From the perspective of Christian faith, God has the supreme right and power to require obedience because He is the creator and Lord of all men. Authority lies in God.

Authority for the Christian becomes a practical one of finding God's will and mind on any issue.

### **But how do we encounter God, discover His mind, and will?**

Has God provided a source that we may learn of His truth and so bring ourselves under His authority?

Theology speaks of general revelation and the Christian revelation as the two areas from which we obtain knowledge of God. All revelation, by definition, is given by the free and gracious initiative of God.

### **a) The Source of Authority**

Over the centuries, Christians have appealed to a variety of voices as the source of final authority.

The creeds – These summaries of Christian truth were produced in the early centuries to state the essence of the faith in a time of theological confusion. The Apostles' Creed is the oldest and best known, and therefore has a strong claim to authority, but the creeds will not serve as the final source and standard of Christian truth.

The historic confessions – These statements of the Christian faith belong to the Reformation and post-Reformation period – e.g. the 39 Articles and the Westminster Confession. These are fuller than the Creeds, but again will not do as final authorities.

The mind of the church – According to this approach, God's presence in the church implies that his mind can be discovered by consulting the main trend of Christian opinion, the "mind of the church". But whom do we listen to: theologians, clergy, church commission, average lay opinion, or what?

Christian experience – This approach begins with actual human experience of God and tries to identify the doctrines expressed by that experience. Within our experience of God, we somehow have to distinguish between objective truth about God and our own subjective opinions. These are limited, biased, and seriously compounded by our fallen minds.

Christian reason – This approach claims that Christian truth consists in what we can demonstrate about God by logical reasoning. Fallen humanity's perception of truth, particularly in the moral and spiritual sphere, is severely limited.

The "inner voice" – Some claim that God speaks directly in the depths of our consciousness and that this "voice within" is the ultimate source of authority. This view is common today, being frequently interpreted as the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Any specific claim to his prompting should be treated with instinctive skepticism if it makes

no reference to the written Word of God. The sincerity of many making such claims must not obscure the immense dangers of self-delusion here. None of the above is adequate to bring us God's mind and so be the authoritative source of Christian truth, but each contributes.

**The ultimate source of authority is the triune God himself, as he is made known to us through the words of the Bible.** This combines three truths:

- **God has taken the initiative.** We learn of him and come under his direct authority because of his decision to make himself and his will known to us. This process is called "revelation".
- **God has come to us himself in Jesus Christ,** the God-man. As the eternal Word and Wisdom of God, Jesus Christ is the mediator of all our knowledge of God.
- **Our knowledge of God comes through the Bible.** He caused it to be written and through it speaks to us today as he spoke to his people when those words were first given. The Bible is to be received as God's words to us and revered and obeyed as such. As we submit to its authority, we place ourselves under the authority of the living God who made it known to us supremely in Jesus Christ.

Revelation means unveiling something hidden, so that it may be seen and known for what it is. If we are to know God, revelation is essential. The hiddenness of a transcendent and sovereign God can be broken only as He chooses to reveal Himself to mankind.

We are creatures:

***"In the beginning God created ... man"*** (Genesis 1:1, 27) these first words of the bible express the distinction between God and mankind. God as creator exists freely apart from ourselves; the creature depends utterly on God for existence. God and mankind therefore belong to different orders of being.

This distinction is not absolute. We are made "in the image of God"; God communicates with us; God became man in the Lord Jesus Christ; God the Spirit indwells Christians and brings them into a personal relationship to God. All these factors confirm a degree of correspondence between God and humanity. Yet a profound, irreducible distinction remains.

This distinction in being involves a distinction in knowing - "who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God". Only God truly knows God. Since God is creator and lord of man, his knowledge includes our self-knowledge, but our knowledge does not include God's self-knowledge. We therefore require God to reveal Himself if we are to have adequate knowledge of Him.

We are sinners – blind and separated from God:

God is not accessible to sight or understanding of sinful or fallen man. Because of man's sin, he is not able to attain to the knowledge of God or to recognize God, even when He does reveal Himself, unless God enlightens his mind.

Our need of revelation is immeasurably increased by our sinfulness. The fall has affected every aspect of our being, not least our perception of moral and spiritual reality. SIN RENDERS US SPIRITUALLY BLIND AND IGNORANT OF GOD. The only way to gain a genuine knowledge of God is for God to freely place himself within range of our perception and renew our fallen understanding. As a result, if we are to know God and have any adequate basis for our Christian understanding and experience, revelation is indispensable.

a) **General Revelation**

- **In Creation**, to all men, chiefly through nature and conscience:

God's revelation to all people of His eternal power and deity can be seen through his created order. Mankind is without "any excuse" and he is obliged to acknowledge God and give Him glory and thanks.

- **Natural Theology** – Common moral and religious awareness:

A long-standing tradition in theological thinking has sought to demonstrate a certain minimum of truth about God based on rational argument from the existence and nature of the world, and the common moral and religious awareness of mankind.

General revelation is not sufficient, and a fuller revelation is necessary; if man is to know God "it remains for God to give witness of himself from heaven" (Calvin). Therefore, despite the blinding effects of sin, man cannot plead entire ignorance of God. Through general revelation, God has disclosed something of his nature and purposes for mankind.

b) **Special Revelation – In Jesus and Scripture**

The supreme credential of Christianity is the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the eternal Word of God who "became flesh and lived among us" John 1:1f, 14. This is the heart and summit of all divine revelation, God himself in the person of Jesus Christ true God and true man.

c) **Holy Scripture – The Bible**

The Bible is the record and authoritative interpretation – historical and personal writings of various kinds.

The Bible is the record of God's word to his creatures (Jn. 10:35, Rom 3:2 and 2 Tim 3:16) these words were originally written and spoken to particular generations, but by His providence they address every generation (Acts 7:38, Rom 15:4 and 1 Corinth 10:11). Christ, the incarnate Word, is known through the written Word of God, the Bible. Knowing Christ is, of course, a richer reality than a mere acquaintance with the Bible teaching about him.

Therefore, revelation was given in the form of a person, and also in the preparatory experiences of God's ancient people of Israel, and the subsequent foundation of God's new people, the church, through the Holy Spirit.

The primary and all-essential place may be assigned to the life, character and teachings of Christ. **Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of our faith.**

In summary:

God's revelation has two major parts, a general revelation to all men chiefly through nature and conscience, and special revelation in Jesus Christ and Scripture. As the Holy Spirit inspired the full completion of the revelation of Christ in the experience of the apostolic church, and also the recording of the whole biblical revelation, so too He enlightens the understanding of the Christian reader.

## 2. The Canon of Holy Scripture

The word 'canon' comes from the Greek word *kanon* meaning 'rule' or 'measuring rod'. Applied to the Scriptures, it has a double meaning. In the first place, it is used to indicate a collection of those books to which a prescribed test has been applied and which have been acknowledged authentic or "canonical". Then the term is applied to the collection of writings, as a whole because it constitutes the Canon, or 'rule of faith', by which all doctrine must be tested.

Since the 4<sup>th</sup> century, *kanon* has been used by Christians to denote an authoritative list of the books belonging to the Old Testament or New Testament. The production of a list of 'official' writings does not make those writings any more 'official' than they were originally. Similarly, it is necessary to keep distinctly in mind that whereas 'inspiration' relates to the divine control of the writers, the Canon relates to the number of such writers, which were admitted to be 'inspired'. One writer remarked, "The Bible is not an authorized collection of books, but a collection of authorized books".

What qualifies a book for a place in the Canon of the OT or NT is not just that it is ancient, informative, and helpful, and has long been read and valued by God's people, but that it has God's authority for what it says.

The books of the Bible were given to us by 40 different authors over a period of about 1,400 -1,600 years:

### The Old Testament canon

There are **39** books - set out in four sections:

- a) The books of **Law** are the first five books – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- b) Twelve books of **History** – Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.
- c) The five books of **Poetry** or Writings – Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs.
- d) The books of the **Prophets**:
  - Five books of the **Major Prophets** – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel.
  - Twelve books of the **Minor Prophets** – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

### The New Testament canon

There are **27** books - set out in three sections:

- a) **The Gospels** – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
  - b) **History** – Acts
  - c) **The Epistles/Letters**
  - d) **Pauline** – Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon.
- General Letters** – Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John and Jude.
- e) **Prophecy** – Revelation.

### 3. **The Inspiration of Holy Scripture**

#### **The Meaning of Inspiration:**

**Inspiration** refers to the way in which God's self-revelation has come to be expressed in the words of the Bible. It is the activity of the Spirit of God whereby He superintended the human authors of Scripture so that their writings became the transcript of God's word to man. The Greek word nearly equivalent to our word inspiration '**God breathed**' occurs only once in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16). More accurately, the Scriptures are *expired* which is **breathed out by God**. The thought is not of God as breathing through Scripture, but of God as having breathed out Scripture. Paul's words mean, not that Scripture is inspiring (though this is true), but that Scripture is a divine product, and must be approached and estimated as such.

Note that the object of God's action is the written Scriptures; the actual human writers are not mentioned. They were involved, of course, controlled, and directed for the purpose by the Holy Spirit, **but the forming of Scripture is referred wholly to God's activity**.

#### **The Mode of Inspiration**

An exact definition of the mode is obviously an impossibility. We do not know how the Holy Spirit operated on the minds of the writers, but it is important that we should have no illusions on the following matters:

- ♦ The personality of the human writer was not superseded.
- ♦ God purposely chose a number of men from all ranks of society; previously training them by varied experiences, so that the Scriptures should be as close to the many-side circumstances of human life as possible.



#### **The Extent of Inspiration**

- ♦ All of the Old and New Testament books are (with the exception of copyists' errors and mistranslations) substantially as the Spirit of God designed them. The inspiration extends to all 66 books of the Bible.

Two related terms:

Verbal – This adjective implies that the biblical authors were not merely inspired in their general ideas, BUT IN THE VERY WORDS THEY USED. Every word in the Bible is inspired

Plenary – This adjective indicates that the inspiration extends TO THE WHOLE BIBLE. God has caused *all* Scripture to be written

The Bible is our supreme authority, inspired by God down to the words used by the original authors, and its reliability is without question:

#### 4. **The implication of revelation for us today**

##### **It is Infallible**

Applied to Scripture this word means it is TRUSTWORTHY. Scripture does not mislead because it is God's own self-testimony.

- ♦ The infallibility of Scripture refers to its message viewed AS A WHOLE. This means that each particular statement and section of the Bible **is infallible within the context of the whole of Scripture**.

##### **It is Inerrant**

This word implies the ABSENCE OF ERROR. If the Bible has been supervised down to its very words by the God of truth, then it must be free from error.

We believe in the inerrancy because:

- the Bible teaches it
- Jesus teaches it
- Church teaches it
- God's character

##### **It is Sufficient and Final**

Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation. The Scriptures claim sufficiency and finality for themselves. Rev 22:18, 19

#### 5. **The science of interpreting Scripture**

The Bible is infallible *as correctly interpreted*. There are four major principles that help us interpret Scripture correctly:

##### a) **Scripture must be interpreted literally:**

- According to the original meaning
- According to literary form – what kind of writing is it
- According to context

##### b) **Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture:**

- Interpret according to the purpose of Scripture. This applies to the Bible as a whole. It is important to identify the situation being addressed
- Interpret in the light of other passages on the same theme



- Interpret the earlier in the light of the later and fuller. The biblical revelation develops as God reveals more of himself and his purposes for his people. The New Testament interprets the Old Testament. Christ fulfils the law and therefore the Old Testament is to be interpreted in the light of this fulfillment.

c) Scripture can be interpreted only by the Holy Spirit

- True understanding is not normal to us; it is God's gift through the Holy Spirit.
- It requires hard work
- The Holy Spirit is a corporate Spirit – dwelling in all God's people. Learn from the gift exercised by his chosen teacher

d) Scripture must be interpreted dynamically

- This final principle is really an extension of the third. God's Spirit is a living Spirit; he uses his Word in accordance with his great goals for God's people, their regeneration and sanctification. God's truth must be brought and put to work for us in the present. After asking, what did this mean in its own time and context and what does it mean in the light of the whole of Scripture, we must ask, what does this mean for today – here and now?

## APPLICATION

- **The need to be born again**

We cannot know God and His truth until we have been born again. This miracle of rebirth and illumination is always associated with a response to the gospel, which lies at the heart of the Christian faith. The message of the gospel confronts us with our sin, our moral helplessness, intellectual blindness and the realistic fact of God's wrath against us. But at the same time, it assures us of God's almighty love for sinners expressed in the gift of His son, Jesus Christ who died for sinful men and women on the cross. The gospel calls us to turn from our sin and to cast ourselves to God's mercy held out to us in Christ.

In responding to that call in simple trust, we experience a new beginning in our lives, a **new birth**, and with it comes a new capacity to grasp and respond to God's revelation. As we come in utter dependence, acknowledging our sinful ignorance and blindness and our constant need of His divine illumination, he stoops to us in grace and grants us again and again the gift of His truth.

- **The need to work hard at the Bible**

Scripture has come to us out of a period spanning several millennia, from the experience of peoples whose culture is unfamiliar. It is written in languages which are not our own. To understand and interpret the Bible correctly therefore requires the demanding discipline of bridging these cultural and linguistic gulfs, which separate us from the Bible's time and world.

- **The need to preach and expound the Bible**

Preaching is the supreme means, which God has instituted to unveil His truth among his people.

- **The need to be obedient to Scripture.**

If God has revealed Himself and His purposes to us in Jesus Christ, as He is known to us through all the Scriptures, then clearly, we are under a total obligation to submit our lives to the teaching of the Bible.

# THE GODHEAD

## THE BEING OF GOD

### ♦ The Basis of Theism

Theism may be defined as **belief in the existence of a God who controls the world**. Scripture itself does not attempt to prove God's existence; it merely states that *"In the beginning ... God ...."* Genesis 1:1.

The following are the chief intellectual arguments or 'proofs' traditionally held to justify belief in the existence of God:

- ♦ Ontological – This argument is based on the concept of perfection.
- ♦ Cosmological – The universe is not self-existent. The existence of the world requires a Supreme Being to account for it. Every effect must have a start.
- ♦ Teleological – from design, nature and creation.  
The design had a designer. It shows that if there be a 'first cause', He is an intelligent cause.
- ♦ Moral Purpose – The universe should result in some moral end.
- ♦ The argument from the Fact of Christ

## THE NATURE OF GOD: THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The attributes speak of God's essential being, but we do not think of them as parts of His being. God's whole being is ...

### NATURAL ATTRIBUTES:

- ♦ **The Infinity of God:** He is without limitation. Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, *"I AM WHO I AM."*
- ♦ **Personality** – the marks of personal being – mind, emotions, will and freedom. Proverbs 15:3 - *"The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked, and the good"*. Isaiah 46:10 - *"I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please"*.  
It is as *Spirit* that God is personal without any of the limiting notions attached to our view of human personality. God is 'free persona; Spirit'.
- ♦ **Eternal** – Scripture plainly declares that God is eternal and immutable, meaning He is unlimited by time and space. 1 Timothy 1:17 - *"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen"*. His attributes are constant. *'I the Lord do not change'* (Mal 3:6). God's changelessness is expressed in His faithfulness and dependability in His relationships with His people. The whole idea of the covenant is based on this perfection.

- ♦ **Omnipresence** – God is everywhere present. God is far removed from man in His essential being. He is external to the world and His creatures as the sovereign Creator and Judge of the world. BUT at the same time God is in ‘all things’ and in Him all things hold together. - Psalm 139:7-8 – David is writing of an all-knowing God – *“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there”*.  
Matthew 28:20 ....”and surely I am with you always”.
- ♦ **Omniscience** – God is all-knowing. God’s knowledge is part of His own nature. It is complete and absolute. God knows the future as well as the past. God sees and hence knows all. - 1 Samuel 16:7 – *“....The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the looks at the heart”*.  
Psalm 147:5 – *“Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit”*.
- ♦ **Omnipotence** – God is all-powerful. Genesis 17:1 – God said to Abraham, *“I am God Almighty ...”*  
In the New Testament God reveals himself as the God with whom *“nothing is impossible”*.

### **THE MORAL ATTRIBUTES**

God’s Goodness – God continually seeks the welfare of creation. Scripture stresses aspects of goodness such as love, loving-kindness, mercy, forbearance, and grace. The supreme act of love is seen in redemption.

God’s Holiness – God’s holiness is central to His being and is repeated again and again in the OT. God is separate from all other beings; He alone is God. The holiness of God refers to His separation from all that is impure. God’s holiness means that He is utterly pure and perfect, without any sin or evil; his very being is the outshining and outpouring of purity, truth, righteousness, justice, goodness and every moral perfection.

God’s Righteousness – God is eternal and essential righteousness. It is God’s provision of righteousness in Christ, which constitutes the heart of the gospel of his grace (Romans 1:17; 3:21; 5:17-21) - Psalm 147:17 *“The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made”*.

God’s Justice – God’s justice is his holy will in operation. Deuteronomy 32:4; - *“He is the Rock, his works are perfect and all his ways are just”*. 1 John 1:9 – *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”*.

God’s Wrath – “God’s wrath is the holy revulsion of His being against that which is the contradiction of his holiness”. (J. Murray). God’s wrath is working itself out in history as men reap the moral and spiritual harvest for rejecting God’s revelation, but this is something that will be revealed at the end of the age. John 3:36 – *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him”*.

## **WITHOUT BODY, PARTS AND PASSIONS**

John 4: 24 – “*God is spirit...*”. God is not limited to a body shape and anatomical parts (structure of organs). As “spirit”, it is impossible to limit God in any manner.

As in the words of Article 1. of the Church of England – “There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions”.

## **THE DIVINE NAMES OF GOD**

Each divine name offers an indication of the character of God. One classification, which has been suggested, is:

- General Names: e.g. El and Elohim (plural)
- Covenant Name: Yahweh – This is God’s special covenant name and occurs 7000 times in the Old Testament. Meaning probably ‘the existing, ever-living, absolute, unchangeable One’.
- Particular Names: Compounds of the name Jehovah, with nouns or verbal forms. E.g. Jehovah-Jireh (will provide) Genesis 22:14; Jehovah-Nissi (my Banner) Exodus 17:15&16; Jehovah-Tsidkenu (our Righteousness) Jeremiah 23:6
- 

There are several other forms of the divine name such as Jah; Adon; and Adonai. The two latter forms are best translated into English by ‘the Sovereign Lord’

## **RIVALS OF MONOTHEISM**

The following rivals on the belief in the one true God may be described as:

1. Atheism – A denial of the existence of God
2. Agnosticism – Declares that God is ‘unknowable’
3. Pantheism – Broadly defined as “God is everything and everything is God. It promotes love and care of Nature, reverence for the Cosmos.
4. Polytheism – In contrast with the belief in one true God, teaching on this subject develops a belief in a plurality of gods (many gods).

## **THE HOLY TRINITY**

The Bible presents God as three distinguishable persons, referred to as FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT

- a) God the father is God – Nehemiah 9:6
- b) Jesus is God – John 1:1; Colossians 1:15
- c) The Holy spirit is God – John 14:16; 14:26
- d) Together they are one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Matthew 28:19

## **GOD THE CREATOR** (the work of creation)

Creation is that work of the triune God by which he called all things that exist, both material and spiritual, into existence out of non-existence. The biblical view of God as creator includes his continuous, unbroken sustenance and renewal of the world.

Quite apart from the first two chapters of Genesis, there are clear references to creation in every section of Scripture.

- Psalms (90:2); Prophets (Isaiah 40:26f); Gospels (Matthew 19:4); Epistles (Romans 1:25); Revelation 4:11)
- Each person of the Godhead is seen as active in creation:

**Father:** 1 Corinthians 8:6 - “yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came...”

**Son:** John 1:3 – “Through him all things were made ..”

**Spirit:** Genesis 1:2 – “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters”. Job 33:4 – “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life”.

The material earth was given a definite beginning by God: *“By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God”* – Hebrews 11:3.

### **GOD’S PROVIDENCE AND DIVINE GOVERNMENT**

The preservation of the world and the control of mankind follows the doctrine of creation. Calvin stated, “Providence asserts that God, having called the world into being, continually sustains, renews, and orders it.

- a) Preservation – This term is used to imply that all existence apart from that of the Godhead derives its continuance, including its powers, from the will of God.
- b) The Nature and Extent of God’s Providence – The Bible teaches that God’s providence is complete and all embracing.
- c) The Nature of the Divine Government – In addition to the providential care over the works of His hands, God governs his created beings

### **MIRACLES**

In terms of Christian understanding of God and the world, God’s universe is open before him; he is sovereignly free at any point to order his world in a different way.

### **APPLICATION**

#### **He is to be worshipped:**

To believe in such a God we are called to pour out our beings before him in worship, thanksgiving and praise.

We recognize and worship Father, Son, and Spirit for the perfection of his *glory*, his *lordship*, his *holiness* and his *love*.

#### **He is to be served:**

The response to such a God is to serve him. Worship is part of service, which extends to every area of our life.

Calvin – “The great thing is this; we are consecrated and dedicated to God in order that we may think, speak, meditate, and do nothing **except to his glory**”.

**He is to be proclaimed:**

Part of our response to God as he reveals his being and nature to us is our **making him known in the world**. Our proclamation of God is not only direct and verbal, it is also indirect. It involves living in such a way that the God we proclaim in our speaking is manifested in every area of our living.

These three applications of God’s being, and nature are indissoluble. To worship God is to serve and proclaim him; to serve God is to proclaim and worship him; to proclaim God is to worship and serve him.

# **MAN AND SIN**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **MAN AS HE WAS CREATED (GENESIS 1-2)**

#### **1. MAN AND HIS WORLD:**

##### **a) The world was made for Adam to subdue.**

“At creation mankind was invested by God with a special dignity, appointed ruler of the world under God, summoned to possess and subject it; and to rule the other creatures”. (Know the Truth by Bruce Milne) Genesis 1:27-2:3; Psalm 8:5

b) **Adam was to live by it:** God said in Genesis 1:29 “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

c) Adam was to **look after it:** “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it”. (Genesis 2:15)

#### **2. MAN AND HIS FELLOW:**

a) To have close fellowship – The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him..... (Genesis 2:18-24)

b) They were innocent and open – “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame”.

#### **3. MAN AND HIS GOD:**

a) Depends on God for life – “the Lord 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”.

b) God requires obedience – “And the Lord God commanded the man”. (Genesis 2:16)

c) There was freedom to disobey – God gave Adam the freedom to choose to obey God. Genesis 2:17

d) There was intimate fellowship with God – “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden at the cool of the day....

Until this point, everything was perfect and wonderful. What happened to destroy this perfect, intimate fellowship with God?

### **THE CAUSES OF MAN’S DEATH** (Genesis 3-4)

a) Adam and Eve listened to Satan – The serpent caused DOUBT as to what God had instructed them not to do. “Did God really say .....?” (Genesis 3:1)

b) They disobeyed God.

c) Allowed ambition to win the day - ...”and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”



- d) They followed the desires of body and mind - ...'the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom....'

FROM THIS MOMENT EVERYTHING WAS BROKEN - SIN BROUGHT DEATH.

## **THE RESULTS AND EFFECTS OF SIN**

### **1. SPIRITUAL DEATH – IN RELATION TO GOD**

- a) Hide from God through fear - ...and they hid from the Lord God among the trees in the garden.” (Genesis 3:8-10)
- b) Death, no more mortality (sweat, work and die)  
Adam and Eve’s disobedience and fall from God’s gracious presence affected all creation. – “Cursed is the ground because of you ...” “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” (Genesis 3:17-19)
- c) Separation from God – “So the Lord God banished him from the garden .....After he drove the man out...”. (Genesis 3:23-24)
- d) Defiance of God – After Cain had killed his brother the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother ....I don’t know”, he replied. “Am I my brothers’ keeper?” (Genesis 4:9)

### **2. SOCIOLOGICAL – IN RELATION TO OUR FELLOWS**

- a) Blame each other – The man said, “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it”. (Genesis 3:12)
- b) Introduced pain to personal relationships – To the woman God said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” To Adam God said, “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life”.
- c) Anger and jealousy – Cain and Abel. After Cain’s sacrifice was rejected, God gave him the chance to right his wrong and try again. But Cain refused, and the rest of his life is a starting point of what happens to those who refuse to admit their mistakes. (Genesis 4:5-6)
- d) Murder – Cain kills his brother Abel. This is the first murder the taking a life by shedding human blood – “Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him”. (Genesis 4:8)
- e) Lies – Cain lies to God about where his brother is. The Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother .... I don’t know”, he replied. “Am I my brothers’ keeper?” (Genesis 4:9)

### **3. PSYCHOLOGICAL – IN RELATION TO OURSELVES**

- a) Lost innocence. Genesis 3:7 – Inward conflict is expressed as shame, discomfort of oneself. Sin has robbed us of self-confidence and self-acceptance as God’s own creatures; we are ashamed of ourselves.
- b) Conflict man and devil – 4:15
- c) Despair – Cain said to the Lord, ‘your punishment is more than I can bear.’

#### 4. **ECOLOGICAL – IN RELATION TO NATURE**

Humanity loses its harmony with the natural order and our God-given stewardship of the environment gives place to sinful plundering.

- a) Curse on the ground – Genesis 4:11 “now you are under a curse and driven from the ground ...’
- b) Battle with the environment – Genesis 4:11-12 ‘When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.’

#### 5. **ALL CAUSED BY SIN**

- a) We miss the mark
- b) Rebellion
- c) Perversion, distortion
- d) Sin - any want of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God.

All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever.

Recognizing the fallenness of the world and the plight of mankind, Christians will long make known in the world the one message, which can save and liberate them, the good news of Jesus Christ. Knowing that men and woman are morally and spiritually helpless, we plead with God for mercy and grace to open their hearts so that they can turn to Him and receive His everlasting mercy and salvation.

# **THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Any Christian student who has not read carefully and at leisure completely through one of the Gospel narratives should rectify this omission without delay. Nothing can be more important than the study of the work, character, and teaching of the divine Master. (In Understanding be Men, T.C. Hammond).

Jesus is unique – what do we believe about Him. Christ possesses two natures (divine and human) but was one Person.

1. **HIS HUMANITY** – Jesus was fully human.
  - a. He experienced the full range of human emotions:

For example:

- Joy (Luke 10:21).
- Sorrow (Matt 26:37),
- Love (John 11:5)
- Compassion (Mark 1:41)
- Anger (John 2:15)

- b. And was subjected to normal physical limitations:

For example:

- Weariness (John 4:6).
- Hunger (Matthew 21:18).
- Thirst (John 19:28).
- Temptation (Hebrews 4:15)

That is why Jesus understands us perfectly.

2. **HIS DIVINITY** – The staggering truth which lies at the heart of Christian Religion; that Jesus Christ while true man was also true God.

**Jesus is God** – “Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! (Romans 9:5)  
About the Son he (God) says, “Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever.” (Hebrews 1:8)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1-2).

‘No-one has ever seen God, but God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.’ (John 1:18)

a) **Virgin Birth**: Isaiah 7:14 “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel”.

The Word of God states that our Lord’s mother was a virgin, that the conception was miraculous, and that the Agent was the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our Lord was free from the taint of original sin

Full attention should be given to Scripture which refer to His pre-existence (e.g. “He is before all thing”) and to His association with God the Father in the work of creation (e.g. “without Him nothing was made that was made”).

b) His teaching – John 6:35 - Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life.....

c) He fulfilled the Old Testament: Luke 24:27 – “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself”.

d) The claims that he made:

- To forgive sin (Mark 2:1-12).
- to give life (John 10:10).
- Judge of the world (John 5:22)

e) His resurrection – ‘and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.’ (Romans 1:4)

f) Teaching of Bible:

- The Supremacy of Christ – ‘He is the image of the invisible God...’ (Colossian 1:15)
- ‘In the beginning was the Word....’ (John 1:1)
- ‘The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.’ (John 1:14)

3. **HIS INCARNATION** – the union of divine and human natures in Jesus Christ.

When God became man. – ‘But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law...” (Galatians 4:4)

The great miracle – fullest obedience, empty of everything:

‘Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made him self nothing....’ (Philippians 2:5)

4. **HIS LIFE** – a perfect life

‘And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature (like us), and in favour with God and men.” (Luke 2:52)

The silent years – Jesus was a balanced person.

5. **HIS DEATH** - Jesus died on a cross

The death of Jesus teaches:

- a) Substitution – for my sin – ‘.....Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’
- b) Propitiation – wrath was mine; Jesus removed it from us – ONCE FOR ALL. ‘He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.’ (1 John 2:2)

6. **HIS RESURRECTION**

- a. Proved his deity – ‘and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.’ (Romans 1:4)
- b. Proof that God accepted Jesus’ work – ‘God has raised this Jesus to life...’ (Acts 2:32)
- c. Sure and certain hope of resurrection – 1 Corinthians 15\_12-58
- d. Jesus was victorious over sin, Satan, and death – ‘But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your moral bodies through his Spirit, who live sin you.’ (Romans 8:10-11)

7. **HIS ASCENSION** – Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11)

- a. He has gone to prepare a place for Christians – ‘in my father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.’ (John 14:2-3)
- b. Jesus has gone to make intercession for us – ‘...Christ Jesus .... Is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.’ (Romans 8:34)
- c. He will return triumphantly – ‘This same Jesus ..... will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’ (Acts 1:9-11)
- d. Jesus will rule over his creation as King.

8. **PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING** – the truths of our Saviour.

**APPLICATION** - HOW TO APPLY THIS TO OUR LIVES:

1. **Affirmation** – Jesus came for lost sinners (John 1:14). God has come right to us in Jesus and taken our flesh and blood, our space, and time into union with himself.
2. **Condescension** – God made himself nothing (Philippians 2:7). In the incarnation God himself has condescended to minister to his creatures’ needs, a servant God! This is staggering.
3. **Concentration** – “I have set you an example (John 13:15). Our Lord’s entire life as depicted in the gospels represents one long application, for he is both our redeemer and our example. We are to be like him in his single-minded concern for the Father’s glory.
4. **Death of Christ** – Here is the heart and centre of all Christian faith and understanding, preaching and living, serving and dying. It should draw from us:
  - a. *Wonder* – “The Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”. (Galatians 2:20). Through the centuries nothing in all human experience has so affected the heart and mind of man and so moved him to wonder; love and praise as the deed on Calvary.”
  - b. *The challenge* – ‘Christ died for our sins’ (1 Corinthians 15:3). Have I seen my sin and guilt laid on Christ at Calvary, judged and punished there in him? Have I called on him to save me and found grace to trust in his finished work on the cross for forgiveness, peace and righteousness?
  - c. *Thanksgiving* – Jesus has done it all. ‘To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ...be glory for ever and ever.’ (Revelation 1:5). Our deepest being should cry out in thanksgiving and praise.

- d. *Consecration* – ‘In view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices’ (Romans 12:1). Our response should be to lay down all for Christ.
  - e. *Missions* – ‘Christ’s love compels us’ - this is what drives us (2 Corinthians 5:14). This last application will affect our whole life-style; our conversation; the use of our time’ the stewardship of our money, the theme, and extent of our prayers, as well as our involvement in evangelical witness.
5. **Resurrection of Christ** – Jesus risen from the dead means for the Christian, many things:
- a. *Joy and boundless love* (1 Peter 1:8). To know that he is there with us, loving us with his own deep, boundless love is the joy of all joys to the Christian heart.
  - b. *Peace* – He ‘was raised to life for our justification’ (Romans 4:25). Our sin is gone, and we are accepted before God in him.
  - c. *Worship* - (Romans 1:4). The resurrection further confirms the eternal Godhead of Jesus Christ and therefore the propriety of our worship of him.
  - d. *Hope* - ‘Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep’ (1 Corinthians 15:20). Death is defeated.
  - e. *Victory* - ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me’ (Matthew 28:18). The victory of sin and evil has been truly won.
6. **The ascension of Christ** -
- a. *Security in an insecure world* – proclaims the reign of Jesus. ‘All authority has been given to me’. ‘Nothing can touch the Christian without the permission of Jesus.
  - b. *Comfort in our suffering* – There is now a man at the Godhead: ascension means that God has forever a human heart. We have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens’ (Hebrews 4:14)
  - c. *Missions* – ‘All authority has been given to me - therefore go’. The ascended Lord sends out the church to preach the gospel to every creature, to teach, to heal, and to minister to every need of man in Christ’s name. (Matthew 28:19-20)
  - d. *Resources for all our Christian living and serving* – one day He is coming back (Acts 2:32). The ascension puts at the church’s disposal nothing less than the power, which resurrected Jesus and set him at the right hand of God in glory. (Ephesians 1:19)
  - e. *The promise of Christ’s coming reign* – ‘He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet’ (1 Corinthians 15:26).

## THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

God's approach to the Sinner – The need of Grace and the need of forgiveness and goodness.

### **A Personal Being**

- a) The Holy Spirit is not 'it', an impersonal force or power, but a divine person. The Greek New Testament always calls the Holy Spirit '**he**', never 'it'. (John 16:13)  
The term Paraclete is essentially personal, referring to a personal agent. John 14:26 – 'But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you'. 16:13-14. "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth .... making it known to you'.
- b) Personal characteristics of the Holy Spirit:
- He gives **knowledge** – The deep and unfathomable nature of God cannot be grasped by even the wisest people .... 'but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit'. 1 Corinthians 2:10-11.
  - He **loves** – Romans 15:30 .... and by the love of the Spirit'.
  - He **grieves** – Ephesians 4:30 'And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption'.
- c) Personal acts of the Holy Spirit:
- **He speaks** – 'He, who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches....' Revelation 2:7.
  - **He intercedes** – 'In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express'. Romans 8:26
  - **He guides** – 'because those who are led by the Spirit of God ....' Romans 8:14

### **The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person**

The Holy Spirit is a divine being. Scripture witnesses to the deity of the Holy Spirit. He is a member of the Godhead, the ever-blessed object of our worship, love, and praise, who shares the same divine nature as the Father and the Son. (2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6).

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE 3<sup>RD</sup> PERSON OF THE TRINITY. He is:-

- a) Eternal - Hebrews 9:14 "How much more, then, will the Blood of Christ... who **through the eternal Spirit** ....'.
- b) Powerful – Luke 1:35 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and **the power** of the Most High will overshadow you'.
- c) Omnipresent – The Spirit is everywhere present. Ps 139-7 "**where can I go from your Spirit?** Where can I flee from your presence?"
- d) Omniscient – The Holy Spirit is **all knowing**: 1 Corinthians 2:10
- e) Called God – Acts 5:3-4 Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit. "... he had not lied to men **BUT TO GOD**'.

- f) The Holy Spirit was in creation – Genesis 1:2 ‘Now the earth was formless and empty .... **And the Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters.

### THE WORK (FUNCTION) OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a) **Glorify Christ** – NB John 16:14-15 – attention to Jesus
- b) **Convicts us of sin** – John 16:8-11 e.g. No person can become a child of God but for the work of the Holy Spirit.
- c) **Instructs** – John 16:13 – Study the Word and guide you into all truth.
- d) **Comforter** – (Key John 16:7 – Jesus says, ‘Unless I go away, the **Counselor** will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you’. John 14:26 - ‘But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit , whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you’
  - Greek work paracletos: para = along side / cletos = call: - calls us and runs along side us.
- e) **Equips** – Acts 1:8 – to receive power.
- f) **Cultivates the fruit of the spirit** – Galatians 5:22 – evidence of the fruit in our lives – not one or a few but all of them 9/9.

### MY RESPONSE

1. I do not want to grieve the Spirit – Ephesians 4:30. We can grieve the Holy Spirit by the way we live: If we are not careful, this can happen in 4 ways:
  - a. John 14:17- Spirit of truth - no error.
  - b. 2 Corinthians 4:13 - Spirit of faith – no worry or anxiety.
  - c. Hebrews 10:29 - Spirit of grace – no arrogance.
  - d. Romans 1:4 - Spirit of holiness – no worldliness
2. Do not quench the Holy Spirit – 1 Thessalonians 5:19 – If we withdraw the fuel supply – run out and stop. We must not stifle the Holy Spirit’s work.
3. Be filled with the Holy Spirit – Ephesians 5:18 – fall afresh on me. We should submit ourselves daily to His leading and draw constantly on His power.



## THE CHURCH

Biblical religion is inescapably corporate. Even before the fall Adam was not fulfilled without a human partner (Genesis 2:18). Corporateness in God's creative purpose is echoed in his unfolding redemptive purpose. His covenants with Noah (Genesis 9:8) and Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-5; 28:14) clearly reach beyond the individual to embrace immediate descendants and even 'all peoples on earth'.

Christians are saved into a body of believers. God has also given us gifts; each person has at least one. We need each other and need to function together. The Church can impact society.

### NATURE OF THE CHURCH – The people.

- a) Jesus and the Church – Accept Him as King.  
The condition: Repent and believe – then we are born into the family of God. Mark 1:44
- b) Old Testament: The covenant - Genesis 12:1-2 God calls Abraham;  
Exodus 6:6-7 Through Moses God promises redemption to the Israelites.  
He takes them "as His own people".  
Jeremiah 31:31-34 – God promises a "new covenant"
- c) Names of the Church – "Body of Christ (Romans 12:4); "People of God" (Romans 9:24-26) "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16); "The Bride of Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2)
- d) Definition of the Church – Gathering of saved sinners.

**LIFE OF THE CHURCH** – a Church that is alive. The tasks and responsibilities of the church are determined by the nature of the church. Since the church is the people of God, it functions by serving God's glory and honour (Romans 11:36, 1 Corinthians 8:6). But how does the church serve God's glory?

In 1 Peter 2:1-10 Peter describes the Church and the characteristics of the children of God, as does Hebrews 13:15-16. Romans 12:1-2 exhorts us to "not conform any longer to the pattern of the world".

Further references to the characteristics of the child of God - Ephesians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 12:13. We are called to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16).

- a) **Worship – The church is a worshipping community.** Practice of worship – offering praise to God.
  - a. The living Christ is present in the midst
  - b. The Holy Spirit empowers the worship
  - c. The overflow of worship – the adoring response to God
  - d. Worship is to be a whole lifestyle – 'whatever you do'.
- b) **Fellowship – The church is a fellowship in the Spirit.** As Christians live together in true fellowship, God is magnified. God never intended the Christian life to be lived in isolation. It is significant that the bulk of the Bible's direct teaching on the Christian life is addressed to churches – to corporate groups of Christians.
- c) **Ministry – The church is a servant community.** Jesus taught that greatness was to be found in humble service (Mark 9:33-37; Luke 22:24-27)

- d) Witness – **The church is a witnessing community. Matthew 28:16-20.**  
The call to witness lay at the heart of Jesus' final instructions to the apostles (Acts 1:8) and at Pentecost, they set about the task. In witness, attention is to be directed to the objective work of God in Christ.

*'Too often the church, and perhaps its theologians in particular, have forgotten that the great theological writings of the NT were composed by missionaries and evangelists engaged in costly, sacrificial evangelistic and pastoral work'.*

### THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH – How do we do this?

- a) **Priesthood of all believers** – we are all priests, with gifts. We have significant privileges associated with our new life in Christ. Hebrew 10:19-25. "But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: ..... and gave them gifts. (Ephesians 4:7).
- b) **Ministry of the Word** – Our textbook: 2 Timothy 4:1-5.
- c) **Discipline to protect the Church** - Jesus teaches us how to do this: Matthew 18:15-20.
- d) **Oversight of property and finance.**
- e) **Ordination of Ministers** – Godly, gifted and trained men. Acts 6:6.  
1 Timothy 4:14.

### MEANS OF GRACE

'All the ordinances of God whereby we receive His covenanted blessings'  
Therefore, in order to carry out the above we need to be people of:

- a) **Prayer** – Balanced prayer embraces worship and thanksgiving to God and intercession for others as well as personal petition.
- b) **Bible Reading** – the discipline of daily Bible study is an obvious and God-owned means of spiritual growth.
- c) **Preaching** – The public exposition of Scripture in the power of the Spirit.
- d) **Sacraments** –/ Communion and Baptism.
  - a. Definition = 'Outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace'.

### THE CHURCH'S GROWTH

We need to examine our attitudes to and use of the means of grace.

This will mean a commitment to read and study Scripture and to listen regularly to it being expounded, being baptised if we have not yet been so, and regularly sharing in the Lord's Supper. It will involve making time for prayer and waiting on God, a genuine commitment to the fellowship of our local church, and a willingness to take our share of suffering for the sake of the gospel and for our own and the church's growth.

For all its present weakness, the church is destined to become glorious and beautiful. Christ's perfected people, his spotless bride, who will be presented to her heavenly bridegroom at his appearing.

## ESCHATOLOGY – Greek word for ‘last’ – End Times

What we believe about the end times.

There can be no possible doubt that the Bible holds out to the Christian the ‘blessed hope’ of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as the outstanding landmark of his spiritual horizon.

The doctrine of the ‘second coming of Christ’ is referred to 300 times in the New Testament.

### 1. **JESUS CHRIST:**

Jesus often referred to the fact that he is coming back.

Matthew 24:30; 25:19; 26:64)

### 2. **NEW TESTAMENT:**

It is gloriously true that Christ receives His own at the dissolution of their mortal bodies, but Scripture goes much further than that. – Acts 1:11 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Titus 2:13) can, on no exegetical (critical interpretation of a text) grounds, be made to mean anything **but a coming in Person**, such that the church as a whole (the completed company of the redeemed) will be aware of and benefit by it. Our Lord Himself implies a distinction between death and His coming (John 21:23).

### 3. **EVENTS** (preceding the Second Coming) – the signs of His coming:

- a. Calling of the Gentiles (Matthew 24:14) The gospel must go to all the world first. (There are still some 1200 peoples’ groups that have not yet heard)
- b. Conversion of Israel – The Jewish people will turn to Jesus.
- c. Great apostasy and tribulation – Many of these persecutions have already occurred but will escalate. Christians will grow cold.
- d. Anti-Christ – Biblical references to this occur most clearly in John’s letters. John states that the antichrist is already present and at work; indeed, there are ‘many antichrists’, the appearance of whom is a clear sign that ‘it is the last hour’. The antichrist is marked by his teaching; ‘he denies the Father and the Son’; refuses to ‘acknowledge Jesus’ or to acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh.
- e. Signs and wonders – Jesus speaks of His return (Mark 13:24-25)

### 4. **TIMING**

- a. From God’s perspective, it is near - ...all the more as you see the Day approaching.’ (Hebrews 10:25)
- b. We do not know the time – it is in the hands of God, no one knows but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36)

### 5. **MANNER** – How is Jesus going to come back?

- a. Personal – the Lord will descend from Heaven. He will be seen – (Acts 1:11 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16)
- b. Physical - ‘every eye will see him’ (Revelation 1:7).
- c. Visible – “He will come with the clouds of heaven

- d. Sudden – the Bible speaks clearly about the unexpectedness of the Lord's return (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3)
- e. Glorious coming – universally manifest. In 'power and great glory' (Matthew 24:30) The Lord's return will be the final act of the unveiling of the divine presence, the culminating revelation of the majesty and transcendent glory of the triune God.

#### 6. **OTHER EVENTS** – what is going to happen?

- a. Resurrection of the dead – According to the New Testament a major accompaniment of the Lord's return will be the resurrection of the dead. 'Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good will rise to live...'. (John 5:28); Revelation 20:15; Acts 24:14.
- b. Judgement – The judgement will be utterly just and completely convincing. 'Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life ... if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life; he was thrown into the lake of fire'. (Revelation 20:11).

#### 7. **HEAVEN**

- a. We shall see God – 1 John 3:2.
- b. Enjoy the presence of Jesus -
- c. Fellowship with the saints – Matthew 8:11 ...and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven'.
- d. Freedom from sin and sorrow – "For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes'.

The Bible teaches clearly that there will be a division at the final judgement. For those who have rejected Jesus will be condemned. The destination for those who pass under God's judgement is hell.

#### 8. **HELL**

- a. Away from the face of God – 'then they will go away to eternal punishment...' (Matthew 25:46)
- b. Together with the devil - ...'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'. (Matthew 25:41)
- c. Fire – 'They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'. (Matthew 13:42)
- d. Darkness - ...will be thrown outside, into the darkness....' (Matthew 8:12).

## CONCLUSION

How does this affect us as Christians?

- a) Hope – The Lord's return is our 'blessed hope' (Titus 2:13)
- b) Comfort – 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) "we are not to grieve like the rest of men, who have not hope' (v. 13)
- c) Holiness – the Christian and the church are destined for a holy and sinless eternity. We are driven therefore to holiness – through daily repentance from sin and increasing conformity to the holy will of God.
- d) Action – the truth of the last things should lead us to activity, not ease.
  - Spread the Gospel – Evangelism (Matthew 28:19-20)
  - Build the Church – the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:21-23)
  - Serve our neighbours (Revelation 21:24)
  - Love, prayer and watchfulness - (Romans 5:5, 8:19; Matthew 24:42, 25:13)
  - Praise – A final expression of our conviction concerning Christ's coming triumph is joyful praise and worship. 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever'. (Revelation 5:13).