

The Foundation and Pillars of the Biblical Worldview

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to Vonne, my wife of forty-six years. Thank you for your unending love, faithfulness, loyalty, and service. Without your faith and encouragement, it would not have been possible for me to write these books. You were the helper God formed just for me (Gn 2:18ff). An incomparable wife and mother! Your worth was far above rubies (Pr 31:10)! *Soli Deo Gloria!*

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THE FOUNDATION AND PILLARS OF THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?

Description and definition

Every person holds millions of beliefs about things as diverse as mangos to babies to quasars. Each person holds his or her innumerable beliefs in some sort of conceptual system. In anyone's system of beliefs, he or she holds the various beliefs in different degrees of conviction and certainty, being more committed to some beliefs than others. It is helpful to picture a person's belief system as a spider web. This web includes some non-central, peripheral beliefs that can be doubted with little consequence to the person's belief system as a whole. However, other beliefs are much more central and foundational. The degree of influence or control that a particular belief has in any belief system will vary according to the individual person.¹

At the center of a spider web of beliefs is the person's **ultimate authority** (sometimes referred to as either his starting axiom or his frame of reference), i.e., that which he does not question and on the basis of which he proves everything else. A person can never prove his ultimate authority or beginning axiom; it must be **self-attesting**—otherwise it is not his *ultimate* authority. Therefore, when it comes to one's ultimate authority, **circular reasoning**² is inevitable. Every system of organized propositions depends of necessity on some indemonstrable premises, and every system must make an attempt to explain how these primary premises come to be accepted.³ Circular

¹ Ronald H. Nash, *Faith and Reason* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 23.

² “**Circular reasoning**” (also called “begging the question”) is a fallacious argument in which the conclusion of an argument is one of its premises.

³ Gordon H. Clark, *God's Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics* (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1987), 19. This type of argument

reasoning is used in every philosophical or religious system, as well as in geometry.⁴ For example, **rationalists** say reason is the ultimate standard because reason says so. Furthermore, people assume the laws of logic while they're arguing for the laws of logic. **Empiricists** use their eyes and ears when arguing for empiricism, and say that sensory experience has taught them to trust their senses above all else. Irrational **mystics** say mystical experience validates mysticism. Proponents of philosophical linguistic analysis use language to argue for philosophical linguistic analysis and to assert that language cannot convey truth. **Muslims** argue that Allah is the ultimate authority because Allah says so. Adherents to each of these philosophical and religious systems simply assume their ultimate authority solely by "faith."

One of the most significant questions to ask regarding any person or group is, "Who (or what) is their ultimate authority?" Who (or what) infallibly determines truth and morality (i.e., right and wrong)? In the final analysis there are only two possibilities—the infinite, tri-personal,

is used by Christian presuppositional apologists. Modern destructive-critical theories begin on assumptions which are anti-supernaturalistic and non-revelational, and then proceed to "disprove" the Scriptures; they, too, can be accused of begging the question or circular reasoning.

⁴ Apologetically, it should be noted that in the Biblical worldview circularity "can be as broad as the whole universe, for every fact witnesses to the truth of God" (John M. Frame, *Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief*, ed. Joseph E. Torres, 2nd ed. [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015], 14f). The Biblical worldview also has complete internal coherence, i.e., it holds together on its own terms. This is not true for any competing worldview, for all other worldviews borrow Biblical concepts at crucial points. Furthermore, man being created in the image of God—having both an awareness of God and the basic moral requirements of God's law on his heart—renders him incapable of escaping the God of the Bible. Cf. John M. Frame: *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987), 130-133; idem., *Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief*, 10-15.

Creator-God of the Bible, or, finite, depraved, autonomous (i.e., a law unto himself)⁵ man.

A system or web of beliefs may best be designated as a **worldview**. “A worldview is a set of beliefs about the most important issues of life.”⁶

Everyone has a worldview or a philosophy of life (whether they know it or not). A worldview is **a network of basic assumptions or presuppositions by which we (consciously or unconsciously) place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality.**⁷

A more philosophical definition of worldview is: “**a network of presuppositions about *reality, knowledge, and behavior, which is not verified by the procedures of natural science but in terms of which every aspect of man’s knowledge and experience is interpreted and interrelated.***”⁸

These worldview definitions stipulate that every person and every worldview hold to basic, unproven **presuppositions** or axioms. Presuppositions can be compared to a high speed rail train running on dedicated tracks that have no switches. Once a person commits himself to a certain set of presuppositions, his direction and destination are determined.⁹ That is why one professor I knew used

⁵ The word “**autonomous**” (Greek *autos*—self + *nomos*—law) literally means “a law unto oneself.” It denotes thought and behavior independent of, and not submitted to, God’s revealed Word. This is the paradigm attitude of unbelievers.

⁶ Ronald H. Nash, *World-Views in Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 16.

⁷ A worldview may be defined as “a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world” (James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976], 17. Ronald H. Nash defines a worldview as “a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality” (*Faith and Reason*, 24).

⁸ I am indebted to Dr. Greg L. Bahnsen for this definition.

⁹ Ronald H. Nash, *Faith and Reason*, 29.

to say, “Tell me your presuppositions and I will tell you your arguments and your conclusions!”¹⁰

A person’s worldview functions somewhat like sunglasses, filtering and coloring all incoming data. Picture three people wearing three different colors of sunglasses (e.g., green, blue, and pink). The first person sees everything as green; the second sees everything as blue; the third sees everything as pink. The different colors of their sunglasses represent three different worldviews that color the way they see everything.

Our worldview controls our thinking about what is real (metaphysics), how we know what we know (epistemology), and how we should live our lives (ethics). It also provides a foundation for our use of logic.

A worldview must answer life’s basic questions, such as:

- Man’s origin: Where did I come from?
- The nature of man’s problem: How did I get into this mess? [Man innately recognizes the disparity between the way things should be and the way things are.]
- The path to salvation: What can I do about it?
- Future destiny: Where am I going?

¹⁰ This statement is simplistic, since “presuppositions are not the only factor in the development of one’s system of beliefs. Because of different secondary commitments, social influences, personal experiences, criteria of rationality, intellectual abilities, (etc.), two people with shared presuppositions may nevertheless generate differing ‘networks’ of belief” (Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*, ed. Robert R. Booth [Atlanta: American Vision, 1996], 220 n 10).

“Any world-view must be such that those who accept it intellectually **can also live what they profess.**”¹¹

Christianity is a total world- and life-view. The competitors of Christianity are also worldviews. Thus, the apologetical case for or against Christianity (or its competitors) must properly be made in terms of its entire worldview (not just certain theological pieces). Christianity should not be evaluated or defended in a piece-meal fashion.¹²

Consider how a person’s religious commitments will determine his interpretation of “facts.” Two quotes from R.J. Rushdoony will illustrate:

The facts of the physical universe differ widely for a humanist, a Christian, and a Hindu. For the **humanist**, all factuality is a product of chance evolution; all facts are thus ultimately meaningless, and their only reality is a physical one, and an irrational one. For the **Christian**, all factuality is God-created and the product of His eternal purpose; all facts are thus totally rational, because the mind of God is behind them, and their reality is thus more than physical and natural. For the traditional **Hindu**, all factuality is really illusion, because nothingness is ultimate; all things are burdened with Karma, and their goal is release from the illusions of this world into final nothingness. What we call facts is determined by our faith.¹³

¹¹ Ronald H. Nash, *Faith and Reason*, 26 n 9. Nash then adds, “Competing world-views need to be tested both in the philosophy classroom and in the laboratory of life.”

¹² “The fight between Christianity and non-Christianity is . . . no piece-meal affair. It is the life and death struggle between two mutually opposed life and world-views” (Cornelius Van Til, *Introduction to Systematic Theology* [1932; reprint: Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974], 6). Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952), 25.

¹³ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1981), 149f.

The “facts” of the universe are very different for a Buddhist, an existential humanist, and an orthodox Christian. For the **Buddhist**, all is illusion and misery; his faith requires a world and life negation. *Maya* and *karma* determine all things. For an **existential humanist**, “facts” have only a purely personal meaning, the meaning which each man assigns them. Neither man nor creation have any essence, any created and preordained meaning. Good and evil and every other form of meaning is [*sic*] self-generated: they are values I assign to things in terms of my will. Nothing has any meaning from God’s creative act; all meaning comes from man’s creative act. In **Biblical** thought, however, every fact is God-created and God-interpreted so that the meaning of all creation is to be understood in terms of Him and His Kingdom.¹⁴

These two quotes clearly illustrate that a humanist, an existential humanist, a Hindu, a Buddhist, and a Christian will view any given “fact” in terms of his worldview, and they will have radically different interpretations of all facts. We must recognize people’s worldviews.

Ultimately, there are only two basic worldviews: the Christian and the non-Christian (Ro 1:25). These worldviews provide the framework by which people determine: the nature of mankind and the universe; what constitutes moral behavior; what is the role of civil government; whether “science” can ever discover truth; and so forth. In this book I will be presenting the Christian worldview.

Three necessary components of any worldview

Any worldview is comprised of three aspects: epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. What do these terms mean?

I. Epistemology

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies theories of knowledge¹⁵ (i.e., the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge). Simply stated, epistemology attempts to explain how we

¹⁴ Ibid., 129 (bold added).

¹⁵ **Knowledge** may be defined simply as “justified true belief.”

know what we know. A satisfactory epistemology must cogently answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of truth and objectivity? Is truth absolute (i.e., the same for all people in all places for all time), or is it relative?
- What is the nature of, and relationship between, belief and knowledge?
- What are the standards or procedures for justifying one's beliefs?
- What is the basis for logic?
- What is the basis for science and discovery? Can we trust our senses, and if so, on what basis?
- Is knowledge about God possible? If so, how (by revelation, etc.)?

At its simplest, epistemology asks the fundamental questions that every Christian should learn to ask: **How do you know that?** and, **By what standard?**¹⁶ In asking “by what standard” we are seeking to learn what that person looks to as his **ultimate authority** (or frame of reference), i.e., that which he does not question and on the basis of which he proves everything else.

2. Metaphysics

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that studies theories of reality (its origin, nature, and structure). Metaphysics examines three main areas: God, the universe, and man. Here are the fundamental questions metaphysics attempts to answer:

¹⁶ Two Christian theologian-apologists wrote books based on this epistemological question: Rousas J. Rushdoony, *By What Standard?* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1959) and Greg L. Bahnsen, *By This Standard* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985); idem., *No Other Standard* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991).

God

- Does God exist? If so:
- What is the nature of God?
- Is there more than one God?
- Is God personal (i.e., one who knows, speaks, acts, loves, etc.) or impersonal (e.g., a force or power)?

The universe

- What is the relationship between God and the universe? Is God separate from the universe (i.e., transcendent), or is He to be identified with the universe (e.g., pantheism or panentheism¹⁷)? Does God work miracles¹⁸ within history, or is the universe a closed system (operating only by natural causes)?
- What is the origin of the universe? Is it eternal, or did God create it?
- What is the nature of the universe? Is it material, spiritual, or something else? Should the universe be understood in a mechanistic way or in a purposeful way (e.g., God's predestination and providential control)?

¹⁷ **Pantheism** (Greek *pan*—all + *theos*—God) is the belief that God and the universe as a whole are identical; all is God and God is all. It denies the personhood of God. **Panentheism** (Greek *pan*—all + *en*—in + *theos*—God) is the belief that the universe is a part of God but not the whole of His being. God is the soul of the universe and the universe is the body of God.

¹⁸ A **miracle** (enacted by God) is best defined as a visible, extraordinary work of God whereby He accomplishes His sovereign, redemptive purposes in the realm of nature and human history, bearing witness to Himself (as Redeemer and Judge) and arousing people's awe and wonder.

- What is the nature of history/change/development? Where is history going? Is there meaning in history?
- Are there unchanging laws, universals, or concepts?

Man

- What is man's origin? Is man God's creature, or is he merely a highly evolved animal?
- What is the nature of man? Is man free, or is he the victim of deterministic forces (e.g., biological, psychological, environmental, or economic forces)? Is man basically good or evil? Is man only material/body, or does he have a soul/mind?
- What is man's relationship to God?
- Does man's conscious, personal existence survive death?
- Are there rewards and punishment after death?

3. Ethics

Ethics is the branch of philosophy that directs how we should live our lives. A satisfactory ethics must cogently answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of good and evil? Is it absolute (i.e., the same for all people in all places for all time), or relative (i.e., different for different individuals, cultures, historical periods)? Is it subjective or objective?
- What is the standard of ethics and ethical evaluation?
- What is the nature of guilt, atonement, and personal peace?
- How should society and the state be ordered?
- How does one attain or produce moral character and conduct?

Epistemology: Achilles heel of non-Christian thought

As we have noted, epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies theories of knowledge (i.e., the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge).

Over the past 3,000 years there have been four basic schools of thought attempting to explain how we know what we know (i.e., epistemology): empiricism; rationalism; irrationalism; and divine revelation.¹⁹ Let's begin by examining empiricism.

Empiricism

Strict empiricism²⁰ is the epistemological theory that **all knowledge comes from sense-data perceived or experienced through the five senses** (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste). It is opposed to rationalism and to any *a priori* or inborn knowledge; man is born a *tabula rasa* (i.e., a blank sheet of paper), or, in modern parlance, a blank, unformatted hard drive.²¹ Empiricism teaches that **to know whether**

¹⁹ Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy* (1973; repr., Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1989). After David Hume reduced empiricism to skepticism, Immanuel Kant pioneered modern philosophy by postulating a divided field of knowledge having two kinds of truth: the realm of freedom ("faith," non-reason) and the realm of nature (reason, science, history, the space-time world). Of course, the two fields of knowledge could never really be brought together, which is the problem of all dualistic systems of thought (cf. Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy*, 13, 93f). The twentieth century featured many schools of philosophy that abandoned the enterprise of developing a comprehensive worldview (including metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics that comport with each other), such as philosophies of pragmatism, existentialism, and linguistic analysis.

²⁰ The word "empiricism" comes from the Greek word *empeiria* meaning "experience."

²¹ Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy*, 24. The most influential empiricists are: Greek philosopher Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas (13th century), and David Hume (18th century). John

something is true, you investigate or observe it. The test for truth is experience.

Most people put great stock in empirical evidence (“seeing is believing”). For example, critical Biblical scholars put far greater stock in the authority and reliability of ancient Near East historical records and modern scientific dating methods than they do in Biblical history or chronology. However, there are insuperable philosophical and logical problems with relying on empiricism as the foundation for knowledge. First, let’s do an internal critique within empiricism’s worldview—what apologists Cornelius Van Til and Greg Bahnsen called the argument from folly (Pr 26:5).²²

Internal critique within empiricism’s worldview

There are at least thirteen philosophical objections commonly made against empiricism.

1. If all that I know are my sensations, then I cannot be sure there is an external world that corresponds to my sensations. I never know the external world; I only know my sensations of the external world. So with empiricism it is impossible to know whether any other person even exists; there is no one to communicate with. Furthermore, if another person does exist, it would be impossible to know anything about him or her.
2. Empiricism cannot provide us with categories²³ with which to organize our sensations. How do our senses give us concepts such as equality, justice, fairness, rights, parallel, equal, justification,

Locke (who influenced some of America’s founding fathers) was also an empiricist.

²² Here we are using one part of the presuppositional apologetic, the argument from folly, which is based on Proverbs 26:5: “Answer a fool as his folly *deserves*, that he not be wise in his own eyes” (NASB).

²³ “Empiricism makes use of space and time surreptitiously [stealthily] at the beginning of the learning process, while explicitly these concepts are learned only at the end” (Gordon H. Clark, *God’s Hammer*, 73).

etc.?⁹ How can the empiricist know what evidence is? (My son Joshua used this point to shut the mouth of a university philosophy professor who was mocking people who believe there is a God.)

3. Empiricism cannot account for the (immaterial, invariant, universal, absolute) laws of logic, mathematics, and ethics.
4. “Empiricism cannot justify any statements about ethical values. Statements about sensible facts do not imply anything about ethical goodness or badness, right or wrong, or obligation or prohibition.”²⁴ Attempting to derive ethics (what ought to be) from empiricism (what is) commits the naturalistic fallacy.²⁵ Statements about what “is” involve descriptive propositions that are either true or false; what “ought” to be involves commands which are neither true nor false.

²⁴ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 117f.

²⁵ The naturalistic fallacy, which assumes that what “is” is what “ought” to be, was disproven by philosopher David Hume. Philosopher Gordon Clark explains the problem with the naturalistic fallacy:

The theory of natural law commits a major logical blunder when it tries to deduce a normative conclusion from descriptive premises. No matter how carefully or how intricately one describes what men do, or what the provisions of nature are, or how natural inclinations function, it is a logical impossibility to conclude that this is or is not what men ought to do. The *is* never implies the *ought*. This criticism applies to all empirical theories (Gordon H. Clark, “Fruits of the Reformation in Philosophy and Ethics,” *Essays on Ethics and Politics*, ed. John W. Robbins [Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1992], 102; cf. 10).

Statements about what “is” involve descriptive propositions that are either true or false; what “ought” to be involves commands which are neither true nor false. In the final analysis, “No arguments from empirical observation can establish any moral principle. . . . A moral principle can only be a divinely revealed prohibition or command” (Gordon H. Clark, *First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. [Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1991], 78).

5. Empiricism can make no universal propositions about anything (e.g., “all men are mortal”),²⁶ since no one has experienced all the past nor any of the future.
6. Empiricism cannot justify any statements about the future, for no one has known the future by sense experience. Consequently, empiricism cannot justify making any scientific or economic predictions!
7. You cannot prove your personal identity over time. Thus, empiricism results in a solipsistic²⁷ individual who can never know what he thought yesterday, since he can only know what is present in his mind right now. The past is unknowable since it cannot be experienced today. The impossibility of knowing what is not present precludes all knowledge of the past. An individual sensation never occurs again.²⁸ One cannot think the same object twice. A solipsistic individual, confined to the present, is ignorant not only of yesterday’s sensations, but also of yesterday’s self. Thus, the human “self” disappears, resulting in a world of perceptions with no one to perceive! This, in effect, annihilates memory.²⁹ Thus, since empiricists cannot prove personal identity

²⁶ “No universal and necessary proposition can be deduced from sensory observation. Universality and necessity can only be a priori” (Gordon H. Clark, “God and Logic,” *The Trinity Review* (Nov-Dec 1980), 6; available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=16>; reprinted in *Against the World*, ed. John W. Robbins (Hobbs, NM: The Trinity Foundation, 1996), 52–56.

²⁷ **Solipsism** is the belief that the human self knows and can know nothing but its own conscious states, being cut off from (or denying) the reality of anything outside its own mind. In other words, solipsism merges the world into the self, so that the world becomes nothing more than a part of one’s own consciousness.

²⁸ Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy*, 121f.

²⁹ Gordon H. Clark, “Special Divine Revelation as Rational,” in *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F.H. Henry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1958), 33; reprinted in *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 73.

over time, empiricism cannot justify anyone learning anything from experience!³⁰ Furthermore, how can empiricists observe time at all?

8. Empiricism cannot justify the reliability of human memory. You can never double-check your memory without using your memory to do it—thereby begging the question (which is a logical fallacy).³¹
9. Since no one can sense causation through their sight, hearing, touch, smell, or taste³² (as empiricist David Hume pointed out), causation must not exist. Without causation one cannot prove that the future will be like the past (i.e., the uniformity of nature). Even though the future was like the past in the past, on what *empirical* basis can they know that the future will be like the past in the future? For example, just because the sun rose yesterday and today, on what *empirical* basis can they know that the sun will rise tomorrow? They certainly have not observed the future. Since, for the empiricist, causation does not exist, empiricism cannot justify doing historical, scientific, or economic investigations!

³⁰ Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy*, 76.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 76–81.

³² We see sequence of events, and we can see the effects of causation, but we do not see causation itself.

10. All inductive arguments³³ are formal fallacies (i.e., they commit the logical fallacy of asserting the consequent).³⁴ A simple example of asserting the consequent is: “If your battery is dead, your car will not start. Your car will, in fact, not start; therefore, it is indeed

³³ **Inductive reasoning** is a method of reasoning by which a general law or principle is inferred from observed particular instances (e.g., every crow I’ve ever seen is black; therefore, all crows are black). However, the conclusion expresses something that goes beyond what is said in the premises. Since the conclusion goes beyond what is given in the premises, the truth of all the premises can never guarantee the truth of the conclusion. Furthermore, as David Hume showed, inductive arguments covertly assume without justification the uniformity of nature. Deductive proofs of the validity of induction are impossible, since they go beyond the premises; inductive proofs of the validity of induction are fallacious, since they would involve circular reasoning (begging the question). Hume concluded that argument from experience must be without rational foundation (Anthony Flew, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, rev. 2nd ed. [New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1979], 171f, s.v. “Induction”).

³⁴ **Asserting the consequent** is a logical fallacy that reasons as follows: if p , then q ; q , therefore p . Philosopher/logician/mathematician Bertrand Russell, certainly no friend of Christianity, explained:

All inductive arguments in the last resort reduce themselves to the following form: ‘If this is true, that is true: now that is true, therefore this is true.’ This argument is, of course, formally fallacious. Suppose I were to say: ‘If bread is a stone and stones are nourishing, then this bread will nourish me; now this bread does nourish me; therefore it is a stone, and stones are nourishing.’ If I were to advance such an argument, I should certainly be thought foolish, yet it would not be fundamentally different from the argument upon which all scientific laws are based [“Limitations of Scientific Method”].

See: John W. Robbins, “The Scientist as Evangelist,” *Trinity Review* (Jan-Feb 1986), <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=35>; reprinted in *Against the World*, 203f; and “Foreword,” in Gordon H. Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*, x-xi. Cf. Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy*, 133.

true that your battery is dead.”³⁵ Since all inductive arguments are formal fallacies, empiricism cannot justify using the scientific method!

11. Observation is unreliable because our senses can deceive us (e.g., hallucinations, mirages, optical illusions, etc.). On what basis can we know when our senses are lying to us and when they are telling us the truth? Or, is whatever our senses tell us at the time true (i.e., corresponding to the real, external world)? Even scientific experiments yield slightly different data each time they are conducted.
12. The basic axiom of empiricism (i.e., everything ought to be either verified or falsified by sense observation [an ethical “ought”!]) itself cannot be verified by sense observation!³⁶ Empiricism cannot empirically justify empiricism!
13. No one can live solely on the basis of empiricism.

Of course, empiricism rules out claims to know the transcendent, invisible, Creator-God of the Bible, Who is resistant to the empirical checking procedures of autonomous man.

The history of philosophy—culminating with David Hume—illustrates the fact that empiricism inevitably leads to skepticism (i.e., nothing can be known).³⁷ If one starts with a blank mind, one’s mind remains blank.

Thus far we have been doing an internal critique within empiricism’s worldview (the argument from folly). Now let’s focus on the Biblical

³⁵ W. Gary Crampton, *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark* [n.p.: Trinity Foundation, 1999], 18.

³⁶ W. Gary Crampton, *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark*, 22.

³⁷ Philosophical **skepticism** is the denial that genuine human knowledge or even rational belief is possible; nothing can be known with certainty.

worldview critique of empiricism, i.e., the argument from truth (Pr 26:4).³⁸

Biblical worldview critique of empiricism

1. God created man in His image/likeness (Gn 1:26)

- God’s mind is not blank; He possesses knowledge. Since God created Adam in His image, Adam could not have had a blank mind (contra philosopher John Locke).
- “*A priori* or innate knowledge (denied in empiricism) is necessary to explain how Adam understood the words God spoke to him shortly after he was created—an understanding impossible under the philosophy of empiricism, which requires a significant amount of time for man to learn concepts and build a language.”³⁹
- Regeneration, described in the Bible as a new creation, restores in the believer knowledge and righteousness that man originally possessed prior to the Fall (Col 3:10; Eph 4:24).

³⁸ Here we are using the second part of the presuppositional apologetic, the argument from truth, which is based on Proverbs 26:4: “Do not answer a fool according to his folly [i.e., his autonomous thinking, his worldview], or you will also be like him.”

The book of Proverbs uses six different Hebrew words that are translated into the English word “fool.” In general, the term “fool” designates a self-sufficient person who orders his life as if there were no God (not a person who is mentally deficient). The fool is especially characterized by his repudiation of God’s wisdom, instruction, and discipline. Thus, the term “fool” is primarily a description of character or ethical attitudes and behavior. Some fools are also “scoffers” (*lits*, used 19 times in Proverbs).

³⁹ Douglas J. Douma, *The Presbyterian Philosopher: The Authorized Biography of Gordon H. Clark* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 60.

“and have put on the new *man* who is [being] renewed in **knowledge** according to the **image** of Him who created him” (Col 3:10).

The fact that God created man is His image/likeness precludes the epistemology of empiricism (which postulates that man is born with no *a priori* knowledge, a blank sheet of paper).

2. The basic requirements of God’s law are written on the hearts of all people

Romans 2:14–15 “for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, **by nature** do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the work of the law [NKJV, ESV, NASB; “**the requirements of the law**,” NIV; “what the law requires,” NRSV] **written in their hearts**, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them.”

Romans 1:32 [the unregenerate] **knowing** the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things [homosexuality, idolatry, etc.] are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them” (cf. vv. 18–32).

Thus, Romans 1:32 and 2:14–15 show that even sin does not eradicate certain innate moral knowledge that God has given to every person.

The fact that the basic requirements of God’s law are written on the hearts of all people from birth means that they are born with innate knowledge, thereby precluding the epistemology of empiricism.

3. Original sin corrupts the mind of every person from conception onward
 - Since the Fall, the mind of every unbeliever is depraved, i.e., corrupted by sin, so that he cannot think God’s thoughts after Him.

Depravity of Unbelievers' Minds

- can't know God (1 Cor 1:21; 2:14)
- foolish (Ro 1:21-22; 1 Cor 1:19-10)
- futile/useless (Ro 1:21; 1 Cor 3:20; Eph 4:17)
- ignorant, without understanding (Ro 1:31; 3:11; Eph 4:18)
- depraved (Ro 1:28; Gn 6:5; Jer 17:9)
- opposed to/enemy of God, His wisdom & His law (1 Cor 1:18-29; 3:18-20; Ro 8:7; Eph 2:3; Phil 3:18-19; Col 1:21; cf. Ja 4:4)
- blinded by Satan (2 Cor 4:4)
- enslaved by spirits (Gal 4:8-9, 3)
- false knowledge (1 Tim 6:20)
- empty deception (Col 2:8)
- defiled (Tit 1:15)
- suppresses the truth (Ro 1:18)

Scripture also declares that unbelievers are “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim 3:7). The heart/mind of natural man cannot submit to God’s law (Ro 8:7), and it is more deceitful than anything else and desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). What seems right to the natural man leads to death (Pr 16:25).

Truly, God has made foolish the humanistic, autonomous wisdom of the unbelieving world (1 Cor 1:19-20; 3:19-20; Ro 1:22; Proverbs, noting especially “fool” and “folly”).

Thus, the pagan Greek philosopher Aristotle—who (through Thomas Aquinas) is so foundational to Roman Catholic theology and philosophy—is quite mistaken in his belief that man at birth is morally neutral.

The fact that original sin corrupts the mind of every person from their conception precludes the epistemology of empiricism.

Unbelievers' wills are depraved, so they cannot choose to obey God

- suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Ro 1:18);
- exchange the truth of God for the lie (Ro 1:25; cf. 2 Th 2:10-12);
- repudiate their knowledge of God (Ro 1:18, 21-22, 28, 32; 3:10-11ff);
- make idols (Ro 1:23, 25; Ac 14:11-13, 15; 17:16, 23, 29; etc.);
- reject God's moral law (Ro 1:18ff; Ps 2:1-3; Lk 19:14) while pursuing autonomy (i.e., self-law: "I live by my own rules"⁴⁰);
- become their own gods, determining good and evil for themselves (cf. Gn 3:5);
- love darkness and hate the light, because their deeds are evil (Jn 3:19-20);
- are devoid of the fear of God (Ro 3:18); and
- are slaves to sin (Ro 6:17).

"There is none who seeks after God" (Ro 3:11). Unbelievers know God exists (Ro 1:18ff), but they "suppress the truth."

4. The nature of faith. Abraham (the father of all who believe) had to believe God's covenantal Word, even when all the empirical evidence available to him pointed the opposite direction (Ro

⁴⁰ Note God's condemnation of those who live by the dictates of their own hearts: Jer 3:17; 7:24; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12; 23:17; cf. 8:6; Dt 29:19, which mentions those who do whatever is right in their own eyes—a reoccurring theme in Scripture (Dt 12:8; Jdg 17:6; 21:25; Pr 12:15; 21:2).

4:17–22, 11). “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7). “Faith is . . . the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1; cf. 1–3, 7).

In making her verdict, Eve used empirical data (Gn 3:6) to test the truth claims of God’s Word. Adam may even have conducted the first scientific experiment to test the truthfulness of God’s Word: He waited till Eve ate the forbidden fruit and observed that she did not immediately die, as God had predicted. With God’s hypothesis thereby “disproven,” Adam concluded that Satan’s hypothesis was most probably correct, so he should eat as well. Adam and Eve sinned, in part, because they did not make God’s revealed Word their ultimate authority and the judge over all empirical data.

In sum, in the Biblical worldview, (1) the doctrine of creation, (2) “the requirements of the law” being written on the heart of every person, (3) the doctrine of depravity, and (4) the nature of faith all disprove the philosophy of empiricism. God created man a rational being already in possession of *a priori*, propositional knowledge about God⁴¹ and His creation.

In sum, the philosophy of empiricism is not true; it cannot justify knowledge.

Since empiricism cannot function as an adequate epistemological basis for knowledge, what about rationalism?

⁴¹ John Calvin taught that the Spirit of God has implanted an innate idea of Himself, a *sensus divinitatis*, in all men, which is propositional and ineradicable (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, translated and indexed by Ford L. Battles, 2 vols. [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1960], 1:3). Cf. Benjamin B. Warfield, “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Knowledge of God,” in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 10 vols. (1931; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991), 5:29ff; available at https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/pdf/warfield_calvinknowledge.pdf.

Rationalism

Caution: Do not confuse rationalism (which is a system of philosophical thought) with rationality (i.e., thinking in a logical, self-consistent, non-contradictory manner).

Rationalism may be defined as **the epistemological belief that human reason alone is the road to the acquisition and justification of knowledge**. Rationalism asserts that man is not born a blank paper (as in empiricism), but is born with *a priori* knowledge (i.e., innate knowledge before any observation or experience occurs). Rationalism is opposed to both sensory experience and divine revelation as sources of knowledge. Reason is postulated to be: autonomous⁴² (i.e., a law unto itself); self-authenticating (i.e., reason is the ultimate standard because reason says so); and subject to no standards other than its own.

Thus, for a rationalist, proof consists of conceptually clear and distinct (self-evident) ideas being presented in a logical manner. To know whether something is true, stop and think about it.

Let's do an internal critique within the rationalist's worldview (the argument from folly).

Internal critique within rationalism's worldview

There are at least eight philosophical objections commonly made against rationalism.

1. Rationalism cannot deduce historical particularities from universal premises. In other words, rationalism cannot demonstrate that there was a particular historical person named

⁴² The word “**autonomous**” (Greek *autos*—self + *nomos*—law) literally means “a law unto oneself.” It denotes thought and behavior independent of, and not submitted to, God's revealed Word. This is the paradigm attitude of unbelievers.

John Calvin, Benjamin Warfield, or even Jesus Christ. Thus, rationalism can produce no history and no science.⁴³

2. How can rationalism acquire a language in which to express its thoughts, and what sort of thoughts could it have if it had no language at all?
3. Rationalism has been thoroughly discredited by the fact that its proponents cannot agree with each other on what ideas are clear and distinct. Consider the great Continental rationalists:
 - René Descartes (1596–1650) was a dualist who taught that reality is made up of mind and matter;
 - Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) was a pantheist who taught that mind and matter are the same thing);
 - Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716) was a spiritual atomist who taught that reality is made up of an infinite number of bits of non-material mind or energy).

Thus, the great Continental rationalists completely disagreed with each other on the nature of reality. If the leading proponents of rationalism cannot agree with each other regarding which ideas are clear and distinct, then these ideas are obviously not clear and distinct! Rationalists disagree on their starting point.

4. Men can and do err in their reasoning.
5. Reasoning apart from revelation cannot distinguish between the omnipotent, good God of the Bible and an omnipotent demon who deceives us. Or, as pagan philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) argued, perhaps our logical categories and thinking faculty are nothing more than physiological necessities,

⁴³ Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy*, 23. Examples of leading rationalists include: medieval Christian philosopher Anselm (11th century); the three great 17th century Continental philosophers, René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, and Gottfried Leibniz, and 19th century philosopher Georg W.F. Hegel.

determined by evolutionary forces. Their purpose is not the discovery of truth, but the survival of the organism.⁴⁴

6. Rationalism commits the fallacy of asserting the consequent, reasoning in this manner: If we begin with presupposition **R**, we can justify the claim that we do have knowledge. Now it is certain that we do have knowledge, therefore, presupposition **R** is true.⁴⁵
7. Rationalism leads to solipsism, which merges the world into the self so that the world becomes nothing more than a part of one's own consciousness.⁴⁶ One can know only about his own mind, not about the real world.
8. No one can live on the basis of rationalism.

Thus, rationalism has proven to be unreliable. Rationalism cannot function as the epistemological foundation for knowledge.

Now let's focus on the Biblical worldview critique of rationalism, i.e., the argument from truth (Pr 26:4).

Biblical worldview critique of rationalism

1. The depravity of man's autonomous mind and will (called the noetic effects of sin) render him incapable of thinking God's thoughts after Him.
2. As we saw under the heading "Original sin corrupts the mind of every person from conception onward," there is a wide chasm and an antithesis between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world. God has made foolish the humanistic, autonomous

⁴⁴ W. Gary Crampton, *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark*, 18.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid. Crampton adds that nineteenth century German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel attempted to solve the problem of solipsism by postulating an Absolute Mind. However, Hegel's Absolute Mind could not rationally deduce particular individuals. Furthermore, it was pantheistic, with the self being swallowed up by the Absolute or World Spirit.

wisdom of the unbelieving world (1 Cor 1:19-20; 3:19-20; Ro 1:22; Proverbs, noting especially “fool” and “folly”).

3. Many truths—such as the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of Christology (especially the divine and the human natures of Christ), the Incarnation, and the doctrine of salvation—could never be deduced from man’s autonomous mind.

“For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your ways My ways,” says the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts” (Is 55:8-9).

Thus, the Biblical worldview disproves rationalism. Rationalism cannot function as the foundation for knowledge.

Since rationalism cannot function as the foundation for knowledge, what about irrationalism (mysticism)?

Irrationalism (mysticism)

Irrationalism may be defined as **the belief that human reason is inadequate to discover truth**. Irrationalism thus involves the rejection of reason and the acceptance of absurdity. Irrationalism is a form of skepticism. It involves “faith” without reason.

One example of an irrational philosophy is **existentialism** (developed by Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, 1813-1855) and its theological counterpart, **neo-orthodoxy**. The fatal flaw of existentialism is its rejection of logic. Once a man commits himself to contradictions, his language, and therefore his recommendations to other people, become meaningless. When sincerity and passion are the only values, why cannot we direct our passion toward the devil as well as toward God? For an existentialist, an infinitely passionate appropriation of nothing is as valuable as a belief in Christ’s atoning death on the cross!

German philosopher **Arthur Schopenhauer** (1788-1860) countered the Enlightenment by teaching that reason can only lead to despair.

Thus, he promoted an escape from reason through subjective experience. Only in the subjective irrational state can man find meaning. As one would expect, this led to Eastern mysticism.⁴⁷

Many types of psychology promote irrationalism. For example, Carl Jung (1875–1961), the father of transpersonal psychology, spent his entire life attempting to wed Eastern mysticism to Western philosophy.⁴⁸

Rationality and logic require distinctions be made, such as the law of noncontradiction (i.e., nothing can be both A and not-A at the same time and in the same respect). However, monism (all is one) does away with all distinctions. Thus, monistic Eastern religions (e.g., Hinduism) and New Age thought are rooted in irrationality. That is why their devotees look for mystical enlightenment, rather than objective, rational, absolute truth (such as, Jesus took my punishment on the cross).

With that description of irrationalism, let's begin our internal critique.

Internal critique within irrationalism's worldview

1. There can be no reason to accept irrationalism as true (since it rejects rationality). An irrationalist cannot claim to know objectively the truth that there is no objective truth. Thus, every adherent using rational argumentation to promote irrationalism (whether some Eastern religion or neo-orthodox theology) is contradicting his own epistemology.

⁴⁷ Thaddeus Williams, "A Twoist Model for Helping Your Utopian Neighbors," in *The Coming Pagan Utopia*, ed. Peter Jones (Escondido, CA: TruthXChange, 2013), 201f.

⁴⁸ Robert E. Fugate, *Psycho-Heresy: "Christianizing" Pagan Psychologies* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2012), 209–214.

2. Language is impossible for irrationalism, since language requires logic.⁴⁹ (Every word means something, and it does not mean its opposite. For example, heaven is not hell; a dog is not a venomous viper.)
3. Since irrationalism is a form of skepticism (which asserts that nothing can be known), it is subject to the criticisms of skepticism: we cannot know that nothing can be known.⁵⁰ Skepticism is self-refuting.
4. Irrationalism cannot provide a purpose, reason, or justification for living. That is why it has led some of its adherents to commit suicide (e.g., the renowned Dutch Post-Impressionist artist Vincent Van Gogh).
5. No one can live on the basis of irrationalism. An irrationalist accused of murder could not offer any reasons why he is innocent, nor could he offer any evidence to convict a rapist of assaulting his wife. He could not give his child a reason why she should not run into the street in front of an oncoming car.

⁴⁹ “Apart from logic a noun would mean what it does not mean; and if a word means everything, it means nothing. In order to mean something, a word must also not mean something. There is no meaning without the law of contradiction” (Gordon H. Clark, *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 183f); cf. idem., *In Defense of Theology* (Milford, MI: Mott Media, 1984), 99. “The fact that a word must mean one thing and not its contradictory is the evidence of the law of contradiction in all rational language” (Gordon H. Clark, “The Axiom of Revelation,” in Clark, *An Introduction to Christian Philosophy* (1968; repr., Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1993), 71. Idem., “God and Logic,” *The Trinity Review* (Nov-Dec 1980), 5; available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=16>; reprinted in *Against the World: The Trinity Review, 1978-1988*, ed. John W. Robbins, 56. Robert E. Fugate, *A Theology of Rationality and Logic* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2017), 9f.

⁵⁰ Gary Crampton, *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark*, 25.

6. Vishal Mangalwadi convincingly demonstrates that the irrationality of Eastern religions retarded the development of science and technology in Eastern cultures.⁵¹

Apologetical questions to use with proponents of irrational, mystical, monistic religions

1. If this religion transcends rationality and normal human experience, then how can you know about it? You can't use language to tell me anything about it, since it is not rational.
2. If there are no distinctions (as monism teaches), then I am both enlightened and not enlightened, both a New-Ager and not a New-Ager; there is karma/reincarnation and there is not karma/reincarnation. (Logic and argumentation require distinctions, particularly the law of noncontradiction, i.e., nothing can be both A and not-A at the same time and in the same respect.)
3. Since there can be no distinctions—such as between individual persons (e.g., you and I), religions (e.g., Hinduism and Christianity), truth and error, future destinies (e.g., Nirvana), etc.—the New Age monist cannot argue or evangelize without contradicting his worldview! There can be no one else to argue with and nothing to argue about!
4. If there are no distinctions (as in monism), then how can individual souls be reincarnated from one body to another higher or lower body?
5. If there is no distinction between good and evil (relativism), then on what is karma based?
6. To assert that all truth is relative is to claim to know an absolute truth.

⁵¹ Vishal Mangalwadi, *Truth and Transformation: A Manifesto for Ailing Nations* (Seattle, WA: YWAM, 2009), 39–46. Cf. idem., *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011).

7. No one can live as if there are no distinctions between persons and things, good and evil, love and hate, peace and war, life and death.

Thus, if New Age teaching is true, then it is false. If New Age teaching is true, then there is no reason to believe that it is true.

Biblical worldview critique of irrationalism

The practitioners of Eastern religions do not view their sacred writings (e.g., the Bhagavad-Gita) the way Christians view the Bible. Gurus do not study the original texts of such writings, in their historical-social setting, using grammatical-historical hermeneutics, to learn the single meaning of the propositions contained therein!

1. The gods of Eastern religions are not the God of the Bible; furthermore, they could never produce the Bible. Only an absolute, personal, rational God could produce the Bible. As John Frame notes:

Of all the religions and philosophies of the world, only those influenced by the Bible are personalistic. Polytheistic religions have personal gods, but these personal gods are not ultimate; they are finite, themselves subject to larger forces. Hinduism presents Brahma as a kind of absolute reality, but Brahma is not personal, nor is the Buddhist nothingness or the Platonic forms, or the Hegelian absolute. Only in Biblical religion is there a personal absolute, a being who is truly ultimate, but who also plans, speaks, thinks, acts in history, rejoices, grieves, loves, and judges. As God's creation, the universe is fundamentally personal.⁵²

⁵² John M. Frame, "Presuppositional Apologetics," in *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 224.

2. The Bible teaches the distinction between God the Creator and the creation,⁵³ which is a kind of dualism (what Dr. Peter Jones calls “twoism”) vs. the monism of Eastern religions and New Age thought. The Creator is transcendent, holy (separate), and self-existent.⁵⁴
3. The God of the Bible possesses the perfections or attributes of truth⁵⁵ and logic⁵⁶—unlike Eastern false gods.

Logic is an attribute of God Himself. He is the God of Truth (Ps 31:5). Christ is the Truth (wisdom, logic, and reason) incarnate (Jn 1:1; 14:6;⁵⁷ 1 Cor 1:24, 30; Col 2:3). The Holy Spirit is “the

⁵³ The theological term “**Creator-creature distinction**” depicts the distinction between God as the Creator and everything else (i.e., the creation; the heavens and earth, other moral beings, etc.). It is a fundamental Christian doctrine (Gn 1:1; Ro 1:20, 25). It is opposed to the errors of monism (all is one), pantheism (God and the universe are one), panentheism (the universe is a part of God), the Greeks’ chain of being, the eternity of matter, etc. Pantheism (Greek *pan*—all + *theos*—God) is the belief that God and the universe as a whole are identical; all is God and God is all. It denies the personhood of God. Panentheism (Greek *pan*—all + *en*—in + *theos*—God) is the belief that the universe is a part of God but not the whole of His being. God is the soul of the universe and the universe is the body of God. The Creator-creature distinction also refutes the Word of Faith heresy that Christians are “little gods.”

⁵⁴ Robert E. Fugate, “The Attributes of God,” unpublished paper.

⁵⁵ Robert E. Fugate, *A Biblical Philosophy of Truth with Contemporary Applications* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2017).

⁵⁶ Robert E. Fugate, *A Theology of Rationality and Logic*.

⁵⁷ “Like other words, truth can be used figuratively, by metonymy, in which the effect is substituted for the cause. Thus when Christ says, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,’ the word truth is just as figurative as the word life. As Christ is the cause of life, so is he the cause of truth. That water freezes and that a sinner may be justified by faith are true because Christ creatively said, Let it be so” (Gordon H. Clark, “Truth,” *Baker’s Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Everett F.

Spirit of Truth” (Jn 16:13 [cf. 1 Jn 5:6]). God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor 14:33); His Word to us is “not yes and no” (2 Cor 1:18). Thus, He does not speak to us in illogical, paradoxical statements. Because logic is the way God thinks, the laws of logic are eternal principles. And because man is the image of God, these laws are part of man. There is, then, a point of contact between God’s logic and man’s logic, between God’s knowledge and man’s knowledge. Both God and man think $1 + 1 = 2$; both agree that A is A .⁵⁸ (Gary Crampton)

God himself is logical. . . . His Word is truth (Jn 17:17), and truth means nothing if it is not opposed to falsehood. Therefore, His Word is non-contradictory. Furthermore, God does not break His promises (2 Cor 1:20); He does not deny himself (2 Tim 2:13); He does not lie (Heb 6:18; Tit 1:2). . . . Does God, then, observe the law of noncontradiction? Not in the sense that this law is somehow higher than God himself. Rather, God is himself non-contradictory and is therefore himself the criterion of logical consistency and implication. Logic is an attribute of God, as are justice, mercy, wisdom, knowledge. As such, God is a model for

Harrison [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1960], 533). Jesus’ statement, “I am . . . the truth” (Jn 14:6), “must be taken to mean, I am the source of truth; I am the wisdom and Logos of God; truths are established by my authority” (Gordon H. Clark, “The Bible As Truth,” in *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 37). Clark’s essay, “The Bible as Truth,” was originally published in *Bibliotheca Sacra* (April 1957); it was reprinted in: *The Trinity Review* (December 2008) (available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=258>); *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 24–38; and *For the King: The Trinity Review, 1999–2008*, eds. John W. Robbins and Thomas W. Juodaitis (Unicoi, TN: The Trinity Foundation, 2011), 543–548.

⁵⁸ W. Gary Crampton, “Review of *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* by Greg L. Bahnsen,” *The Trinity Review* (July 2000), available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=128>; reprinted in *For the King: The Trinity Review, 1999–2008*, eds. John W. Robbins and Thomas W. Juodaitis, 92–97.

us. We, as His image, are to imitate His truth, His promise-keeping. Thus, we too are to be non-contradictory.⁵⁹ (John Frame)

4. The Bible adamantly condemns all false gods (1 Ki 18:21, 24; Pss 31:6; 96:5; 135:15-18; 115:4-8; Is 41:22-26, 29; 42:17; 43:9; Jer 2:28; 10:5, 10; 18:15; Dn 5:23b; Hab 2:19; Ac 14:15; 19:26; 1 Cor 8:5-7; 10:19-20; 16:22; Gal 4:8; 1 Jn 5:21; Ex 20:3).

⁵⁹ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 253. “Laws of logic are a human reflection of the mind of God and of God’s thinking regarding the conceptual and/or evidential-proof relations between truths (or sets of truth.). Logical laws are elaboration upon the fact that God does not contradict Himself (His word is not yes and no, 2 Cor 1:18) and that it is impossible for Him to lie (Heb 6:18)” (Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*, ed. Robert R. Booth, 149 n 10). However, we must not make too sharp of a distinction between human laws of logic and God’s logic, since it is the divine Logos enlightening every man (Jn 1:9) (Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6 vols. [Waco, TX: Word, 1976-1983], 3:216). Henry adds, “Whoever calls for a higher logic must preserve the existing laws of logic to escape pleading the cause of illogical nonsense” (229), and “If the law of contradiction is irrelevant in the sphere of transcendent ontology, then ‘God and the not-God, the divine and the demonic, cannot be assuredly differentiated’ (2:60). Ronald H. Nash concurs: “A supralogical God would be unknowable and unintelligible. . . . We cannot say how a supralogical God would act or how He would communicate anything to us by way of revelation. A supralogical God is a God about whom nothing can be said or known. . . . If [a supralogical] God can do self-contradictory acts, then there is no inconsistency in His *promising* eternal life to all who trust in Christ but actually condemning to everlasting damnation all who trust Christ. Such duplicity (inconsistency) would be entirely in character for a God not bound by the law of noncontradiction since, in a world where the law does not apply, there is no difference between eternal life and eternal damnation” (*The Concept of God* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983], 40f).

5. The infinite personal God has given us His Word, which is truth and is rationally-consistent.
6. The Bible everywhere teaches antithesis, for example: between God and Satan, Christ and antichrist, truth and error, good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness, believer and unbeliever, heaven and hell, etc. Such Biblical antithesis completely contradicts monism (all is one).
7. One can view Satan's temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden from the perspective of Eastern/mystical thought: "Eve falls for the lie that in order to be free, she must make her own, independent choices, and create her own world. Eve chooses to believe the pagan/diabolical lie that if she relies on herself, if she goes within, she can be divine."⁶⁰

Since God thinks rationally, the deeper one goes into irrationalism the farther away from God he goes and the deeper he goes into the world of demonic thought. "Irrationalism is not pious; it is ungodly, Satanic."⁶¹

Thus, the Bible, with its infinite, personal, rational God, Who created all things, but Who is separate from His creation, disproves irrationalism.

In addition to Eastern religions, consider Talmudic Judaism. The Talmud promotes irrationality, since it contains dialectical reasoning throughout.⁶²

⁶⁰ Peter Jones, *Gospel Truth, Pagan Lies* (Winepress Publishing, 1990), 62f.

⁶¹ John M. Frame, "Rationality and Scripture," in *Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition*, eds. Hendrik Hart, Johan Van Der Hoeven, and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 305.

⁶² Judaism is not based on the Old Testament; it is based on the Babylonian Talmud and the mystical Kabbalah. See Michael

Comparisons and contrasts between empiricism, rationalism, and irrationalism

Empiricism, rationalism, and irrationalism contradict each other. Thus, they are mutually exclusive. They all use different forms of proof.

Empiricism, rationalism, and irrationalism are all anti-Christian epistemologies, presupposing the ultimacy of man. Man does not need to receive knowledge from God through revelation. Empiricism assumes that man's senses decide what is true. Rationalism assumes that human reason is the ultimate determiner of truth. Irrationalism assumes that man's absurd thoughts or his mystical experiences are the ultimate standard.⁶³ Empiricists, rationalists, and irrationalists are culpable rebels against the omniscient God of truth, Who has graciously revealed Himself to them! They are also idolaters.

Divine revelation

Our critique of empiricism, rationalism, and irrationalism has left us with only one basis for epistemology: divine revelation.⁶⁴ The infinite,

Hoffman, *Judaism's Strange Gods*, rev. ed. (Coeur d'Alen, ID: Independent History & Research, 2011).

⁶³ Note the **circular reasoning** involved in each of these epistemologies. Rationalists say reason is the ultimate standard because reason says so. (Furthermore, people assume the laws of logic while they're arguing for the laws of logic.) Empiricists use their eyes and ears when arguing for empiricism, and say that sensory experience has taught them to trust their senses above all else. Mystics say mystical experience validates mysticism. (Of course, when irrationalists argue for absurdity or mystical experience they are using logic and rationality—thereby contradicting their belief system!) Adherents of each of these three epistemologies assume their ultimate authority solely by “faith.”

⁶⁴ Theologically, the term “**revelation**” denotes “God's disclosure of himself and the communication of His Word and will to mankind; it may be divided into two types—general revelation and special revelation” (Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You* [Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2012], 831). God's revelation is

tri-personal God, who knows everything perfectly, has revealed truth to mankind.

Either God is the source and means of knowledge, or man is the source and means of knowledge. Either God determines the nature of reality and the interpretation of all facts, or man determines the nature of reality and the interpretation of all facts. All non-Christian theories of knowledge make man the ultimate reference point of knowledge.⁶⁵

Bible verses teaching that divine revelation is the basis for all knowledge⁶⁶

That [Word, i.e., the Second Person of the Trinity] was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world (Jn 1:9).

But *there is* a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding (Job 32:8).

In Your [God's] light we see light (Ps 36:9).

In whom [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument (Col 2:3-4 NASB).

supernatural, personal, verbal, propositional (conveying truth), and soteriological; it comes at God's initiative, within human history (Robert E. Fugate, *God's Revelation: He Wants You to Know Him* [Omaha, NE: Thy Word Is Truth, 1992], chapter 4).

⁶⁵ William O. Einwechter, "Ethics and Epistemology," *The Christian Statesman*, 149:5 (September–October 2006), 17.

⁶⁶ "A rational life is impossible without being based upon a divine revelation" (Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason and Revelation* [Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1986], 152). God's rationality is the rational basis for human faith, which is the rational basis for human reasoning (John M. Frame, "Presuppositional Apologetics," *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, 210). "We live by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7 NET).

Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God . . . Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God (1 Cor 1:24, 30).

Truth is in Jesus (Eph 4:21; cf. Jn 14:6).

God's "anointing teaches you about all things" (1 Jn 2:27 NASB).

Cf. Is 28:24-29 (God teaches the farmer how to farm).

Thus, Scripture teaches that divine revelation from God, mediated by His Word, is the basis for all knowledge.

Presuppose the Biblical worldview

Since divine revelation is the basis for all knowledge, we must presuppose the Christian worldview to make sense out of anything, as theologian and philosopher John Frame explains:

- The only way to find truth is to bow before God's authoritative Scripture. . . . The very essence of knowledge is to bring our thoughts into agreement with God's revealed Word. Thinking God's thoughts after him is to be the rule not only in narrowly religious matters, but in every sphere of human life . . . history, science, psychology, sociology, literary criticism . . . business, sports, family life, worship, politics [economics, education, counseling, journalism, etc.]. . . . God calls us to 'presuppose' him in all our thinking. This means that we must regard his revealed truth as more important and more certain than any other, and find in it the norms or criteria that all other knowledge must meet.⁶⁷

"Man can only know the truth of anything when he submits himself to God's interpretation of reality, and this interpretation is given by

⁶⁷ John M. Frame, "Cornelius Van Til," in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 163.

revelation. . . . The Bible is the only infallible interpretation of reality for man.”⁶⁸

In sum, we have learned that neither empiricism, nor rationalism, nor irrationalism can provide any foundation and justification for knowledge. Indeed, non-Christian philosophy has produced nihilism (i.e., believing in nothing, having no allegiances and no purposes).

Thus, it is unreasonable and irrational not to commit oneself to the absolute, personal, triune God of the Bible as one’s starting point (i.e., a revelational epistemology). God’s existence is the precondition of intelligibility. The non-Christian worldview cannot justify:

- the (immaterial, invariant, universal, absolute) laws of logic;
- the inductive principle (i.e., probabilistic reasoning, which is the basis for learning from experience and is the basis for science);
- moral absolutes;
- the dignity of man; or
- the freedom of man’s mind.

All of these things unbelievers simply assume! Atheism (even the practical atheism of the psychological counselor) is arbitrary and irrational. Atheists irrationally live by habitual conditioning, by blind faith (regarding the rationality of the universe).

⁶⁸ William O. Einwechter, “Ethics and Epistemology,” *The Christian Statesman*, 149:5 (September–October 2006), 20f.

Comparison of three worldviews

The following table⁶⁹ summarizes the worldviews of naturalism, New Age thought, and Christianity. (Think of them as the three different-colored sunglasses that color everything.)

Topic	Naturalism	New Age	Christianity
God	God does not exist; belief in God results from superstition	God is impersonal force, creative energy or principle; It is above good and evil; everything is God (i.e., pantheism)	God is the personal, triune, eternal, almighty, sovereign, all-knowing, loving, just and holy Creator
Metaphysics	The natural order is eternal, self-sufficient ⁷⁰ and uncreated. It is ultimately matter/ energy	The earth is a divine, living, conscious organism	The cosmos was created by the transcendent God. God is working out His purposes in history

⁶⁹ Robert E. Fugate, *Psycho-Heresy: Christianizing Pagan Psychologies*, 22–24. Adapted from Ronald H. Nash, *World-Views in Conflict*, 139f.

⁷⁰ Whenever man rejects the infinite-personal God of the Bible, man then attributes divine attributes to the natural order. For example, in the worldview of naturalism, eternity and self-existence are attributes of matter. Deterministic philosophies and psychologies attribute predestination to the natural order. In the new age pantheistic worldview, everything is god. “Humanistic science, by positing as an article of faith the ultimacy of the universe, has as a result a strong tendency towards determinism and the denial of secondary causes as

Topic	Naturalism	New Age	Christianity
Epistemology	Truth is based on human sense experience; the scientific method	Truth lies within every human; it is attained through states of mystical consciousness	Truth has objective standing; it is independent of human desire; the functional view of truth is false. Humans can know because God created them rational creatures
Ethics	Ethics is relative	Ethics is relative	Ethics is objective and absolute, based on the moral law of God, which is grounded in the nature of God
Humans	Humans are highly evolved animals	Humans are spiritual beings who are divine, part of God	Humans are creatures made in the image of God

anything more than an illusion” (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*, 71f).

Topic	Naturalism	New Age	Christianity
Basic human problem	Superstition and ignorance	Ignorance of our true divine-human potential. Ethical evil does not exist	Ethical/moral failure. All people are sinners in rebellion against God (causing alienation from God)
The solution to the human problem	Scientific advancement and technology; education; psychological reprogramming	Transformation of consciousness (i.e., enlightenment) to realize one's divine nature. Uses meditation, visualization, spirit guides, etc.	Salvation by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ that transforms human nature
Death	The end of human existence	An illusion; the entrance to the next life through reincarnation	The end of our earthly life, resulting in heaven for the believer and eternal torment in hell for the unbeliever

Topic	Naturalism	New Age	Christianity
Jesus Christ	A merely human teacher	One of many enlightened gurus (i.e., master teachers) who have appeared throughout history	The unique Incarnation of God; the only Lord and Savior

Clearly, one’s worldview determines the way he or she interprets all facts in all areas of life. This means that there are no brute “facts” of nature that can be interpreted by epistemologically-neutral scientists, apart from their worldviews.

Summary

Everyone has a worldview. One’s worldview controls how he or she will think about every area of life. We must learn to recognize and to think in terms of worldviews. Christianity is a total world- and life-view—and should be defended as such. As Christians, we need to spend the rest of our lives learning the Biblical worldview, and learning how to apply it to all areas of life. We must love God with all our minds (Mt 22:37).

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW: THE BIBLE IS THE CRITERION⁷¹ OR STANDARD OF TRUTH

Having examined what a worldview is and having learned that the only viable epistemology is an epistemology based on divine revelation, let us now further develop the epistemological foundation of the Biblical worldview.⁷²

Truth is one of the attributes of God.⁷³ Something is true because God thinks it to be true. God's thoughts are perfectly self-consistent (coherent⁷⁴). Because God is truth, His Word is truth. As truth revealed from God, God's Word is our criterion or standard of truth.

⁷¹ "The essence of the idea of Scripture is that it *alone* is the criterion of truth" (Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge* [Presbyterian & Reformed, 1975], 43). The Bible is "authoritative on everything of which it speaks. And it speaks of everything [either directly or indirectly]" (Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, 3rd ed. [Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1976], 8; cf. Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1976], 2).

⁷² This discussion assumes the doctrines of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, which are developed in depth in Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, chapters 2-6. This work also delineates the properties of Scripture: necessity; truthfulness; authority; efficacy; sufficiency; clarity; and completeness/finality (chapter 8).

⁷³ Robert E. Fugate, "The Attributes of God," 70-78.

⁷⁴ Coherence is used as a Biblical test for truth, e.g., Dt 18:20-22; Mt 12:22-28; 1 Cor 15:12-20. See John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 133-134; for the correspondence theory of truth see pp. 141-142. Frame also cites several Scriptural examples of the word "truth" being used in: a metaphysical sense (the true is the absolute, the complete as opposed to the relative, the partial); an epistemological sense (the true is the correct); and an ethical sense (truth is doing what is right) (48-49).

Truth is absolute (i.e., the same for all people in all places for all time); truth is not relative. Man, God's finite creature, is to be a truth-receiver, not a truth-maker.

In his great high priestly prayer, the Lord Jesus Christ prayed to His father saying these words, "Your **word is truth**" (Jn 17:17). Note that Jesus did not merely say that God's word is "true," but that it is "truth." Theologian Wayne Grudem points out,

The difference is significant, for this statement encourages us to think of the Bible not simply as being "true" in the sense that it conforms to some higher standard of truth, but rather to think of the Bible as being itself *the final standard of truth*. The Bible is God's Word, and God's Word is *the ultimate definition of what is true and what is not true*: God's Word is itself truth. Thus we are to think of the Bible as *the ultimate standard of truth, the reference point by which every other claim to truthfulness is to be measured. Those assertions that conform with Scripture are "true" while those that do not conform with Scripture are not true.* What then is truth? Truth is what God says, and we have what God says (accurately but not exhaustively) in the Bible.⁷⁵

Professor John Frame adds, "Our methods of knowledge, our standards of truth and falsity, our views of logic, and our scientific methods must be reconciled first of all with God's revelation."⁷⁶ This leads J.I. Packer to conclude, "If biblical teaching and my own thoughts clash, it is my thoughts that are wrong every time!"⁷⁷ Thus, mankind's findings in fields such as science, history, political theory,⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 83.

⁷⁶ John M. Frame, "Presuppositional Apologetics," in *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, 220.

⁷⁷ James I. Packer, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, Inerrancy," in *Jerusalem and Athens*, ed. E.R. Geehan (n.p.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1971), 153.

⁷⁸ Some may object saying, "The Bible is not a textbook of civil government or economics." This statement, however, is a half-truth. The Bible is a textbook of civil government and economics in the

economics, education, child raising, welfare, counseling, etc. must be subordinated to the benchmark of Scripture, which alone is absolute truth.

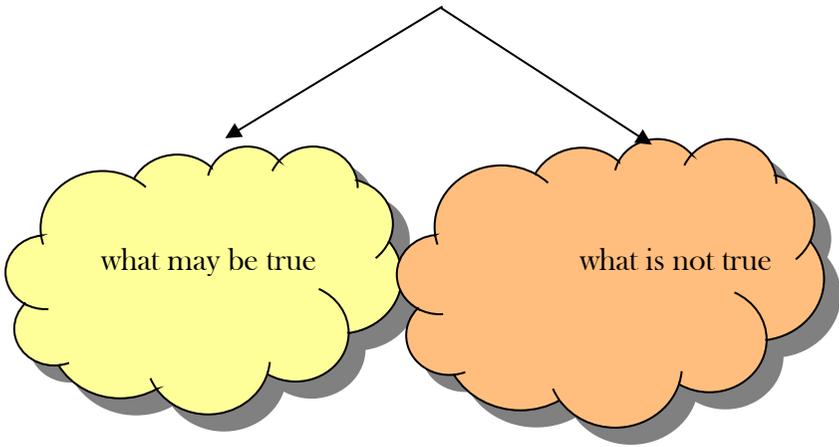
In sum, the epistemological foundation of the Christian worldview is that the Bible—being God’s own words—is truth, and as such, it is the ultimate standard by which all other truth claims must be judged (Jn 17:17; Pss 111:7; 119:89, 151, 160; Mt 24:35; Nu 23:19). Let’s diagram this basic truth:

sense that wherever it touches on civil government or economics it is true, propositionally true, speaking with absolute, infallible authority. It is also a textbook of civil government and economics in the sense that it provides the only epistemological foundation for a coherent philosophy of civil government and economics. However, the Bible is not a textbook on civil government or economics, if by that one means that its purpose is to give us exhaustive truth (Dt 29:29; 1 Cor 13:9, 12; Ro 11:33-34) or that political theory or economic theory is its central theme and purpose.

God's Word = Truth

“Your word is truth” (Jn 17:17; cf. Ro 3:4)⁷⁹

Man's word = fallible theory, subject to change



- Where man's theories agree with the teaching of Scripture, they are true.
- Where man's theories disagree with the teaching of Scripture, they are false.
- All other points in man's theories cannot be known for certain to be true; the best we can say is that they may be true.

Furthermore, the only coherent worldview is the Biblical worldview, which begins with the infinite mind of the triune God who created all

⁷⁹ This includes both what is “expressly set down in Scripture” and what “by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture” (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1:6).

things and Who knows all things. All non-Christian worldviews are limited by their finite starting point.

Because Scripture is truth, God calls us to believe everything the Scripture teaches (Lk 24:25, 27, 44; Ac 3:18; 24:14; Ro 15:4).

“He [resurrected Lord Jesus Christ] said to them [disciples on the road to Emmaus], ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in **all** that the prophets have spoken!’” (Lk 24:25).

“But this I [Apostle Paul] confess to you [Governor Felix], that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, **believing all things** which are written in the Law and in the Prophets” (Ac 24:14).

Let us further develop this epistemological foundation of the Christian worldview by examining the theological doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and the properties of Scripture.

Revelation

Definitions of revelation⁸⁰

We must start our discussion of the doctrine of revelation with some key definitions.

In theology the term “**revelation**” denotes God’s disclosure of Himself and the communication of His word and will to mankind. The content of revelation is not accessible to man by either empirical research or reason alone.⁸¹ Revelation is traditionally divided into two types: general revelation and special revelation.

⁸⁰ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 831f, 828, 38–43.

⁸¹ “The Bible assumes throughout that [the transcendent] God must first disclose himself before men can know him” (J.I. Packer, “Revelation,” in *New Bible Dictionary* [NBD³], eds. I.H. Marshall, *et. al.* 3rd ed. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996], 1015). “Human reason is not viewed as a source of truth; rather, one is to think God’s thoughts after him. Revelation is the source of truth, and reason, as illuminated by the Spirit, is the instrument for the comprehending of

The term “**general revelation**” has historically been used in Protestant theology to denote God’s revelation of Himself to all persons, at all times, in all places, through creation, through His providential governing of history, and through man’s mind and conscience. For example, Lewis and Demarest define general revelation as “the disclosure of God in nature, in providential history, and in the moral law within the heart, whereby all persons at all times and places gain a rudimentary understanding of the Creator and his moral demands.”⁸² Verses most often used to teach the doctrine of general revelation are: Psalms 19:1-4; Romans 1:18-32; 2:14-16; Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-31.

The term “**special revelation**” (or particular revelation) has historically been used in theology to denote God’s disclosure of Himself and His will to particular persons, conveyed by miraculous acts and words, enabling those persons to enter into a redemptive relationship with Him. J.I. Packer elaborates on the verbal aspect of special revelation: “The Bible conceives of revelation as primarily and fundamentally verbal communication—God’s *tora* (‘teaching, instruction, law’), or *dabarim* (‘words’), in the OT, and his *logos* or *rhema*, ‘word, utterance,’ in the NT. The thought of God as revealed in his actions

it” (Carl F.H. Henry, “Revelation, Special,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* [EDT₂], ed. Walter A. Elwell, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001], 1023). “Christianity is the religion of revelation”; its doctrines “are communications from God. Christianity thus stands fundamentally in contrast with all other religions” (Benjamin B. Warfield, “Christianity and Revelation,” in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. John E. Meeter, 2 vols. [Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970, 1973], 1:23).

⁸² Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987-1994], 1:61. Cf. Bruce A. Demarest, “Revelation, General,” EDT₂, 1019.

is secondary, and depends for its validity on the presupposition of verbal revelation. . . .”⁸³

General and special revelation have different, but complementary functions. General revelation imparts some rudimentary knowledge of God (Ro 1:18-21, 25-26, 28, 32; Ac 14:17) and His moral law (2:14-16; 1:32) to all mankind, thereby rendering them guilty and “without excuse” (1:20).⁸⁴ It reveals God as Creator, Ruler, Lawgiver, and Judge. It is also a revelation of man’s culpable guilt (1:18-32) and a revelation of the wrath of God against men who “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (1:18). In showing a person his or her lost condition, general revelation prepares the way for special revelation. Special revelation functions salvifically, telling people about God’s plan of salvation through the gospel of Jesus Christ, Who alone is the way to the Father (Mt 11:27; Jn 14:6; 17:3; Ac 4:12). Thus, God designed general and special revelation to work together, not independently (Ps 19:1-11; Ac 14:15-17 and 17:22-31 are part of Paul’s evangelistic sermons).⁸⁵ Nevertheless, general revelation (with

⁸³ J.I. Packer, “Revelation,” NBD³, 1015. Cf. James I. Packer, *God Has Spoken* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979), 76-80.

⁸⁴ John Murray, *Romans*, NICNT, 2 vols. in 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959, 1965), 1:40.

⁸⁵ “While the Bible indeed affirms God’s general revelation, it invariably correlates general revelation with special redemptive revelation. It declares at one and the same time that the Logos is creator and redeemer (John 1). It does not present general revelation on the thesis that the true knowledge of God is possible to fallen humanity through the natural light of reason apart from any divine revelation, but rather introduces general revelation alongside special revelation in order to emphasize human guilt” (Carl F.H. Henry, “Revelation, Special,” EDT₂, 1022). “They do not stand as two systems, each complete in itself, over against one another; but together they form one organic whole” (Benjamin B. Warfield, “Christianity and Revelation,” *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. John E. Meeter, 1:27). “They constitute together a unitary whole, and each is incomplete without the other” (Benjamin

its impartation of a rudimentary knowledge of God and basic requirements of His moral law—as evidenced by man’s conscience), combined with God’s providential control of all things, exercises some restraining influence upon depraved mankind and his apostate cultures, preserving the world from degenerating into total nihilism,⁸⁶ anarchy, and butchery.⁸⁷

At this point it is necessary to examine more carefully the limitations of general revelation.⁸⁸

Insufficiency of general revelation

All mankind responds to God’s gracious self-disclosure through general revelation in the same way—by repudiating their knowledge of God (Ro 1:18 “suppress the truth,” 21–22, 28, 32; 3:10–11ff) and then by making idols, thereby worshipping the creation rather than the Creator (Ro 1:23, 25; Ac 14:11–13, 15; 17:16, 23, 29; etc.).

By God’s design, general revelation is insufficient to function apart from special revelation. Indeed, “The history of philosophy clearly shows that general revelation is no safe and certain guide.”⁸⁹ There are

B. Warfield, “Revelation,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* [ISBE], eds. James Orr, *et al.*, 5 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1939], 4:2575).

⁸⁶ **Nihilism** denotes a state of believing in nothing, having no allegiances and no purposes.

⁸⁷ In Reformed circles this is usually called “common grace,” a term I am not fond of. It is an unbiblical usage of the term “grace,” and it is often applied in such a way as to undermine and compromise the Reformed doctrine of the depravity of man and to erase Biblical antithesis between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

⁸⁸ “One’s view of general revelation will greatly influence one’s apologetical system” (Richard L. Mayhue, “Is Nature the 67th Book of the Bible?” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury [Green Forest, AZ: Master Books, 2008], 127).

⁸⁹ Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 132f. “The history of philosophy has been a history of systems that broke each other down and ended among the Greeks, in skepticism, in the

two basic reasons for this deficiency: the limited content of general revelation and the effects of the Fall.

Limited content

- General revelation tells us nothing about God’s purpose in revealing Himself to man. Neither does it fully disclose God’s will for man. Because of this incompleteness of general revelation, man has always needed special revelation—even before the Fall (Gn 1:28–30; 2:16–17; 3:8).⁹⁰
- General revelation tells us nothing about how to be saved. General revelation does reveal God as Creator, Ruler, Lawgiver, and Judge, but it cannot reveal God as Redeemer; it shows that God punishes sin, but not that He forgives sin. Truths concerning the Trinity, the Incarnation, the atonement, etc. cannot be known through general revelation.

Middle Ages in nominalism, and today among many in agnosticism” (Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003–2008), 1:313). Rushdoony observes that the vast majority of the major philosophers throughout history were sodomites (cf. Ro 1:24–29).

⁹⁰ Gordon H. Clark points out that “When Adam was created and placed in the Garden of Eden, he did not know what to do. Nor would a study of the Garden have led to any necessary conclusion. His duty was imposed upon him by a special divine revelation. God told him to be fruitful and multiply, to subdue nature, to make use of the animals, to eat of the fruit of the trees, with one fateful exception. Thus moral norms, commands and prohibitions were established by a special and not a general revelation. Only so could man know God’s requirements, and only so later could he learn the plan of salvation” (“Special Revelation as Rational,” *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry, 29).

Effects of the Fall

- Because of man's sin the created order is cursed (Gn 3:14, 17-19; Ro 8:19-22; Job 25:5); thus the revelation of God through nature is disfigured and abnormal.⁹¹

In nature⁹² we see both cruelty and non-cruelty. This leaves proponents of natural revelation and natural law with an obvious dilemma, as noted in the scholarly *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Are we, for instance, to model ourselves upon the peaceful habits of sheep or upon the internecine conflicts of ants? Is the egalitarianism of the beaver or the hierarchical life of the bee the proper exemplar for human society? Should we imitate the widespread polygamy of the animal kingdom, or is there some higher regularity of which this is no more than a misleading instance?⁹³

Every kind of violence and perversion can be justified as natural, including rape, incest, and infanticide. John Robbins points out:

⁹¹ Commenting on Genesis 3:17 Calvin says, "Before the fall, the state of the world was a most fair and delightful mirror of the divine favour and paternal indulgence towards man. Now, in all the elements we perceive that we are cursed" (John Calvin, *Commentaries on The First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 2 vols. [repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984], 1:173).

⁹² Statements regarding nature can easily fall into the logical fallacy of hypostatization, in which abstract terms are treated as if they were concrete ones; frequently humanlike properties (e.g., intelligence, intention) are ascribed to them. See S. Morris Engel, *With Good Reason* (NY: St. Martin's, 1994), 109, 113. "Nature has no power, mind, consciousness, or will in and of itself. Nature is simply a collective noun, a name for the sum total of this universe. It is absurd to personify nature and to ascribe to it a law or purpose" (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Law and Liberty*, 24). Cf. Rousas J. Rushdoony, "The Myth of Nature," in *The Mythology of Science*, 96-98.

⁹³ Richard Wollheim, "Natural Law," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, 8 vols. (NY, NY: Macmillan, 1967), 5:451.

Since it is nature that prompts us to murder, steal, slander, fornicate, and since we have a ‘natural inclination to such actions and ends as are fitting’—to quote Thomas Aquinas—none of these things can be wrong, for nature is normative. The logic is commendable.⁹⁴

If man is merely an animal, why not harm or kill him—as Marquis de Sade taught. Indeed, one could argue that nature teaches that death is the goal of all process.⁹⁵ Thus, Christian philosopher Gordon Clark concludes,

Caesar, Napoleon, and Stalin can take pride in their crimes. Looking carefully on nature and seeing it red in tooth and claw, they can conclude that the universe is indifferent to the fate of any individual, and that it is the law of nature for the brutal to rule the meek. There are natural inclinations for domination and a will to power.⁹⁶

Clearly, both man’s depravity and the natural universe being cursed by God render natural revelation and natural law wholly inadequate as a basis for governing society.⁹⁷ Sinful humanity

⁹⁴ John Robbins, “Some Problems with Natural Law.” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 2:2 (winter 1975–76): 17.

⁹⁵ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Politics of Guilt and Pity* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn, 1978), 123. Rushdoony also points out that trial by ordeal presupposes that nature is normative and will reject an evildoer (100); cf. Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (n.p.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973), 606–611.

⁹⁶ Gordon H. Clark, “Natural Law and Revelation,” *Essays on Ethics and Politics*, 159.

⁹⁷ The magisterial Reformed Canons of Dort (1619) categorically assert that fallen mankind “is incapable of using it [light of nature] aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and hinders in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God” (3/4, 3, in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation*, ed. James T. Dennison, 4 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008–2014], 4:135f); cf.

simply cannot translate natural revelation into a universally shared body of ethical truth.⁹⁸ Thus, since the Fall, natural revelation is of value only to the extent that men faithfully interpret it in the light of special revelation, which is now inscripturated in the infallible Bible (Is 8:18-20; Mt 5:17-18; 15:3-6; Jn 10:34-35; Ro 9:6; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Pt 1:19-21; 3:15-17).

- Man's mind is fallen; thus he cannot reason his way to God. (Review the vital verses regarding depravity, cited above, under the heading "Biblical worldview critique of empiricism.")

General revelation must be supplemented and interpreted by God's Word (special revelation).

Orthodox Protestant theology has consistently taught that general revelation can only be interpreted through the "eyeglasses"⁹⁹ of the Scriptures,¹⁰⁰ as the following quotations illustrate and elucidate.

"Since the entrance of sin into the world, man can gather true knowledge about God from His general revelation only if he studies it in the light of Scripture, in which the elements of God's original self-revelation, which were obscured and perverted by the blight of sin, are republished, corrected, and interpreted. . . . Some are inclined to speak of God's general revelation as a second source [of revelation]; but this is hardly correct in view of the fact that nature can come into

<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds3.iv.xvi.html>. Robert E. Fugate, *A Brief History and Critique of Natural Law Theory: Is Natural Law Sufficient to Govern Society?* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2003). John M. Frame, "Is Natural Revelation Sufficient to Govern Culture?" in *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 953.

⁹⁸ Carl F.H. Henry, "Natural Law and a Nihilistic Culture," *First Things* 49 (January 1995): 55-60.

⁹⁹ "Eyeglasses" is Calvin's metaphor (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, 1:70 § 1:6:1).

¹⁰⁰ The teachings of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin on the bondage of the human will demonstrate why special revelation is essential.

consideration here only as interpreted in the light of Scripture. . . . **Special revelation has incorporated, corrected, and interpreted general revelation.** And now the Christian theologian takes his stand on the Word of God, and from that point of vantage also contemplates nature and history. He reads general revelation with the eye of faith and in the light of God's Word, and for that very reason is able to see God's hand in nature, and His footsteps in history" (Louis Berkhof).¹⁰¹

The revelation in Scripture must be made our starting-point. It is only in the light of the Protestant doctrine of Scripture that one can obtain also Protestant doctrine of the revelation of God in nature. . . . The Bible, as the infallibly inspired revelation of God to sinful man, stands before us as that light in terms of which all the facts of the created universe must be interpreted. All of finite existence, natural and redemptive, functions in relation to one all-inclusive plan that is in the mind of God. Whatever insight man is to have into this pattern of the activity of God he must attain by looking at all his objects of research in the light of Scripture (Cornelius Van Til).¹⁰²

Scripture is a fuller revelation than natural revelation and includes all of the latter and much besides. . . . The modernist notion that all human knowledge and science is a divine revelation in the same sense that Scripture is a divine revelation is utterly false and destructive. . . . Natural revelation cannot be regarded as a fuller revelation than Scripture, or as coordinate with Scripture in any sense whatever (Johannes Vos).¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 60, 96, 131f (bold added).

¹⁰² Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 27, 67.

¹⁰³ Johannes G. Vos, "The Biblical Doctrine of the Separated Life" (Committee on Christian Education, OPC), available at http://www.the-highway.com/separated_Vos.html.

Scripture is nonetheless our final authority. In a fallen world where natural revelation is suppressed in unrighteousness (Ro 1:18, 20), special revelation is needed to check, confirm, and correct whatever is *claimed* for the content of natural revelation. Moreover, there are no moral norms given in natural revelation that are missing from special revelation (2 Tim 3:16–17). Indeed, the content and benefit of special revelation exceed that of natural revelation (cf. Ro 3:1–2) (Greg L. Bahnsen).¹⁰⁴

There is, therefore, no human activity that can function as God intended by natural revelation alone (John Frame).¹⁰⁵

The “light of nature” is only of any value since the Fall to the extent to which man faithfully interprets it in the light of the “special revelation” now inscripturated in the infallible Bible (Francis Nigel Lee).¹⁰⁶

Contemporary distortions of general revelation devalue special revelation

We have learned that it is a theological error with grave consequences to treat general revelation as a second source of revelation, i.e., as an equal and independent source of truth alongside Scripture. Unfortunately, it has become quite common in contemporary Christian culture to alter and broaden the traditional definition of general revelation. However, a couple examples from the history of theology quickly demonstrate that this is a precarious trend. Roman

¹⁰⁴ Greg L. Bahnsen, in *God and Politics*, ed. Gary S. Smith (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1989), 21.

¹⁰⁵ John M. Frame, “In Defense of Christian Activism,” *Christian Culture* (April 2006): 4; reprinted in Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 949.

¹⁰⁶ Francis Nigel Lee, “Christocracy and the Divine Savior’s Law for All Mankind,” 12 (available at: <http://drfinlee.org/docs6/christocracy/christocracy.pdf>). Cf. A.A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 279; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:74f.

Catholicism has always taught a dualistic, nature vs. grace schema. The natural light of reason (which includes natural law) governs all areas of life except the realm of grace and salvation—which ostensibly come through the Roman Catholic Church (i.e., the incarnate Christ) and its sacraments. Thus, Roman Catholicism teaches a natural theology that is not subject to correction from Scripture, with natural reason being an independent source of truth.

A second historical example of the danger of broadening the definition of general revelation is found in the nineteenth century history of religions school of thought. They accepted all non-Christian religions as containing truth on the basis of general revelation. Their broad “general revelation” produced a general religion!¹⁰⁷ But, this is idolatrous and blasphemous.

- In total contrast to people finding “god” in all religions, the Bible teaches that the only living and true God condemns all other gods as false/lies, nonexistent, and worthless/vanities (1 Ki 18:21, 24; Pss 31:6; 96:5; 135:15–18; 115:4–8; Is 41:22–26, 29; 42:17; 43:9; Jer 2:28; 10:5, 10; 18:15; Dn 5:23b; Hab 2:19; Ac 14:15; 19:26; 1 Cor 8:5–7; 10:19–20; 16:22; Gal 4:8; 1 Jn 5:21) and forbids people from worshiping them (Ex 20:3). Demons are the power behind those religions (Dt 32:17; Ps 106:28; 1 Cor 10:20ff; Rv 9:20).
- The condition of the world devoid of the light of God’s special revelation is: darkness (Is 9:1; 60:2; Lk 1:79; Jn 1:5; Eph 4:18); ignorance (Ac 17:30; Ro 1:18–19; 1 Pt 1:14); illusory and vain wisdom, which is folly (1 Cor 1:18ff; 2:6; 3:19–20); and unrighteousness (Ro 1:24ff; 3:9–10).

This trend to alter and broaden the definition of general revelation is particularly prevalent today in the fields of science and psychology, as well as by proponents of Christianized natural law theory. In such

¹⁰⁷ Gerrit C. Berkouwer, “General and Special Divine Revelation,” in *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl C.F. Henry, 13ff.

cases, two independent sources of revelation are postulated: the Bible and nature/autonomous human reason. This dualistic revelation is a perversion of the Biblical doctrines of general and special revelation.

The idea of two independent sources of revelation was promoted by scientist-philosopher Francis Bacon (1561-1626),¹⁰⁸ who asserted that God gave humanity two revelations of truth, each of which is fully authoritative in its own realm:

- Special revelation (the Bible): authoritative in all matters relating to spiritual truth, salvation, ethics, morality and Christian living.
- General revelation: authoritative in all matters relating to the natural world (e.g., science).

Next, this dual-revelation theory postulates that the two sources cannot contradict each other, because they were given by the same, self-consistent, God of truth. Furthermore, the tasks of the theologian and the scientist are seen to be the interpretation of Scripture and the interpretation of nature, respectively, and each have their own specific methodology and procedures for determining the true meaning of the particular book they are studying.¹⁰⁹

The basic tenet of the dual-revelation theory is summarized by Baptist theologian Bernard Ramm: “God cannot contradict His speech in Nature by His speech in Scripture. If the Author of Nature and

¹⁰⁸ Lord Francis Bacon affiliated with secret societies, was a master Kabbalist, and a proponent of esoteric knowledge. Renaissance man Dr. John Dee, Queen Elizabeth's personal astrologer and sorcerer, may have tutored Bacon in medieval cryptography. The occult Rosicrucians claim Bacon as one of their own. Freemasons borrow from his utopian book, *New Atlantis*.

¹⁰⁹ John C. Whitcomb, “Biblical Inerrancy and the Double Revelation Theory,” *Grace Journal* 4:4 (Winter 1963); cited by Andrew S. Kulikovsky, “Scripture and General Revelation,” <https://creation.com/scripture-and-general-revelation>. I am indebted to Kulikovsky for several thoughts in this section.

Scripture are the same God, then the two books of God must eventually recite the same story.”¹¹⁰ In fact, old-earth proponent and progressive creationist Hugh Ross considers nature to be just as inspired as Scripture—a 67th book of the Bible.¹¹¹ Indeed, the basic maxim for those who accept the dual-revelation theory is “All truth is God’s truth.”

How shall we respond to this dual-revelation theory?

1. Its proponents erroneously define general revelation, and they misunderstand the nature and purpose of it. (See the above discussion for the purpose of general revelation.)

- They do not understand the theological term “revelation.” We noted above that the theological term “revelation” denotes **God’s disclosure of Himself and the communication of His word and will to mankind**. We also noted that **the content of revelation is not accessible to man by either empirical research or reason alone**.
- They wrongly define the word “general” (in general revelation) to mean the *content* of the revelation rather than the *recipients* of the revelation (i.e., given to all persons, at all times, in all places). This is wrong theologically and Biblically.
- They broaden the definition of general revelation to include all scientific and psychological studies. But the resultant definition is unbiblical.
 - Biblical references to general revelation limit its content to information about God (Ps 19:1; Ro 1:19-21; Ac 14:15-17; 17:24-28; Ro 2:14-15; etc.), not information about the physical world.

¹¹⁰ Bernard L. Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 32; cf. 29.

¹¹¹ Richard L. Mayhue, “Is Nature the 67th Book?” *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008), 105-129.

- Biblical references to general revelation teach that it has always been, and continues to be, readily accessible to everyone throughout history—not just to specialists in certain fields (e.g., scientists, psychologists, philosophers, etc.), at a certain time in history, or in certain geographical parts of the world. General revelation is not something people must seek to discover. It is information that is common knowledge to all.
 - The Bible teaches that the unregenerate response to general revelation is universal rejection of it (Ro 1:18–32). It is thus unbiblical to assert that unbelieving scientists and psychologists discover truths on the basis of general revelation.
2. Its proponents do not account for the noetic and ethical effects of the sin and depravity on their scientific and psychological research. (Review the verses regarding depravity, cited above, under the heading “Biblical worldview critique of empiricism.”)
 3. Its proponents underestimate the effects of God’s curse upon the earth (Gn 3:14, 17–19; Ro 8:19–22; Job 25:5). (See the above subsection entitled “The effects of the Fall,” under the heading “Insufficiency of general revelation.”)
 4. Its proponents fail to understand the limitations of science. (See below for the subsection entitled “Limits of science,” under the heading “Four Applications of the Biblical worldview.” There we demonstrate that science, based on a philosophy of empiricism and inductive reasoning, can never arrive at truth about anything.)

The dual-revelation theory, with its two independent and equal sources of revelation and truth, would certainly appear to be unbiblical and untenable. But let’s examine more fully the two most important passages of Scripture with regard to general revelation.

Two test cases of general revelation: Psalm 19 and Romans

I

Psalm 19:1-4a The heavens are telling of the glory of God [El]; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. ² Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night **reveals knowledge**. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their line has gone out **through all the earth**, And their utterances **to the end of the world** (NASB).

The heavens/firmament (cf. Gn 1:1, 6-8) declares God's glory by declaring itself to be God's handiwork (vv. 1-2). This "continuously ongoing"¹¹² proclamation is made throughout the earth (v. 4).

The focus is not on creation qua creation, but rather on the *speech* with which creation lauds her Creator. . . . Via personification, the poet endows nature with voice, speech, and even knowledge. Knowledge (*dā`at*) in this context implies **not just any knowledge, but knowledge of God** (cf. Hos 4:1ff).¹¹³

But its testimony is **not heard by those rejecting the special revelation of Yehowah's perfect law**, i.e., the unregenerate (vv. 7-11; cf. Ro 1:18).¹¹⁴ "While creation may utter a voiceless praise of God's glory,

¹¹² "The participles emphasize the continuously ongoing nature of the proclamation made by the heavens, but the imperfect, in its expression of incomplete action, also indicates that the praise is not ended but continues" (Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms 1*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002], 361).

¹¹³ N. DeClaissé-Walford, R.A. Jacobson, B.L. Tanner, *Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 206 (bold added). Derek Kidner calls this "God's wordless revelation in the universe" (*Psalms 1-72*, TOTC [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973], 97).

¹¹⁴ "There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard" (Ps 19:8 NASB). Most translations are similar (NET, NIV, NRSV, RSV, ASV; contra KJV, NKJV). "God's creation resounds with a *speech* that human beings can neither hear nor understand" (v. 3) (N. DeClaissé-Walford, R.A. Jacobson, B.L. Tanner, *Psalms*, NICOT, 206). Psalm 19 involves a tacit polemic against Israel's polytheistic, sun-worshipping neighbors (207f).

the Lord has given to human beings a concrete word that humans can access by studying the Scriptures of Israel,”¹¹⁵ (i.e., the Old Testament). “This is **not natural theology**. The psalmist is not arguing from the world to God. He is looking at the world through the eyes of a faith born of Israel’s encounter with and response to God, the faith which he confesses in verses 7-14.”¹¹⁶

Thus, Psalm 19:1-6 certainly does not support the idea that natural or general revelation includes science and reveals truth about the physical creation.

What about Romans 1?

Romans 1:18-32 For the wrath of God is [being] **revealed** from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **suppress the truth** in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be **known of God** is **manifest** in them, for God **has shown it** to them. 20 For **since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen**, being **understood** by the things that are made, even **His eternal power and Godhead**, so that they are **without excuse**, 21 because, although they **knew God**, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, . . . 28 they did not like to **retain God in their knowledge**, . . . 32 who, **knowing** the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

What is clearly seen is God’s “invisible attributes . . . His eternal power and Godhead.” “In characterizing them as invisible, reference

¹¹⁵ N. DeClaisé-Walford, R.A. Jacobson, B.L. Tanner, *Psalms*, NICOT, 209.

¹¹⁶ Geoffrey W. Grogan, *Psalms*, THOTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 68 (bold added). G.C. Berkouwer concurs that Psalm 19 is not natural theology but a Psalm of Israel lifted out of the sanctuary (“General and Special Divine Revelation,” in *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl C.F. Henry, 18).

is made to the fact that they are not perceived by the senses. . . . It is the seeing of understanding, of intelligent conception.”¹¹⁷ **What is revealed throughout creation is that God is the Creator Who alone should be worshiped;** the creation should not be worshiped. (Note the Creator-creation distinction, in contrast to monism, pantheism, etc.) Because of this general revelation, **all mankind** is “without excuse” (v. 20) for their “ungodliness” (i.e., idolatry, vv. 21, 23, 25) and “unrighteousness” (i.e., sexual perversions, etc., vv. 24, 26–32). Because unregenerate people “suppress the truth in unrighteousness,” “the wrath of God is being revealed” against them (v. 18).

Thus, Romans 1:18–32 describes a revelation of God to all people, throughout all the world, throughout all time (“since the creation of the world,” v. 20)—not a revelation of scientific facts or knowledge about the physical creation.

Romans 1:19–20 offers no support for the view that general revelation encompasses specific knowledge about the physical world, including modern scientific conclusions and theories. What, then, is the purpose of general revelation? Romans 1:19–20 clearly teaches that general revelation proclaims to *all* humanity, past and present, that God exists, that He created the universe and everything in it, and that He is great and powerful. Thus, *the physical world is not a second book of revelation from God, but a signpost pointing to God, the almighty Creator.*¹¹⁸

Is it really true that “all truth is God’s truth”?

We dealt with this question in our book *Psycho-Heresy: “Christianizing” Pagan Psychologies*.¹¹⁹ What was written there

¹¹⁷ John Murray, *Romans*, NICNT, 1:38f.

¹¹⁸ Andrew S. Kulikovsky, “Scripture and General Revelation,” <https://creation.com/scripture-and-general-revelation> (italics in original).

¹¹⁹ Robert E. Fugate, *Psycho-Heresy: “Christianizing” Pagan Psychologies*, 189–192.

regarding psychology is applicable to all sciences. We include the following excerpt:

“Under the banner ‘**All truth is God’s truth**’ and ‘**common grace**,’ integrationists viewed psychology as a source of legitimate and even necessary knowledge [psychological truth].¹²⁰ Psychology was part of God’s ‘second book’ about human beings, supplemental and complimentary to Scripture.”¹²¹ If man thinks something is true, then God must think it is true, and thus it must be “of God” because God is truth. But this confuses the infallible Word of God with the fallible word of men. Furthermore, these slogans and mere assertions avoid

¹²⁰ “When someone, usually a psychologist, says ‘All truth is God’s truth,’ they are truly ‘playing God.’ What these psychologists mean and actually say, is that man’s theoretical and empirical knowledge are on the same level as the word of God. They use the word, ‘integration.’ Integration means the merging of equal authorities. There is not authority equal to Scripture. . . . ‘All truth is God’s truth,’ as it is often used by psychologists, is heresy” (Franklin E. Payne, *God Confronts Culture: The Almost Complete Book on Biblical and Christian Worldview**, 291, 306). By the term ‘playing God’ Payne means “man violating God’s commandments by setting his own ethical standards . . . thinking that I know better than God.” In discussing integrationist Gary R. Collins, Payne notes that “he never defines the principles to know what is and is not ‘truth’ in psychology, and therefore, never defines the method by which integration can take place” (313).

¹²¹ David Powlison, “Integration or Inundation?” in *Power Religion*, ed. Michael S. Horton (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1992), 195. “They are not clear about what God’s truth is. Is God’s truth Freudian pronouncements of obsessive neurosis? Or is God’s truth Jung’s structure of archetypes? Or is God’s truth Rogers’s ideas on human love? Or is God’s truth the behaviorism of B.F. Skinner? Or is God’s truth ‘I’m OK; You’re OK’?” (Martin and Deidre Bobgan, *PsychoHeresy: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity* [Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate, 1987], 32). Cf. Franklin E. Payne, *Biblical Healing for Modern Medicine* (Augusta, GA: Covenant Books, 1993), 83.

the real issue. Of course God knows all truth, but the question is how can man know whether something is true or erroneous? The integrationist's empiricism fails to provide him with absolute truth (cf. Part 1: Biblical Worldview). John Moffat explains where the sloganeering "all truth is God's truth" can lead:

This slogan is the verbal equivalent of a graven image; something that appears to represent truth but does not. . . . None of the people that use this "all truth" expression actually say that they consider man's thoughts equal with God's revealed Word, it just happens to work that way in practice; just as at first the graven images were not meant to replace God, only to represent Him. . . .

I can imagine Nadab and Abihu talking before the early worship service in the wilderness. One says to the other, "All fire is God's fire. God made all fire; therefore it is all of him." When Moses was up on Mount Sinai, the children of Israel could have said to Aaron, "All worship of God is God's worship." These analogies have the same deceptive sound of being logical at first glance, but they are all full of the same ambiguity and deceit as the expression "all truth is God's truth."¹²²

Most integrationists appeal to the doctrine of **general revelation** to justify man discovering truth outside the Bible. However, in so doing integrationists are completely redefining the theological term "general revelation" in a blatantly unbiblical way. For integrationists, "general" no longer means to all mankind everywhere throughout all history (referring to the recipients of the revelation); instead, it is now defined as all knowledge that man learns by human investigation and discovery (i.e., the content of the revelation). "Revelation" no longer means truth that God discloses to man that man could never have

¹²² Martin and Deidre Bobgan, *The End of "Christian Psychology"* (Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate, 1997), 46; citing John D. Moffat, "Is 'All Truth God's Truth'?" *The Christian Conscience* (May 1997), 27f.

discovered by unaided human reason. Putting these two words together, integrationists define general revelation as that body of truth that is gained by unaided human investigation and discovery.¹²³ However, the Bible verses teaching general revelation (Ps 19:1-4; Ac 14:15-17; 17:22-31; Ro 1:18-32; 2:14-16) totally contradict this unbiblical definition.¹²⁴ Biblically, general revelation is “God’s revelation of Himself to all persons, at all times, in all places, through creation, through His providential governing of history, and through man’s mind and conscience” (cf. Part 2: Systematic Theology). Man would never learn these truths by his unaided human reason and sensory experience, i.e., apart from divine revelation. Notice that, according to the above Bible verses, the content of general revelation is God Himself, not truths regarding man and the cosmos that are supposedly discovered through psychology and science.

¹²³ Douglas Bookman, “The Scriptures and Biblical Counseling,” in *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, eds. J.F. MacArthur and W.A. Mack (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 68-78. Some integrationists further confuse the issue by asserting that general revelation is non-propositional (69), which is irrationality. We refuted irrationality in our worldview discussion of epistemology (see above). For a Biblical theology of rationality see Robert E. Fugate, *A Theology of Rationality and Logic*; idem., *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 44-64.

Definitions: **revelation**—God’s disclosure of himself and the communication of His word and will to mankind; **general revelation**—God’s revelation of Himself to all persons, at all times, in all places, through creation, through His providential governing of history, and through man’s mind and conscience; **special revelation**—God’s disclosure of Himself and His will to particular persons, conveyed by miraculous acts and words, enabling those persons to enter into a redemptive relationship with Him (Robert E. Fugate, *God’s Revelation*).

¹²⁴ Richard L. Mayhue, “Is Nature the 67th Book of the Bible?” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, 105-129.

In the counseling field, the key problem for integrationist counselors is “how one determines what is ‘true’ in the vacillating world of psychotherapy. Ultimately, each therapist becomes the final judge of truth and incorporates into his counseling system that which appeals to him personally”¹²⁵ (i.e., what he/she feels psychologically comfortable with). Thus, in the integrationist perspective, truth is not viewed as absolute and ultimate, but as relative and changing. This is a blatantly unbiblical notion of truth.

In light of all the above Biblical and theological evidence, we must conclude that the notion that general revelation includes scientific research and discoveries is unbiblical and theologically naive. Regrettably, it is causing considerable confusion, deception, and false teachings in the body of Christ.

We will conclude our discussion of general revelation with a penetrating quote by G.C. Berkouwer:

We may, and must, emphatically protest against any two-source-theory [of revelation], which places Scripture and tradition, or Scripture and nature, or Scripture and history, on one line, as sources of knowledge of equal import. Any such equalization has always resulted in a devaluation of Holy Scripture. . . . There was the assumption of general revelation as an independent source of knowledge, equal in value with special revelation. **The result was always—there are no exceptions!—a leveling and supplanting of special revelation.** The process here was the same as that in the

¹²⁵ Ed Bulkey, *Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1993), 192. For discussions of ultimate authority and truth, in addition to this book, see Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, 9f, 22, 312-322; idem., *A Biblical Philosophy of Truth with Contemporary Applications* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2017).

juxtaposition of revelation and tradition, or revelation and reason.¹²⁶

Inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture

There are several key passages of Scripture that teach the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16–17. “All Scripture¹²⁷ is **inspired by God**, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

The Greek word translated “inspired by God” (θεόπνευστος) means literally “God-breathed out” (or exhaled). The phrase “breath of God” in Scripture is metaphorical language for God’s almighty power, the bearer of His creative word. Just as God made the host of heaven “by the breath of his mouth” (Ps 33:6), through His own creative, fiat word (Gn 1; Ps 33:6, 9), so we should regard the Scriptures as the product of a similar creative, fiat word—“Let there be Law, Prophets, and New Testament.” Thus, the meaning of “God-breathed” (or “inspired by God”) is that **Scripture, in its entirety, is the product of the creative breath of God.** Although men wrote Scripture, it is God who brought it into being. It is His creation; **He is the ultimate Author.** The content and character of the holy Scriptures have all been decisively determined by the originating and controlling activity of God the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:19–21 And so we have the **prophetic word** confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;²⁰ knowing this first, that no **prophecy of Scripture** is of any private interpretation,

¹²⁶ Gerrit C. Berkouwer, *General Revelation*, Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 280, 314 (bold added).

¹²⁷ The term “Scripture” (Greek *graphē*—a writing), as used in the New Testament, always means the authoritative Holy Scriptures, i.e., (1) the sacred and canonical writings of the Old and New Testament; the Bible; or (2) a particular passage or text of the Bible.

²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were moved by [carried along by] the Holy Spirit.*

This passage teaches that the Old Testament Scriptures (having been written by prophets) did not originate from human initiative. Rather, the source of their prophecies was God Himself—God spoke His words through human instruments. The term “carried along” is a maritime metaphor; it is used in Acts 27:15, 17 of a ship carried along by the wind. Benjamin Warfield elaborates:

The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were therefore His things, not theirs. And that is the reason which is assigned why “the prophetic word” is so sure. Though spoken through the instrumentality of men, it is, by virtue of the fact that these men spoke “as borne by the Holy Spirit,” an immediately Divine word.¹²⁸

In **John 10:34–35** Jesus makes the universal assertion, “**The Scripture cannot be broken.**” In this passage Jesus Christ refers to the Old Testament Scriptures as: “the Law,” “the word of God,” and “the Scripture.”

Matthew 15:3–6 He [Jesus] answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress **the commandment of God** because of your tradition? 4 “For **God commanded, saying,** ‘Honor your father and your mother’ [Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16]; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death’ [Lv 20:9]. 5 “But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God”– 6 ‘then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus you have made the **commandment of God** of no effect by your tradition.

¹²⁸ Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 137 (= “Inspiration,” ISBE_L, 3:1475).

The parallel passage in Mark’s Gospel adds, “making **the word of God** of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do” (Mk 7:13).

In Matthew 15:3-6//Mark 7:8-13 the Lord Jesus Christ (the personal Word of God) quotes several passages of the Old Testament, calling them: “**the commandment of God**” (Mt 15:3//Mk 7:8-9), “**God** [the divine Author] **commanded saying**” (Mt 15:4), “Moses [the human author] said,” (Mk 7:10), and “**the word of God**” (Mk 7:13). (We might also note in Mark 7:7 the Lord Jesus said, “in vain they worship Me, teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.” Thus, God rejects the worship of those teaching the commandments of men rather than the commandments of God.)

Each of these key cited passages teach the inspiration of Scripture.

What Scripture says is what God says

It is also instructive to observe those Old Testament passages in which God is speaking, but the New Testament cites these passages as what Scripture says. The converse is also true: many Old Testament passages do not specify that God was speaking, but are cited in the New Testament as what God says. Thus, what Scripture says is what God says. Let me give a few examples.

WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS, GOD SAYS ¹²⁹	
GOD SAYS . . .	SCRIPTURE SAYS . . .
Gn 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.	Gal 3:8 And the Scripture , foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, <i>saying</i> ,

¹²⁹ References taken from Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1986), 51. See also Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, 299f.

	“In you all the nations shall be blessed.”
Ex 9:16 “But indeed for this <i>purpose</i> I have raised you up, that I may show My power <i>in</i> you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.	Ro 9:17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”
SCRIPTURE SAYS . . .	GOD SAYS . . .
Gn 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.	Heb 4:4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh <i>day</i> in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”;
Gn 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.	Mt 19:4-5 Have you not read that He who made <i>them</i> at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵ “and said , ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh ‘?’
Ps 2:1-2 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed.	Ac 4:24-26 Lord, You <i>are</i> God , who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, ²⁵ “who by the mouth of Your servant David have said : ‘Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things?’ ²⁶ The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered

	together Against the LORD and against His Christ.
Ps 2:7 I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You <i>are</i> My Son, Today I have begotten You.	Heb 1:5 For to which of the angels did He ever say : “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You “?”
Ps 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.	Ac 13:35 Therefore He also says in another <i>Psalms</i> : ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’
Ps 95:7-11 Today, if you will hear His voice: ⁸ “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, As <i>in</i> the day of trial in the wilderness, ⁹ When your fathers tested Me; They tried Me, though they saw My work. ¹⁰ For forty years I was grieved with <i>that</i> generation, And said, ‘It <i>is</i> a people who go astray in their hearts, And they do not know My ways.’ ¹¹ So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’“	Heb 3:7-11 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says : “Today, if you will hear His voice, ⁸ Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, ⁹ Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. ¹⁰ Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, ‘They always go astray in <i>their</i> heart, And they have not known My ways.’ ¹¹ So I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest.”“
Ps 97:7 Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, Who boast of idols. Worship Him, all <i>you</i> gods.	Heb 1:6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says : “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”
Ps 104:4 Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.	Heb 1:7 And of the angels He says : “Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.”

<p>Is 55:3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you-- The sure mercies of David.</p>	<p>Ac 13:34 And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’</p>
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These examples clearly demonstrate that what Scripture says is what God says.

Scripture had to be fulfilled

Frequently Jesus and the Apostles used emphatic language to indicate that, by God’s decreed purpose, certain events had to have happened so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled. Here are a few (of many possible¹³⁰) examples:

How then could the **Scriptures** be fulfilled, that **it must happen thus?** (Mt 26:54).

Men and brethren, this **Scripture had to be fulfilled**, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus (Ac 1:16).

For I say to you that this which is **written must still be accomplished** in Me: ‘And He was numbered with the transgressors.’ For the things concerning Me have an end (Lk. 22:37).

Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all things must be fulfilled which were written** in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me (Lk 24:44).

Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, **for it is written:** ‘I will strike the

¹³⁰ Robert E. Fugate, “That the Scriptures Might Be Fulfilled verses.”

Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered' (Mt 26:31/Mk 14:27; cf. Ac 1:20).

“But all this was done **that the Scriptures** of the prophets **might be fulfilled**” (Mt 26:56).

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, **that the Scripture might be fulfilled** (Jn 17:12).

There are many such passages teaching that Scripture must be fulfilled—God’s words cannot be otherwise.

Definition and significance of Biblical inspiration

Having learned that Scripture itself teaches the doctrine of inspiration, let us now give a theological definition of inspiration. Theologically, inspiration may be defined as “**that supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit whereby the sacred writers were divinely supervised in their production of Scripture, being restrained from error and guided in the choice of words they used, consistent with their disparate personalities and stylistic peculiarities.**”¹³¹

The result of the Holy Spirit inspiring the Scriptures is that they are truthful, authoritative, and trustworthy. **Inspiration is what sets the Christian Scriptures apart from all other books ever written** (e.g., Jewish Apocryphal books canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, sacred books of other religions, such as the Muslim Qur’an, the Hindu Bhagavad-Gita, the Book of Mormon, etc.).

Let us now examine the nature of verbal inspiration.

¹³¹ Carl F.H. Henry, “The Authority and Inspiration of the Bible,” *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* [EBCi] ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 1:25. For a discussion of the humanness of Scripture see Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, chapter 7. For additional definitions see Robert E. Fugate, “Definitions: Inspiration, Revelation, Illumination, Word of God.”

Verbal plenary inspiration

Biblical inspiration applies to the exact words—and all the words—of Scripture (this is a theological truth termed verbal, plenary inspiration). Jesus and the Apostles frequently appealed to one specific word in an Old Testament citation to prove their point. Sometimes their arguments hinged upon whether the word was singular or plural, or, what the tense or voice (active or passive) of a verb was! Here are some examples:

- **chronological sequence** of events. The Apostle Paul proved the doctrine of justification by faith from the chronological sequence of events recorded in historical narrative portions of the book of Genesis (i.e., that Abraham was justified before he was circumcised; Ro 4:10-11; referring to Gn 15:6 and 17:10).
- a **phrase** (Ac 15:17—“and all the Gentiles who are called by my name”; Ro 4:3—“Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness”; Heb 12:27—“yet once more”).
- one **word** (Mt 22:43-45—David calls the Messiah “Lord”; Jn 10:35—Scripture calls human judges “gods”; Mt 4:10//Lk 4:8—worship and serve God “only”; Heb 2:11-12—“my brethren”). Jesus’ entire argument on the identity of the Son of David rested on one word, “Lord” (Mt 22:43-45 “The LORD said to my [David’s] Lord”; citing Ps 110:1).
- the **tense of a verb** (Mt 22:31-32//Mk 12:26-27—the present tense “I am” proves the dead will be raised; Jn 8:58—“before Abraham was I AM”). Jesus proved the resurrection of the dead from the present tense of the verb “I am” (Mt 22:31-32//Mk 12:26-27; citing Ex 3:6, 15).
- the **voice of a verb** (passive voice versus active voice in Gal 4:9—“now after you have known God, or rather are known by God”).

- the **number of a noun** (Gal 3:16—“not seeds as of many, but as of one [i.e., singular], and to your seed, who is Christ”). The Apostle Paul proved that Jesus (not the Jews) are the seed of Abraham, to whom God’s covenant promises were made, by the fact that the noun “seed” is singular not plural (Gal 3:16).
- the **individual letters** of a word (Mt 5:18 ESV—“until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished”).

Professor Wayne Grudem is quite correct when he says:

The implication of literally hundreds of verses is that God’s word is reliable in every way: It is free from all impurities (Ps 12:6); it is eternal and unchanging in heaven (Ps 119:89); it has unique and unlimited perfection (Ps 119:96); it proves true in every word (Pr 30:5); it is not only true in each part, but it is also “truth” when the parts are added together (Ps 119:160). It is not limited to the truthfulness of man, but is as truthful as God Himself (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29). We are to tremble before it (Is 66:2). Any historical detail in the Old Testament narrative can be cited with a confidence that it both “happened” and “was written down for our instruction” (Ro 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11), because every word of Scripture has been spoken by God who never lies (Titus 1:2) and for whom lying is impossible (Heb. 6:18). God’s word is not only “true,” it is “truth” (John 17:17). To say that Scripture is truthful in everything it says is to say that it is “inerrant”; it does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact.¹³²

Because Biblical inspiration extends to the exact words (which theologians term verbal, plenary/entire inspiration), the Bible is completely truthful, authoritative, and trustworthy in everything. Let’s

¹³² Wayne A. Grudem, “Scripture’s Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture,” in *Scripture and Truth*, eds. Donald A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 58.

consider some additional truths that can be deduced from the fact that Scripture is inspired (i.e., God-breathed).

Deductions from Biblical inspiration

Being God’s very words and the product of his creative breath, Scripture, in some measure, shares some of God’s own characteristics:

living (Heb 4:12; 1 Pt 1:23);	spiritual (Ro 7:14);
everlasting (Ps 119:89, 160; Mt 24:35; 1 Pt 1:23-25);	unchangeable (Mt 5:18);
true (Ps 119:142, 151, 160; Jn 17:17);	powerful (Heb 1:3; cf. 11:3);
perfect (Ps 19:7);	holy (Ro 7:12);
righteous (Ps 119:7, 62, 106, 123, 144, 172; Ro 7:12);	good (Ps 119:39; Ro 7:12, 16);
wonderful (Ps 119:18, 27, 129);	faithful (Ps 119:86);
pure (Ps 19:8; 119:140).	

Being God’s Word, Scripture also performs divine acts, such as: judging (Jn 12:48); bringing grace, life, and healing (Ps 107:20; 119:25, 93, 107, 154, 156); restoring the soul (Ps 19:7); etc.

Being the very words of God, Scripture is infallible and inerrant.

Theologian J.I. Packer wrote, “The significance of biblical inspiration lies in the fact that the inspired material stands for all time as the definitive expression of God’s mind and will, his knowledge of reality, and his thoughts, wishes, and intentions regarding it.”¹³³

¹³³James I. Packer, “Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, Inerrancy,” in Jerusalem and Athens, ed. E.R. Geehan, 142.

Applications

How should we apply these doctrines of the inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture?

1. First, since the Bible the is inspired and infallible Word of God written, we must apply it in our own lives and in our own families. God instructs His people to read, memorize, meditate on,¹³⁴ and study His Word, and to diligently teach it to our children (Dt 6:2, 7, 20-21).
2. Second, we must “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).
3. Third, we must learn to apply the Bible to all of life and culture. Consider the breadth of the following truths:

The Scriptures are epistemological foundation of all knowledge, the God-breathed, infallible standard for truth and for right living.

Consider the Dominion Covenant/Creation Mandate, to be God’s royal stewards ruling over His creation (Gn 1:26-28).

Consider the universal kingship of the resurrected and enthroned Lord Jesus Christ (Mt 28:18 Who “has been given” “all authority” “in heaven and on earth”; Ac 10:36 “He is Lord of all”; Pss 2; 110).

Consider the gospel of the kingdom and the Great Commission to disciple all the nations unto obedience to King Jesus (Mt 28:19-20).

¹³⁴ When the Bible speaks of “meditation,” it does not mean emptying one’s mind, as in Eastern meditation, which opens the door to demons. Rather, we are to meditate on: God’s name (Mal 3:16); God’s attributes (Ps 145:5); God’s Word—especially His law (Jos 1:8; Pss 1:2; 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148; 1 Tim 4:15); God’s works (Pss 77:12; 119:27; 143:5; 145:5); and God’s ways (Ps 119:15).

Consider the endless increase (Is 9:7) of Christ's kingdom that demolishes all rival kingdoms (Dn 2:31-35, 44-45) and that grows and permeates everything like yeast (Mt 13:31-33).

These great truths can only mean that the authority of King Jesus and His **inscripturated Word** must be proclaimed and applied in all aspects of life and culture throughout the universe! The whole Bible for all of life, to the glory of the triune God!

Seven properties of Scripture

Scripture possesses seven main properties: necessity; truthfulness; authority; efficacy; sufficiency; clarity; and completeness/finality.¹³⁵

Let's begin with necessity.

I. Necessity

In our study of epistemology we learned that neither empiricism, nor rationalism, nor irrationalism can provide any justification for human knowledge. Only the God-Who-knows-everything, Who has chosen to reveal verbal,¹³⁶ propositional truth to man, can be the basis for human knowledge (this involves the doctrine of revelation). And this triune, speaking God, Who cannot lie (Tit 1:2; Heb 6:18; cf. Ro 3:4), has inspired His written Word to communicate truth to us (which concerns the doctrines of the inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture). These facts introduce us to the first property of Scripture, necessity.

- The Bible is epistemologically necessary for knowledge.¹³⁷ Without it, we cannot justify knowing anything about anything!¹³⁸ Consider the following Bible verses:

¹³⁵ Our discussion of the properties of Scripture is taken from Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, chapter 8.

¹³⁶ We will discuss a Biblical theology of language under the heading "Seven applications of the Biblical worldview."

¹³⁷ **Knowledge** may be defined simply as "justified true belief."

¹³⁸ This was powerfully demonstrated by Dr. Greg Bahnsen's debates with atheists Gordon Stein and Edward Tabash. The Bahnsen-

In Your [God's] light we see light (Ps 36:9).

The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple (Ps 119:130; cf. vv. 104-105).

The testimony [law] of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple; ⁸ . . . The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes (Ps 19:7b-8b).

In whom [Christ] are hidden **all** the treasures of wisdom and **knowledge**.¹³⁹ I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument (Col 2:3-4).

Truth is in Jesus (Eph 4:21).

Jesus said to him, "I am . . . **the truth** (Jn 14:6).¹⁴⁰

Tabash debate may be heard at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL20688B7E40A084CF>. The Bahnsen-Stein debate may be heard at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anGAazNCfdY>. These debates are available for purchase at <https://www.cmfnow.com>.

¹³⁹ "The mediating agent in all divine revelation is the Eternal Logos—preexistent, incarnate, and now glorified. Just as he is the divine Agent in creation, redemption and judgment, so also the *Logos* who became incarnate in Jesus Christ is the divine Agent in revelation. God who creates, redeems and judges by his Word (cf. Gn 1; Jn 1:5) also reveals himself by that selfsame living Word. . . . This emphasis that the eternal Logos is mediator of all divine revelation guards against two prevalent errors, namely, that of reducing all revelation to the revelation found in Jesus of Nazareth; and that of isolating general revelation by treating revelation outside of Jesus of Nazareth as something independent of the Logos who became incarnate" (Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 2:11f). Henry expounds this thesis in 3:203-215.

¹⁴⁰ "Like other words, truth can be used figuratively, by metonymy, in which the effect is substituted for the cause. Thus when Christ says, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' the word truth is just as figurative as the word life. As Christ is the cause of life, so is he the cause of truth. That water freezes and that a sinner may be justified by faith are true because Christ creatively said, Let it be so" (Gordon H. Clark, "Truth," *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Everett F. Harrison, 533). Jesus' statement, "I am . . . the truth" (Jn 14:6), "must be taken to mean, I am the source of truth; I am the wisdom and

Your [God's] **word is truth** (Jn 17:17).

God's "anointing teaches you about all things" (1 Jn 2:27). (the Word plus the Spirit)

These verse teach that God is the source of knowledge and truth.

- The Bible is necessary for knowledge of the gospel. General revelation tells us nothing about how to be saved. General revelation does reveal something of God as Creator, Ruler, Lawgiver, and Judge, but it cannot reveal God as Redeemer; it shows that God punishes sin, but not that He forgives sin. Furthermore, truths concerning the Trinity, the Incarnation, the atonement, etc. cannot be known through general revelation. (See the above discussion on revelation. God has ordained that through the preaching of the Word people will be saved, Ro 10:14; Ac 10:5-6, 32.)
- The Bible is necessary for knowing God's prescriptive will (i.e., His laws for godly living) and for maintaining spiritual life. Consider these verses:

Ps 119:104-105 "Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. ¹⁰⁵ Your word *is* a lamp to my feet And a light to my path."

Ps 119:9, 11 "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. . . . ¹¹ Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!"

Mt 4:4 (citing Dt 8:3) We must "live . . . by **every** word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Dt 32:46-47 "And He [God] said to them: 'Set your hearts on **all the words** which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe-

Logos of God; truths are established by my authority" (Gordon H. Clark, "The Bible As Truth," in *God's Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 37).

- **all the words of this law.** ¹⁷ ‘For it *is* not a futile thing for you, because **it *is* your life**, and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land. . . .’ (Cf. Jos 1:8; Ps 1:2.)

- The Bible is necessary for building and defending the Christian worldview. (In our day there are many Reformed seminary professors and church pastors who have orthodox systematic theology (e.g., believing the five points of Reformed soteriology), but who have very unsound, even syncretistic worldviews—a spiritual condition that fosters pagan, Christ-hating cultures.)

2. Truthfulness

The second property of Scripture is truthfulness.

- Being God’s inspired, inerrant Word, the Scriptures are wholly true—on whatever subject they speak (e.g., history, science, chronology, politics, economics, education, counseling, etc.).¹⁴¹
- God calls us to believe everything the Scriptures teach (Lk 24:25, 27, 44; Ac 3:18; 24:14; Ro 15:4).

“He [resurrected Lord Jesus Christ] said to them [disciples on the road to Emmaus], ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in **all** that the prophets have spoken!’” (Lk 24:25).

¹⁴¹ “The only way to find truth is to bow before God’s authoritative Scripture. . . . The very essence of knowledge is to bring our thoughts into agreement with God’s revealed Word. Thinking God’s thoughts after him is to be the rule not only in narrowly religious matters, but in every sphere of human life . . . history, science, psychology, sociology, literary criticism . . . business, sports, family life, worship, politics [economics, education, counseling, journalism, etc.]. . . . God calls us to ‘presuppose’ him in all our thinking. This means that we must regard his revealed truth as more important and more certain than any other, and find in it the norms or criteria that all other knowledge must meet” (John M. Frame, “Cornelius Van Til,” *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 163).

“But this I [Apostle Paul] confess to you [Governor Felix], that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, **believing all things** which are written in the Law and in the Prophets” (Ac 24:14).

We are not to act as judges over God’s Word—as the devil tempted Eve to do in the Garden of Eden!

- Being God’s inspired, inerrant Word, the Scriptures are not merely true, they are **truth** (Jn 17:17).

If we merely consider the Scriptures to be true, that means that we have a higher authority that we—as judges over God’s Word—are using to judge them, and they passed our test. But, since God’s Word is truth, it is the **benchmark or standard by which all other truth claims must be judged!**¹⁴²

¹⁴² With regard to the affirmation in Jesus’ prayer, “Your **word is truth**” (Jn 17:17), we note that Jesus did not merely say that God’s Word is “true,” but that it is “truth.” “The difference is significant, for this statement encourages us to think of the Bible not simply as being “true” in the sense that it conforms to some higher standard of truth, but rather to think of the Bible as being itself *the final standard of truth*. The Bible is God’s Word, and God’s Word is *the ultimate definition of what is true and what is not true*: God’s Word is itself truth. Thus we are to think of the Bible as *the ultimate standard of truth, the reference point by which every other claim to truthfulness is to be measured. Those assertions that conform with Scripture are “true” while those that do not conform with Scripture are not true*. What then is truth? Truth is what God says, and we have what God says (accurately but not exhaustively) in the Bible” (Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 83).

“The essence of the idea of Scripture is that it *alone* is **the criterion of truth**” (Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, 43, bold added). “If biblical teaching and my own thoughts clash, it is my thoughts that are wrong every time!” (James I. Packer, “Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, Inerrancy,” *Jerusalem and Athens*, ed. E.R. Geehan, 153).

Consider the case of Abraham (the father of all who believe). He had to believe God’s covenantal Word, even when all the empirical evidence available to him pointed the opposite direction (Ro 4:17-22, 11). “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7). “Faith is . . . the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1; cf. 1-3, 7).

Truthfulness is a vital property of Scripture. The third property of Scripture is authority.

3. Authority

Authority refers the right to rule. When we speak of the Bible having the property of authority, we mean that the Bible is our ultimate authority for truth, doctrine, ethics, etc.

- Since God is the One Who inspired Scripture and is its Ultimate Author, the basis for the Bible’s authority is the authority of God Himself. Scripture has intrinsic, **self-authenticating** authority. A.A. Hodge explains:

“At the opening of the book it demands the implicit credence and obedience of every reader. Its instant order to every reader is, ‘Believe, on peril of your soul’s life!’ It does not point to evidence, nor plead before the bar of human reason. But it utters the voice of God and speaks by authority. What other book does this?”¹⁴³

Cornelius Van Til adds, “Whatever the Bible speaks to, it speaks with authority, and it speaks to everything”¹⁴⁴—either directly or indirectly.

- Scripture is entitled to the same faith and obedience that is due to God.¹⁴⁵ (Consider a mundane human example: If one of your parents leaves a note to your son or daughter, directing him or

¹⁴³ Archibald A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology*, 75 (italics added).

¹⁴⁴ Cornelius Van Til, cited by W. Gary Crampton, *The Bible God’s Word*, 47. Cf. Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 2

¹⁴⁵ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1950), 1:307.

her to clean up the kitchen and take out the trash, the son or daughter cannot honor and obey you without obeying your written word. The same principle applies in our relationship with God.) Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn 14:15).

- All human authorities are to submit to the absolute authority of God’s infallible Word. Civil governments, churches, religious traditions,¹⁴⁶ a person’s subjective impressions (such as visions, dreams, prophecies), scientific opinions, etc. must all be subject to the authority of God’s infallible Word, which alone is truth.

4. Efficacy

The fourth property of Scripture is efficacy. By efficacy we mean that the Holy Spirit so works through the written Word of God that it has the power to produce the effects God intended.

Hebrews 4:12 says: “The word of God *is* living and powerful . . .”

There are various, amazing effects which God’s living and powerful Word produces in the life of a believer:

- produces faith (Ro 10:17; Jn 20:31);
- new birth (1 Pt 1:23; cf. Ja 1:18; Ac 5:20);

¹⁴⁶ “One sure way to be swallowed up by traditionalism is to think that one is immune to it. . . . The greatest threat of traditionalism may not always come in the expected form of popes and extrabiblical ceremonies; very often the most dangerous form of traditionalism is the sort that refuses to affirm the positive role of history and community in shaping one’s understanding, the sort that refuses to call traditions what they are and therefore refuses to hold them up to the standard of Scripture. Instead, their traditions become merely confused with Scripture, and that is a disaster” (James I. Packer, “The Comfort of Conservatism,” in *Power Religion*, ed. Michael S. Horton, 286f).

- eternal life (Jn 5:24, 39; Jn 6:68–69; Ac 11:14; Phil 2:16; Pr 4:22);
- sanctification (Jn 17:17; 15:3);
- restores/revives one’s soul (Pss 19:7a; 119:25, 50; Ja 1:21);
- food for growth (1 Pt 2:2; Mt 4:4; cf. Heb 5:12–14);
- understanding and wisdom (Pss 119:100, 104, 130; 19:7b; 2 Tim 3:15);
- light (Pss 119:105; 19:8b; Pr 6:23);
- joy (Ps 19:8a; Jer 15:16);
- healing and health (Ps 107:17–20; Pr 4:20–22);
- purity (Pss 119:9, 11; 17:4);
- strength to endure (Ps 119:92);
- powerful weapon to overcome the devil (1 Jn 2:14; Eph 6:17; Mt 4:4, 7, 10//Lk 4:4, 8, 12);
- great peace (Ps 119:165);
- eternal hope (Col 1:5–6);
- grace and edification (Ac 20:32).

Are you experiencing these benefits of God’s Word in your life? If not, why not?

Metaphorically, God’s Word is depicted as: a lamp (Ps 119:105; Pr 6:23); a seed (Lk 8:11; 1 Pt 1:23); precipitation (Is 55:10–11; Dt 32:2); honey (Ps 119:103); a mirror (Ja 1:23); a sword (Heb 4:12); fire (Jer 23:29); and a hammer (Jer 23:29). All accomplish what God intends.

God’s Word is also the standard by which people will be judged (Jn 12:48).

5. Sufficiency

The fifth property of Scripture is sufficiency. It is so relevant to building a Biblical worldview in our day that I have made it a separate pillar of the Biblical worldview (pillar 7).

6. Clarity

The sixth property of Scripture is clarity (sometimes called perspicuity).

Definition: **“The Bible is written in such a way that its [basic] teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God’s help and being willing to follow it”**¹⁴⁷ (Jn 7:17).

We will briefly mention four lines of evidence demonstrating the clarity of Scripture.

- The Bible was written in the common language of the people (e.g., *koine* or common Greek, not literary classical Greek), and almost all of the Bible is addressed to common people.
- The Bible teaches personal accountability. Every individual is personally responsible and accountable before God to know, believe, and obey God’s written Word (Lk 16:29; Ja 1:22–25; Dt 30:11–14; Ac 17:11; Ps 1:2). God’s law was read to all the people (including women and children) when Yehowah made covenant with Old Testament Israel, at subsequent periodic festivals, and at covenant renewals.¹⁴⁸ All the people were responsible to know God’s law and to obey it.
- Judging. People are commanded and expected by Scripture to judge: prophetic utterances (1 Th 5:19–22; 1 Cor 14:29); teachings (2 Jn 7–11; Ro 14:5; 16:17; 1 Cor 2:15; 10:15; 11:13; cf. Gal 1:8–9); spirits (1 Jn 4:1–3; 1 Cor 12:1–3, 10; Mt 16:23); ministries (Mt 7:15–23; Rv 2:2; etc.); themselves (1 Cor 11:28, 31; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 6:3–4); etc. The only proper basis upon which

¹⁴⁷ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 108.

¹⁴⁸ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 357.

people can make these judgments is the revealed truth of God's sufficient and clear written Word.

- Teaching one's children. God's people are commanded in Scripture to diligently teach their own children God's Word (Dt 4:9-10; 6:4-9, 20ff; 11:18-21; 32:46-47; 2 Tim 3:15, 17; Eph 6:4; etc.). This presupposes that the parents personally know, understand, believe, and obey God's Word, and that their children are also capable of understanding the Scriptures.¹⁴⁹

Some object, if the basic teaching of Scripture is clear, why are there such disagreements in its interpretation? In short, the answer is: personal sin; unbiblical hermeneutics (e.g., dispensationalism or allegorical interpretation); syncretism that incorporates pagan thinking into Scripture; and unbiblical theologies are some of the chief causes of disagreements in the interpretation of Scripture.¹⁵⁰

Qualification: The truth regarding the basic clarity of Scripture and the responsibility of private judgment does not negate the complementary truth that God gifts certain men to be teachers in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:28-29; Eph 4:11; Ac 13:1).

7. Completeness or finality

The seventh property of Scripture is completeness or finality.

Jude, verse 3 says: "I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints**" (Jude 3). (In this verse, the term "the faith" denotes the objective doctrinal and ethical content that Christians must believe.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Many other miscellaneous verses are cited, and several objections to the clarity of Scripture are answered in Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, 358-367.

¹⁵⁰ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, 362-364.

¹⁵¹ In Jude 3, the term "faith" denotes "the content of what Christians believe" (Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains [L-N]*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. [New York: NY: United Bible Societies, 1989]); "that which is believed, *body of faith/belief/teaching*" (*W. Bauer, F.W.*

God gave this body of doctrinal and ethical content to the church once for all.)

In Hebrews 1:1-2 we read: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² **has** in these last days **spoken** to us by *His* Son” (Heb 1:1-2). (The Greek word translated “has spoken” is in the aorist tense, indicating completed action.¹⁵² There is no further doctrinal and ethical revelation beyond Jesus, contrary to the teachings of Islam, Mormonism, Roman Catholicism, and virtually all cults. Some Pentecostals and charismatics, in practice, violate this property of Scripture by treating their revelations as a greater authority than Scripture, as God’s “now word” or “present truth” that’s more relevant and more up-to-date than Scripture.)

With regard to the New Testament, as part of the history of redemption, the apostolic witness/word is unrepeatable and unique, comprising **the written terms of the new covenant, the charter documents of the Christian church, the faith once for all delivered to the church as a deposit to guard earnestly**. The New Testament canon¹⁵³ is the boundary dividing the history of redemption from the history of the church.

Simply put, God is not adding more chapters or books to the Bible. No contemporary revelations are on a par with Scripture.

Danker, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature [BDAG], 3rd ed. [Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000]).

¹⁵² ἐλάλησεν (spoken) is in the aorist tense, indicating completed action. Cf. Robert E. Fugate, “Hebrews 1:1-2,” unpublished paper.

¹⁵³ When used of Scripture, the term “canon” derives from the Hebrew *qaneh* (reed, measuring rod) and from the Greek κανών (rule, standard, norm). The English term “canon” denotes the collection or list of books which are received (not determined!) by the Christian Church as genuine and inspired Holy Scriptures; they are the rule or standard of faith and practice.

These seven properties of Scripture (necessity, truthfulness, authority, efficacy, sufficiency, clarity, and completeness/finality) may be demonstrated in even more depth from Scripture itself.¹⁵⁴ However, in this worldview book we will be content with a few summary statements regarding these properties of Scripture.

Summary statements regarding the properties of Scripture

The Bible (or the Scripture) is “the sum total of the revelations of God which were infallibly recorded in a God-breathed, written form, designed to be the permanent deposit of divine truth and the permanent rule of faith and life to the universal Church.” Thus, the Bible is: (1) the Word of God written; (2) the criterion of truth; (3) the rule of faith and life;¹⁵⁵ and (4) a means or channel of God’s grace.

The full verbal inspiration, inerrancy, and sufficiency of the completed Scripture ensures that it is absolute, universal, invariant, propositional **truth**, being the epistemological foundation for all our knowledge, and the standard or criterion by which all other truth claims must be judged.

The Bible is also the only source of absolute, universal, invariant, objective **ethics** by which we must live.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these seven properties of Scripture (necessity, truthfulness, authority, efficacy, sufficiency, clarity, and completeness/finality) were central truths discovered by the Reformers in their study of Scripture. Wherever these doctrines have been understood and embraced, the light of the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has driven out darkness, superstition, and idolatry of Roman Catholicism and other false religions. Families, churches,

¹⁵⁴ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, chapter 8.

¹⁵⁵ “What do the Scriptures principally teach? A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man” (WSC, Q&A 3).

and nations have been radically transformed by the power of the gospel of King Jesus, to live according to the standard of the inerrant, sufficient, understandable Word of God.

Sadly, in the United States and in Europe today, most evangelical pastors and churches have abandoned this rich theological heritage. Our Lord Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men” (Mt 5:13). That is what is happening to the church in the United States and in Europe. I solemnly warn my international readers: Do not follow our disastrous example of abandoning the doctrines of the inerrancy of Scripture, the absolute authority and sufficiency of God’s Word for every area of life, and God’s created order for male and female. Jesus also said, “whoever falls on this stone [i.e., Jesus, the King of God’s kingdom] will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder” (Mt 21:44). This is what happened to the apostate state of Israel in A.D. 70. Most contemporary American and European Christians have little use for God’s holy and just law; but they will soon learn the reality of God’s covenantal judgments on covenant-breaking nations (Dt 28; Am 1-2).¹⁵⁶ God says, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and all the nations* that forget God” (Ps 9:17).

God is calling the readers of this book to be faithful stewards of the Reformation heritage that He has graciously given to you. May you do your part to disciple¹⁵⁷ your city and nation (Mt 28:18-20) for the extension and glory of Christ’s ever-increasing kingdom (Is 9:7)! Come, national reformation, in Jesus’ mighty name!

The fallacy of an evidential defense of the Bible

The subject of apologetics is outside the scope of this book. However, since Christian apologetics often focuses on attempting to prove the authority and truthfulness of the Bible, we will briefly consider

¹⁵⁶ Robert E. Fugate, “All Nations ‘Covenant’ Nations”; idem., “Historical Judgments.”

¹⁵⁷ Robert E. Fugate, “The Great Commission: Disciple All Nations.”

whether their methodologies comport with the Biblical worldview (as presented in this chapter).

There are two main types of Christian apologetics, evidential¹⁵⁸ and presuppositional. These names are somewhat misleading, however,

¹⁵⁸ I am using the term “evidentialism” to describe a general type of apologetical system that is based on a **rationalistic natural theology** (cf.: Bernard Ramm, *Varieties of Christian Apologetics* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961], 16; idem., *Types of Apologetic Systems* [Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen, 1953], 10f; John M. Frame, “A Presuppositionalist’s Response,” in *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, 132f, 195f). I am not distinguishing between different family members that exist within this type of apologetical system. For example, “**classical apologetics**” uses an argumentative strategy involving two sequential steps: (a) use natural theology (e.g., traditional theistic proofs, not special revelation) to establish the existence of a god, i.e., general theism; (b) then use historical evidence to prove the deity of Christ, the trustworthiness of Scripture, etc. to show that Christianity is the best version of theism (instead of Judaism or Islam). (In classical apologetics miracles cannot be used to prove God’s existence). Its proponents include: Thomas Aquinas, B.B. Warfield, Norman Geisler, R.C. Sproul, William Lane Craig.

Some people distinguish classical apologetics from what they label “evidential apologetics”—a term they use to describe an argumentative strategy involving only one step, i.e., using primarily historical evidence and inductive arguments (as advocated by John W. Montgomery, Clark Pinnock, Wolfhart Pannenberg, the earlier Bernard Ramm, Gary Habermas, and Josh McDowell). They also marshal other lines of evidence, e.g., experiential evidence (primarily changed lives) and fulfilled Biblical prophecies. In their methodology, miracles can be used to prove God’s existence.

A third type is distinguished by various names: “cumulative case apologetics” (Cowan’s term); “verificationism” (Gordon Lewis’s term); or “combinationalism” (Norm Geisler’s earlier term for a type that he now makes a subcategory of evidentialism). This type uses an argumentative strategy of informal argument (i.e., not formal inductive arguments or a formal deductive proof). This family member organizes various kinds of data into a hypothesis that provides a better explanation of the existence and nature of the

since, in terms of methodology, both can use evidence¹⁵⁹ and both have presuppositions. The terms “evidential” and “presuppositional” refer to their different epistemologies (i.e., theories of knowledge).

Evidentialism offers to test the truth claims of Christianity through the use of empirical evidence (i.e., evidence obtained through the five senses) and inductive reasoning (i.e., probabilistic reasoning). In particular, the empirical evidence evidential apologists use to make their case for Christianity is historical evidence. Using this epistemological foundation, evidentialists would proceed in the following manner: Both the believing and the unbelieving parties are

cosmos, the reality of religious experience, the objectivity of morality, and certain other historical facts (e.g., the resurrection of Jesus) than any of the alternative hypotheses. Its advocates include C.S. Lewis and Paul Feinberg.

However, despite slightly different emphases, all three of these variations are based on a method of rationalistic natural theology. All three assume inductive reasoning and the validity of empirical data; all three minimize the noetic effects of sin. Thus, in this book, I am considering all three types as members of the same methodological family, which I’m calling “evidential apologetics.” However, some of my objections to evidentialism apply more strongly to one type than another. For instance, classical apologists are more inclined to note that worldviews do affect one’s interpretation of the facts, rather than saying “the facts speak for themselves.”

¹⁵⁹ “Evidence is useful when used within a transcendental argument based on biblical presuppositions” (John M. Frame, “Van Til, Cornelius,” *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*, eds. W.C. Campbell-Jack and G. McGrath [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006], 740). Thom Notaro, *Van Til and the Use of Evidence* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980]. John M. Frame, “Presuppositional Apologetics,” *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, 219 n 16. As a presuppositionalist, Frame “has a higher view of evidence than some evidentialists do. . . . In presuppositionalism, evidence is not a merely probable witness to the truth of Christianity; rather, it is sure and certain. God’s normative interpretation of it is the *only* rational interpretation of it” (Cowan, 78 n 6).

to set aside their personal beliefs and examine all the facts (raw data) to determine whether there is a greater probability that Christianity is true or untrue.

Presuppositionalists reject the epistemological foundation of evidentialism on the grounds that no one can be religiously neutral (presuppositionless), and there is no raw data (all facts are interpreted through some worldview). Furthermore, without presupposing the Christian worldview, the use of logic and the validity of empirical data cannot be justified.

Most of the popular books on Christian apologetics are based upon evidential apologetics. Well-known proponents of evidential apologetics include John Warwick Montgomery, Norman Geisler, and Josh McDowell. Many creation scientists are evidentialists (Ken Ham and Jonathan D. Sarfati being clear exceptions). Despite its popularity, evidential apologetics has gaping philosophical and theological weaknesses.

Defending the Biblical worldview: Weaknesses of evidential apologetics

1. Evidential apologetics is based upon *inductive reasoning* (probabilistic reasoning). Thus, the very best that it can do is to argue that, given our present evidence, God very probably exists, the Bible is very probably true, and Jesus' corpse very probably resuscitated. Of course, further evidence may change these tentative conclusions. We can never know for certain. Such probabilistic reasoning is completely foreign to the thought of Scripture: "know for certain" (Ac 2:36); "know with certainty" (Eph 5:5); "full assurance of understanding" (Col 2:2); "full assurance" (1 Th 1:5; Heb 6:11; 10:22); "fully assured" (Ro 4:21; Col 4:12); "know the certainty of the words of truth" (Pr 22:20-21); etc.
2. In using historical evidence to prove the Bible, evidential apologetics *sets historical verification as a higher authority than the Bible*; for, "the validating source is always the higher and final

authority (see Heb 6:13).”¹⁶⁰ Thus the Bible cannot be the ultimate authority for empiricists. (Note: A person can never prove his ultimate authority or beginning axiom; it must be self-attesting—otherwise it is not his ultimate authority. Thus, circular reasoning is inevitable in the case of one’s ultimate authority.¹⁶¹)

3. Evidential apologists often assume that the reason people are not Christians is that they lack sufficient evidence (which inadvertently blames God for not giving unbelievers sufficient evidence). The evidential approach assumes that the unbeliever needs, and has a right to, more evidence; and that once he receives the new evidence, he has the right to decide for himself whether the evidence is sufficient. Conversely, the Scriptures teach that the unbeliever’s ignorance is willful, defiant, and culpable (Ro 1:18–3:20; see # 5 below).
4. Evidential apologetics wrongly assumes that *historical facts are neutral*, and that they can be examined apart from any presuppositions and worldview. But, as we have already demonstrated, this is an impossibility. “To interpret a fact of history involves a philosophy of history. But a philosophy of history is at the same time a philosophy of reality as a whole.”¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Robert L. Raymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 80 (cf. 74–80).

¹⁶¹ “Circular reasoning” (also called “begging the question”) is a fallacious argument in which the conclusion of an argument is one of its premises. Rationalists say reason is the ultimate standard because reason says so. (Furthermore, people assume the laws of logic while they’re arguing for the laws of logic.) Empiricists use their eyes and ears when arguing for empiricism, and say that sensory experience has taught them to trust their senses above all else. Irrationalists use logic to discredit logic. Irrational mystics say mystical experience validates mysticism. Proponents of linguistic analysis use language to argue for philosophical linguistic analysis and to assert that language cannot convey truth.

¹⁶² Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 2.

If man does not own the authority of Christ in the field of science [or history], he assumes his own ultimate authority as back of his effort. The argument between the covenant-keeper and the covenant-breaker is never exclusively about any particular fact or about any number of facts. It is always, at the same time, about the nature of facts. And back of the argument about the nature of facts, there is the argument about the nature of man. However restricted the debate between the believer and the non-believer may be at any one time, there are always two world views ultimately at odds with one another.”¹⁶³

The non-Christian worldview is antithetical to the Christian worldview. The non-Christian is committed above all to independence from the sovereign God. His ultimate authority is autonomous man. Thus, the non-Christian worldview rejects—without a hearing—any evidence the Christian may marshal—and there is abundant evidence for the authority of the Scriptures. As theologian Cornelius Van Til noted, “It is therefore logically quite impossible for the natural man, holding as he does to the idea of autonomy, even to consider the ‘evidence’ for the Scripture as the final and absolutely authoritative revelation of the God of Christianity.”¹⁶⁴

Since a person’s worldview will determine which facts he will accept and which facts he will reject without a hearing and how he will interpret whatever facts he does choose to accept, it is impossible for the Christian, on the basis of historical evidence, to prove (even very probably—which is the best that evidential apologetics can do) to the consistent unbeliever that the Bible is God’s Word. The unbeliever will simply interpret whatever evidence the Christian adduces in the light of his own autonomous, humanistic presuppositions.

5. Evidential apologetics requires the apologist to set aside his Christian faith, and the unbeliever to set aside his rebellious unbelief and anti-Christian bias, *become objective or neutral*, and

¹⁶³ Cornelius Van Til, *The Doctrine of Scripture*, 5.

¹⁶⁴ Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 93.

examine the historical facts. But intellectual, religious, and ethical neutrality is impossible. No one comes to a discussion having no presuppositions, no view of truth, no view of right and wrong, no worldview.

Reviewing our argument, neutrality is impossible for both the Christian and the unbeliever. Neutrality is impossible for the Christian because God commands him to make Christ Lord of all his thinking (Col 1:18; 2 Cor 10:5; Ro 8:5; Mt 22:37; Pr 1:7; 9:10); furthermore, all wisdom and knowledge are found only in Christ (Col 2:3-4, 8; 1 Cor 1:30; Jn 1:9; 14:6). Biblically, neutrality: suppresses the truth (Ro 1:21, 25); destroys knowledge (Col 2:3-8); is impossible and immoral (Mt 6:24; 12:30); obscures the antithesis between the Christian and the unbeliever, thereby erasing the Christian distinctives!¹⁶⁵ Neutrality is actually veiled agnosticism or unbelief. The Bible does not teach that “Without faith it is impossible to please God”—except when doing apologetics (Heb 11:6), or, “Whatever is not from faith is sin”—except in apologetics (Ro 14:23)! Thus, for the Christian to attempt to set aside his convictions and become neutral is not only impossible, it is disobeying God.

Neutrality is impossible for the unbeliever because of the mental (noetic) and volitional effects of sin: he is incapable of choosing to set aside his rebellious unbelief and to reason objectively, since both his mind/reasoning and his will are depraved. Yet, the ability to choose to be neutral in one’s thinking is the very thing that evidential apologetics requires of unbelievers.

Even “logic is not neutral. It can be used to glorify God or to resist him.”¹⁶⁶

6. Evidential apologetics *appeals to, and strengthens, man’s autonomous, sinful nature because it exalts him as the judge over*

¹⁶⁵ Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready*, ed. Robert R. Booth, 51.

¹⁶⁶ John M. Frame, “A Presuppositionalist’s Response,” *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, 197. Cf. Robert E. Fugate, *A Theology of Rationality and Logic*.

Scripture. God never gives man the right to test or judge God or God's Word (Ro 9:19-20 net, "But who indeed are you—a mere human being—to talk back to God? Does what is molded say to the molder, 'Why have you made me like this?'""); 3:4 "Let God be true but every man a liar"; Job 38:1-42:6; Mt 4:6-7//Lk 4:10-12 "It is written: 'You are not to put the Lord your God to the test.'"); God's Word judges us (Jn 12:48). Even if the apologist's trial ends in God's acquittal, the important point is that Man is seated on the judge's bench and God is the defendant being tried.¹⁶⁷ In the same way, Satan exalted Eve as the judge who was to weigh God's hypothesis (i.e., if she ate the forbidden fruit she would surely die) against Satan's hypothesis (i.e., she would not die but would become like God), and then to autonomously decide which was more probably true. Authority was the issued at stake in the first temptation—authority in the realms of epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics (see above). (Contrast Christ's response to Satan's temptation: "It is written!") Note that in making her verdict, Eve used empirical data (Gn 3:6) to test the truth claims of God's Word. Adam may even have conducted the first scientific experiment to test the truthfulness of God's Word: He waited till Eve ate the forbidden fruit and observed that she did not immediately die, as God had predicted. With God's hypothesis thereby "disproven," Adam concluded that Satan's hypothesis was most probably correct, so he should eat as well. Adam and Eve sinned, in part, because they did not make God's revealed Word their ultimate authority and the judge over all empirical data. (Contrast Abraham, "the father of all who believe," who believed God's Word, even when all the empirical evidence available to him pointed the other way, Ro 4:18-22, 11; cf. Heb 11.)

The evidential apologist is teaching the unbeliever to judge God's Word at the bar of autonomous human reason, i.e., what seems most likely or probable to himself/herself. However, having been taught the validity of using his autonomous reason in this way, the

¹⁶⁷ Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready*, 131.

unbeliever will not restrict his use of the test of probability to the realm of apologetics; he may apply it to any theological doctrine or ethical practice as well. Thus, the unbeliever may deem improbable the Christian doctrines of: the Trinity; the virgin birth of Christ; Christ having both a divine and a human nature; the inerrancy of Scripture; miracles (e.g., the resurrection of Christ); the second coming of Christ; etc. In his rejection of these Biblical doctrines, the unbeliever will be using the tools and the methodology taught him by the believing evidential apologist! Even if God regenerates the unbeliever, evidentialism has given him a weak foundation, leaving him susceptible to Satan's temptations.¹⁶⁸

7. Finite man's autonomous reason cannot prove the existence of the infinite, transcendent God. Thus, if apologists "prove" the existence of a god, it must be a finite god, not the infinite God of the Bible!
8. Even if the evidential apologist convinces an unbeliever that Jesus' body came back to life (which is the apex of the evidentialist's argumentation), it would not prove to the unbeliever what the Christian thinks it proves (i.e., that God raised His Son from the dead, testifying to Jesus' divine identity and God's acceptance of Jesus' substitutionary, atoning death on the cross).¹⁶⁹ The unbeliever can simply respond (as a professor at UCLA did): I think the historical evidence suggests that Jesus' body very probably came back to life. This is one of many phenomena in the universe that we do not yet understand. Send it to Rippley's Believe-It-Or-Not! Someday, when our scientific understanding has sufficiently increased, we will be able to explain such

¹⁶⁸ Perhaps the examples of numerous evidentialists abandoning the doctrines of the inerrancy of Scripture and six, continuous, 24-hour days of creation illustrate the weak foundation of faith based on empiricism and probabilistic reasoning.

¹⁶⁹ Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education* (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1988), 28.

phenomena, and other corpses will also be able to come back to life!

Additional comments on the fallacy of evidentialism

Christianity is a total world- and life-view. The competitors of Christianity are also worldviews. Thus, the case for or against Christianity and the Bible (or its competitors) must properly be made in terms of its entire worldview (not just certain theological pieces). Christianity should not be evaluated or defended in a piece-meal fashion.¹⁷⁰

Since the non-Christian worldview is completely antithetical to the Christian worldview, consistent believers and unbelievers share no common epistemological ground. Gordon Clark elaborates: “There is no such thing as a common [epistemological] ground between Christianity and a non-Christian system. From a world naturalistically conceived, one cannot argue to the God of the Christians. From a world-view that denies all revelation, one cannot produce a Biblical revelation.”¹⁷¹ Elsewhere Clark adds, “Dogmatism is an all inclusive system and has no propositions in common with any other system.”¹⁷²

It is thus impossible for the Christian, on the basis of historical and archaeological evidence, to prove (even very probably—which is the best that evidentialist apologetics can do) to the consistent unbeliever that the Bible is God’s Word. The unbeliever will simply interpret

¹⁷⁰ “The fight between Christianity and non-Christianity is . . . no piece-meal affair. It is the life and death struggle between two mutually opposed life and world-views” (Cornelius Van Til, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 6). “Christianity is a comprehensive view of all things. It takes the world, both material and spiritual, to be an ordered system. Consequently, if Christianity is to be defended against the objections of other philosophies, the only adequate method will be comprehensive” (Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things*, 25).

¹⁷¹ Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education*, 129.

¹⁷² Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy*, 137.

whatever evidence the Christian adduces in the light of his own autonomous, humanistic presuppositions.

Therefore, the only possible way for the consistent Christian to effectively reason with the unbeliever is by way of a critiquing the unbeliever's worldview (presuppositions)—demonstrating his internal inconsistencies and his arbitrariness. The Christian must show that “unless one accept the Bible for what Protestantism says it is, as the authoritative interpretation of human life and experience as a whole, it will be **impossible to find meaning in anything.**”¹⁷³

At this point it is sometimes objected that, given the complete antithesis between the thinking of a believer and an unbeliever, there would be no common ground, no point of contact with the unbeliever from which to share the gospel with him. This, however, is a faulty

¹⁷³ Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 99. Van Til defines apologetics as “the vindication the Christian philosophy of life against the various forms of the non-Christian philosophy of life” (1). To vindicate the Christian philosophy of life, Van Til uses the transcendental argument (as does Greg L. Bahnsen). The transcendental argument deals with the preconditions for knowledge. It seeks to prove the certainty of Christianity by proving the impossibility of the contrary. Apologists using the transcendental argument attempt to prove that, apart from the Christian worldview, one cannot prove anything at all! Bahnsen cites that dictum, “The claim that a basis for doubt is inconceivable is justified whenever a denial of the claim would violate the conditions or presuppositions of rational inquiry” (Harry G. Frankfurt, “Doubt,” *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, 2:414). Gordon Clark's rational presuppositional apologetic also does an internal critique of the unbelieving worldview: “The dogmatic mode of argument . . . consists of an *ad hominem* attempt to convict the liberal of contradicting himself” (Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy*, 141). However, Gordon Clark would insist that, in the justification of knowledge, epistemology must precede metaphysics (*An Introduction to Christian Philosophy*, 27; and *Philosophy of Gordon H. Clark*, ed. Ronald H. Nash [Philadelphia: PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1968], 435; etc.).

(albeit common) inference. Both the believer and the unbeliever are made in the (creaturely) image of God. Both live in the universe that was created, and is controlled, by God. This universe constantly reveals God (i.e., general/natural revelation). Thus, every area of life, or any fact, can be used as a point of contact with an unbeliever. (There is, however, no *neutral* ground between a believer and an unbeliever—all ground is God's ground. The point of contact is not man's autonomous mind.) In other words, metaphysically believers and unbelievers have everything in common, as Van Til affirmed:

They [believer and non-believer] have every fact in common. Both deal with the same God and with the same universe created by God. Both are made in the image of God. In short, they have the metaphysical situation in common. Metaphysically, both parties have all things in common, while epistemologically they have nothing in common.¹⁷⁴

Gordon Clark concurs:

Reformed theology, while denying a common epistemological ground, has always asserted a common psychological or ontological ground. Believer and unbeliever alike, though their philosophic axioms and theorems are totally incompatible, bear in their persons the image of God from creation.¹⁷⁵

It should also be noted that the unbeliever cannot live consistently with his own worldview. He repeatedly borrows from the Christian worldview by using science, logic, morality, and the dignity of man.

Evidential apologetics is not taught in Scripture; neither is it consistent with Scripture. It is also philosophically weak (which is one reason why very few people trained in philosophy turn to Christ through evidential apologetics, and why using it is rather ineffective in university classrooms).

¹⁷⁴ Cornelius Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1977), 5.

¹⁷⁵ Gordon H. Clark, *Karl Barth's Theological Method* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1963), 100.

Cf. WCF 1 (WLC 2-5 // WSC 2-3).

8 PILLARS OF THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

How should one build upon this epistemological foundation of the Biblical worldview? We would suggest that there are at least eight structural pillars that must be in place before attempting to construct a Biblical worldview in the various areas of life and culture.

I. The uniqueness of the Biblical God

The first pillar is the uniqueness of the God revealed in the Bible. While there is virtually no limit to what could be written on this topic, we will focus briefly on four main points: God is both personal and infinite; the attributes of God; God is triune; and applying the Creator-creature distinction to the worldview areas of epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics.

God is both personal and infinite

Unlike the gods of all other religions, the God of the Bible is both personal and infinite. Professor John Frame elaborates:

Of all the religions and philosophies of the world, only those influenced by the Bible are personalistic. Polytheistic religions have personal gods, but these personal gods are not ultimate; they are finite, themselves subject to larger forces. Hinduism presents Brahma as a kind of absolute reality, but Brahma is not personal, nor is the Buddhist nothingness or the Platonic forms, or the Hegelian absolute. Only in Biblical religion is there a personal absolute, a being who is truly ultimate, but who also plans, speaks, thinks, acts in history, rejoices, grieves, loves, and judges. As God's creation, the universe is fundamentally personal.¹⁷⁶

So God of the Bible is unique in that He is both personal and infinite. This God is also unique in His attributes.

¹⁷⁶ John M. Frame, "Presuppositional Apologetics," *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, 224. Cf. John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015), 48.

Attributes of God

The following list itemizes and defines the primary attributes or perfections of the unique God of the Bible.¹⁷⁷ No other religion has a god with these attributes.

Unity (simplicity)—God is not divided into parts, yet we see different attributes/perfections of God emphasized at different times. Every attribute of God is true of all of God’s being. Every attribute of God also qualifies every other attribute. No attribute of God (e.g., love) is primary.

Spirit—God is a (a) personal and (b) incorporeal (not made of any matter) being, having no parts or dimensions, unable to be perceived by bodily senses.

Independence, self-existence, aseity, self-sufficiency—God is eternally and absolutely independent and self-sufficient in His being, knowledge, moral standards, decrees, works, and relationships. God’s self-existence teaches the Creator-creature distinction.

Eternal (infinite/unlimited with respect to time)—God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in His own being, and He sees all time equally vividly (supratemporal, atemporal, temporally transcendent), yet God sees events in time and acts in time (temporal immanence). God is Lord over time and history.

Immense and omnipresent (infinite/unlimited with respect to space)—God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point in space with His whole being (aspatial, spatial transcendence), yet God acts differently in different places (spatial immanence); in other words, God is immediately and continually present everywhere

¹⁷⁷ “The divine essence is expressed precisely in the sum total of its attributes” (Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998], 616). Elsewhere Reymond notes that we “cannot know the number of [the infinite] God’s attributes” (Robert L. Reymond, *“What Is God?”: An Investigation of the Perfections of God’s Nature* [Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2007], 7).

in the fullness of all that He is and all the powers that He has. God manifests His presence in different ways in different places: to providentially sustain; to punish the wicked; and to bless the righteous.

Unchangeable (immutable)—God is unchanging in His being, perfections, purposes, and covenant promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and He acts and feels differently in response to different situations (e.g., people’s sinful acts or righteous acts).

All-knowing (omniscient, infinite/unlimited with respect to knowledge)—God fully knows Himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act.

All-wise—God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals.

All-powerful (omnipotent, infinite with respect to power)—God can do anything that is compatible with His attributes.

Holy—God is separated from sin and devoted to seeking His own honor; the transcendent Creator is metaphysically separate from His creatures (the Creator-creation distinction) and ethically separate from sinful people.

Righteous-just—God always acts in accordance with what is right/just and is Himself the ultimate standard of what is right/just. God revealed His standard for righteousness-justice by giving His righteous-just law.¹⁷⁸

Goodness—God is the ultimate standard of good, and all that God is and does is worthy of approval.

Benevolence—a kindly desire and disposition to do good to others and promote their welfare; goodwill, charitableness. God shows His benevolence in different ways to different classes of people (e.g., mankind universally, the elect).

¹⁷⁸ Robert E. Fugate, *Justice and Sovereignty: Perfections of God Imaged by His People* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2016).

Love—God’s self-giving affection for His image-bearing creatures and His unselfish concern for their well-being that leads Him to act on their behalf and for their happiness and welfare.

Hesed (covenant love/loyalty/faithfulness/kindness)—God’s conditional love to His covenant-keeping people.

Mercy—God’s goodness toward those in misery and distress.

Grace—God’s sovereign unmerited favor, given to those who deserve His wrath.

Patience/longsuffering—God’s goodness in the withholding of punishment toward those who sin over a period of time.

Compassion—God’s sympathetic view of another’s distress, motivating helpful action.

Truth (and faithfulness)—God is the true God, and all His knowledge and words are both true and the ultimate standard of truth.

Metaphysically/ontologically: God is the genuine/real God in contrast to all other gods that are false.

Epistemologically: God’s thoughts are perfectly self-consistent, and they perfectly correspond to His being and perfections (which are ultimate reality). God is the source, the standard, and the definer of truth for all creation for all time.

Ethically: God is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably faithful and trustworthy.¹⁷⁹

Freedom (sovereignty)—God is the Lord and King who reigns absolutely; He does whatever He pleases; He is not obligated by anything external to Himself (i.e., to His own nature and will). God’s sovereign free will is the final cause of all things, including the salvation of the elect.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Robert E. Fugate, *A Biblical Philosophy of Truth with Contemporary Applications*.

¹⁸⁰ Robert E. Fugate, *Justice and Sovereignty: Perfections of God Imaged by His People*.

Jealousy—that holy perfection of God whereby God continually seeks to protect His own honor (Ex 20:5; 34:14; Dt 4:24; 5:9; Is 48:11), blessing covenant keepers and judging covenant-breakers. God’s jealousy is part of His holiness and His covenant love. It focuses on the sin of idolatry.

Hatred—God’s hatred is that divine perfection of utter abhorrence, disgusting repugnance, vehement aversion, and hostility toward sin, and judgment and retribution for the sinner.

Wrath—the settled opposition of God’s nature against evil, His holy displeasure against sinners, and the punishment He justly metes out to them on account of their sins.¹⁸¹

Trinity: one God in three persons

Definition of the doctrine of the Trinity: **God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.**¹⁸²

The doctrine of the Trinity is progressively revealed in Scripture

Old Testament teaches that God exists as more than one person

- Passages in which God speaks to Himself using plural verbs and plural pronouns (Gn 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Is 6:8).
- Passages in which one person is called “God” or “the Lord” and is distinguished from another person who is also said to be God (Pss 45:6-7 [Heb 1:8]; 110:1 [Mt 22:41-46]; Ho 1:7; Mal 3:1-2).
- Passages in which the Angel (i.e., messenger) of *Yehowah* is represented as a divine person (Gn 16:7-13; 18:1-21; 19:1-24; 22:1-2, 11-18; 24:7, 40; 28:10-17; 31:11-13; 32:9-12, 24-30; 48:15-16; Ex 3:2-6; 13:21; 14:19; 23:20-23 and 33:14; 32:34; Nu

¹⁸¹ Robert E. Fugate, *Jealousy, Hatred, and Wrath: The Disregarded Attributes of God* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2016).

¹⁸² Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 226.

22:35, 38; Jdg 2:1-2; 6:11-24; 13:2-23; 2 Sm 24:16; Ho 12:4; Zc 12:8 and Mal 3:1; cf. Josh 5:13-6:2).

- Passages in which the Spirit is spoken of as a distinct person, co-causing God's work (Gn 1:2; Ps 33:6; Is 48:16; 61:1; 63:10).
- Passages that personalize God's Word (Pss 107:20; 33:6; 147:15-18; Is 55:11; Gn 1:3).
- Passages that personalize God's Spirit (Is 63:10; 48:16; Ezk 2:2; 8:3; Zc 7:12).
- Passages in which the divine Messiah is distinguished from the Lord or the Spirit (Is 48:16; 61:1; Zc 2:10f).
- Passages in which three divine persons are implied (Is 48:16; 61:1; 63:9-10).

New Testament teaches that God exists as three persons

Mt 3:16-17//Lk 3:21-22; Jn 14-16; Mt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:13; Lk 1:35; 1 Cor 12:4-6; Gal 4:4-6; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Pt 1:2; Jude 20-21; 1 Jn 5:7 NKJV.¹⁸³ The Incarnation of God's Son and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Ac 2) cemented the doctrine of the Trinity in the minds of the early church.

Three components of the Biblical teaching on the Trinity

There is only one God

Dt 6:4-5; 32:39; 2 Sm 7:22; 1 Ki 8:60; Ps 86:10; Is 45:5-6; Jn 5:44; Mk 12:29; 1 Tim 1:17; Ja 2:19.

God is three persons

- God the Father and God the Son are two distinct persons (Jn 1:1-2; 17:24; 1 Jn 2:1; Heb 7:25).

¹⁸³ For additional verses see Walter A. Elwell, *Topical Analysis of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991), 66-68.

- God the Father and God the Son are distinct from the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Ro 8:27; see also the New Testament Trinitarian passages listed above).

The Holy Spirit is a person (distinct from the Father & the Son; not a force)¹⁸⁴

1. The Holy Spirit has all the characteristics of personhood:
 - Rationality and possesses knowledge¹⁸⁵ (1 Cor 2:10-11; 12:8; Ro 8:16, 27; Is 40:12-14; cf. “teach” and “truth” in Jn 14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:13; etc.).
 - Volition, i.e., he wills certain things and makes ethical judgments (1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:4; Ac 16:7; 15:28).
 - Feels emotions (Ro 15:30; Gal 5:22-23). He can be: lied to and tested (Ac 5:3-4, 9); resisted (Ac 7:51); grieved (Eph 4:30; Is 63:10); quenched (1 Th 5:19); insulted (Heb 10:29); blasphemed (Mt 12:31-32 // Mk 3:29). Only a person can perceive insult and be offended.
 - Self-conscious (Ac 10:19-20; 13:2).

¹⁸⁴ Regarding the personhood and deity of the Spirit in the Old Testament see: John B. Metzger, *The Tri-Unity of God Is Jewish* (St. Louis, MO: Cenveo-Plus Communications, 2005); Robert Morey, *The Trinity: Evidence and Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: World Publishing, 1996), 188-195; David L. Cooper, *The God of Israel* (Los Angeles, CA: Biblical Research Society, 1945), 24-97. J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1962), 173-176.

¹⁸⁵ When we say the Holy Spirit has knowledge, will, etc., we are not saying that there are three intelligences or three wills in the Godhead. “The Three are one God, and therefore have one mind and will.” The essence of the Godhead is common to each of the three persons. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1: 461.

- Moral capacities: convicts of sin (Jn 16:8-10); restrains evil (Gn 6:3, 5); sanctifies (Ro 15:16; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Th 2:13; 1 Pt 1:2); intercedes (Ro 8:26-27); glorifies Christ (Jn 16:14); etc.
 - Speaks (Mt 10:20; Jn 16:13; Ac 1:16; 8:29; 10:19-20; 11:12; 13:2; 21:11; 28:25; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 3:7; Rv 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 14:13; 22:17; etc.).
2. Scripture designates the Holy Spirit as a person, using **personal pronouns**, etc.
- Scripture uses personal pronouns to designate the Holy Spirit. Jesus consistently referred to the Holy Spirit as “**He**,” not “it” (Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-8, 13-14).¹⁸⁶ This usage of the masculine pronoun deliberately breaks the rules of Greek grammar. Note “**I**” and “**me**” in Ac 10:19-20 and 13:2.
 - Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit would be “**another**”¹⁸⁷ **Helper**” (Advocate or Counselor) for the disciples—like he had been (Jn 14:16; cf. 1 Jn 2:1). (Jesus calls the Holy Spirit “Helper” in Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.) Thus, when Jesus ascended back to the Father in heaven and they sent the Holy Spirit to believers on earth, there was an exchange of Persons (Jn 14:16-18).
3. The Holy Spirit performs acts appropriate to a person.

That which searches [1 Cor 2:10], knows [see #1 above], speaks [see #1], testifies [Jn 15:26; Ro 8:16; Ac 5:32; Heb 10:15; 1 Jn 5:7], reveals [Lk 2:26; 1 Cor 2:10 Eph 3:5; cf. Jn 16:13-15; Heb 9:8; 1 Pt 1:10-12], convicts [Jn 16:8],

¹⁸⁶ The Majority Text of Eph 1:14 also uses the masculine pronoun in referring to the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸⁷ The Greek word translated “other” is *allos*, meaning another of the same kind. See: Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § 95 (various editions); Archibald T. Robertson, *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, 6 vols., (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1930-1933), 5:252.

commands [Ac 13:4; 16:6], strives [Gn 6:3], moves [Gn 1:2], helps [Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7], guides [Jn 16:13], creates [Gn 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30; cf. Job 26:13; Ps 33:6],¹⁸⁸ re-creates [Jn 3:5-6; Tit 3:5; Ezk 37:1-14], sanctifies [Ro 15:16; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Th 2:13; 1 Pt 1:2], inspires [2 Pt 1:21; Ac 21:4; cf. 2 Tim 3:16], makes intercession [Ro 8:26-27], orders the affairs of the church [Ac 13:2, 4; 15:28; 16:6-7; 1 Cor 12:11], performs miracles [Gal 3:5; Heb 2:4; including virginal conception, Mt 1:18-20 and Lk 1:35], raises the dead—cannot be a mere power, influence, efflux, or attribute of God, but he must be a person.¹⁸⁹

We could also add: teaches (Lk 12:12; Jn 14:26; 1 Cor 2:13); leads (Mt 4:1; Ro 8:14); encourages (Ac 9:31); warns (1 Tim 4:1); distributes gifts (1 Cor 12:7-11); appoints to church office (Ac 13:2; 20:28); gives life (Jn 6:63; Ro 8:2; 1 Pt 3:18).

4. The Holy Spirit is the **source of Christian fellowship** (Phil 2:1; 2 Cor 13:14) and of the believer's intimate revelation that God is "*Abba*," i.e., Dear Father (Gal 4:6; Ro 8:15).
5. Scripture mentions the Holy Spirit in connection **with other persons** in such a way as to imply His own personality: He is **juxtaposed** with: the Apostles (Ac 15:28); Christ (Jn 16:14); the Father and Son (Mt 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:13; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Pt 1:1-2; Jude 20-21; cf. Ro 15:16; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 3:14-17; 2 Th 2:13-14).
6. The Holy Spirit is **distinguished from His own power** (Lk 1:35; 4:14; Ac 10:38; Ro 15:13, 19; 1 Cor 2:4; Eph 3:16). Viewing the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force turns these verses into absurd tautologies.

¹⁸⁸ John Rea, *The Holy Spirit in the Bible* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1990), 27ff.

¹⁸⁹ Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1907), 324. Cf. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 96.

Each person in the Trinity is fully God

The Father is fully God

(Mt 6:9 prayer; Mt 7:21 doing the Father's will determines one's eternal destiny; Mt 11:25 Lord of heaven and earth; Mt 18:19 all-knowing & all-powerful; Mt 24:36 all-knowing; etc.).

The Son is fully God¹⁹⁰

1. Jesus Christ is called by the **name** and **titles** of God.

- God (Greek "*theos*") (Jn 1:1, 18; 20:28; Ac 20:28; Ro 9:5; Phil 2:6; Tit 2:13; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:8; 2 Pt 1:1; 1 Jn 5:20; Rv 1:8).
- *Yehowah* (Pss 68:18 [Eph 4:8]; 102:25-27 [Heb 1:10-12]; Is 8:14 [1 Pt 2:8; Ro 9:33]; 40:3 [Lk 3:4-6; Mt 3:3]; 45:23-24 [Phil 2:10-11]; Jer 23:5-6; Jl 2:32 [Ro 10:13; Ac 2:21]; cf. Jn 8:58-59; 18:5-6; Is 43:10-13).
- *Elohim*, i.e., God (Ps 45:6 [Heb 1:8]; Is 40:3 [Lk 3:4-6; Mt 3:3]; etc.) and *El*, i.e., "mighty God" (Is 9:6; cf. 7:14).
- *Adonai*, i.e., Lord (Ps 110:1; Is 6:1 & Jn 12:41; Mal 3:1; etc.).
- Savior. In the OT *Yehowah* is the only Savior (Is 43:11; 45:21; Ho 13:4; Jl 2:32). In the NT the Savior (of Israel and the world) is the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt 1:21; Jn 4:42; Ac 2:21; 4:12; 5:31; Ro 10:13; Tit 2:13; Heb 5:9; 2 Pt 1:1; 1 Jn 4:14; etc.; cf. Col 1:20) (or, God the Father is called Savior in the Pastoral Epistles and in Jude v. 25).
- The first and the last (the Alpha and the Omega) (Is 44:6; 48:12; Rv 1:11, 17; 21:6; 22:13; "Lord God" in 1:8 and 21:6).

2. Jesus Christ has the **attributes** of God.

- Life in himself (Jn 1:4; Jn 5:26; 14:6).

¹⁹⁰ Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992). Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 309f, 681f.

- Independence or self-existence (Jn 1:1-2; 5:26; 8:58; Heb 7:16; cf. *Yahweh*).
- Eternity (Jn 1:1-2, 15; 6:62; 8:58; 12:41; 16:28; 17:5, 24; 1 Cor 10:4; Eph 1:4; Phil 2:6; Col 1:17; Heb 1:10-12, 8; 11:26; 13:8; Jude 5; Rv 1:8, 17-18; 21:6; 22:13; Is 9:6-7; Mc 5:2).
- Unchangeableness (i.e., in his essential nature; Heb 13:8; 1:11-12).
- Omnipresence (Mt 18:20; 28:20; Jn 1:18; 3:13 NKJV; 14:9-10; Eph 1:23; 3:17; 4:10).
- Omniscience (Mt 9:4; 11:27; Jn 1:9, 47-48; 2:24-25; 4:29; 6:64; 11:11, 14; 16:30; 18:4; 21:17; Ac 1:24; Col 2:3; 1 Cor 4:5; Rv 2:19, 23).
- Omnipotence (Mt 28:18; 1 Cor 1:24; 15:24; Heb 1:3; Rv 1:8; 19:15).
- Holiness (Mk 1:24; Lk 1:35; Jn 6:69; Ac 3:14; 4:27; Heb 7:26; Rv 3:7; Heb 4:15; 1 Pt 2:22).
- Righteousness (Ac 7:52; 22:14; 2 Tim 4:8; Heb 1:8-9; 1 Pt 8:18; 1 Jn 2:1; Rv 19:11; Jer 23:5-6; cf. Is 45:24).
- Goodness (Jn 1:14, 17; 10:11; 15:9; Ac 10:38; Ro 8:35, 39; 2 Cor 8:9; Heb 2:17; 4:16; 1 Jn 3:16; Jude 21).
- Truth (Jn 1:9, 14, 17; 6:32; 14:6; 1 Jn 5:20; Rv 3:7, 14; 19:11).
- Sovereignty (Mt 11:27; 28:18; Jn 3:31; 5:21; 1 Cor 15:27; 2 Pt 2:1; Rv 1:5; 2:26-28; 3:14; 19:16). Jesus is called "Lord" about 475 times in the NT.
- The glory of God's manifested presence (Hebrew *Shekinah*) (Jn 12:38-41 + Is 6; Jn 1:14; 17:5; 1 Cor 2:8; Heb 1:3). *Yehowah* does not give his glory to false gods or to sinful mankind (Is 42:8; 48:11).

3. Jesus Christ performs the **works** of God (Jn 10:37; 5:17).

- Creates and is the source life (Jn 1:3-4, 10; 5:26; Ac 3:15; Col 1:16-17; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:2, 10).
- Providentially controls and sustains the created order (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:17; Heb 1:3; Mt 28:18; Ro 14:9; Rv 1:5).
- Healing and performing miracles by his own authority (in his own name) (Mk 1:32-34; Ac 3:6; 10:38; etc.), including raising the dead (Mk 5:41 & //s; Lk 7:11-17; Jn 11:39-44, 25; 5:21; etc.).
- Forgiving sins by his own authority (Mk 2:1-12 // Mt 9:2-6; Lk 7:48; 24:47; Ac 5:31; Col 3:13). Only *Yehowah* can forgive sins (Is 43:25).
- Granting salvation and imparting eternal life (Jn 1:12; 5:21, 25-26; 10:28; 11:25-26; 17:2; Ac 4:12; Ro 10:12-14).
- Giving the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:11; Lk 24:49; Jn 15:26; 16:7; Ac 2:17, 33).
- Resurrecting all those who have died physically (at the general resurrection) and judging everyone at the final judgment (Mt 7:22-23; 25:31-46; Jn 5:19-29; 6:39-40, 54; Ac 10:42; Ro 10:14; 1 Cor 4:4-5; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1; etc.). (Thus, Christ determines the eternal destiny of every person.) In the OT it is *Yehowah* alone who gives life (Dt 32:39; 1 Sm 2:6) and who is the Judge of all the earth (Gn 18:25; Jdg 11:27).
- Teaching with absolute authority (Mt 7:28; Mk 1:21-22; 13:31; “I say to you”¹⁹¹—listing only those passages found in the Sermon on the Mount, Mt 5:18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 44; 6:2, 5, 16, 25, 29).
- Perfectly reveals God the Father (Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22; Jn 1:18; 14:9; Col 1:15; Heb 1:1-3).

¹⁹¹ For additional verses see Walter A. Elwell, *Topical Analysis of the Bible*, 90-92.

4. Jesus Christ receives the **honor** due only to God. (“honor the Son just as they honor the Father,” Jn 5:23).

- Receives **praise** (Mt 21:15–16; Eph 5:19; 1 Tim 1:12; Rv 5:8–14), **worship** (Mt 2:8; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; Mk 5:6; Lk 24:52; Jn 5:23; 9:38; 20:28; Phil 2:10f; Heb 1:6 by angels; Rv 5:8–12), and **prayer** (Jn 14:13–14; Ac 1:24; 7:59–60; 9:10–17, 21; 22:16, 19; 1 Cor 1:2; 16:22; 2 Cor 12:8; 1 Th 3:11; 2 Th 2:16; Rv 22:20), including **doxologies** (2 Tim 4:18; Heb 13:21; 2 Pt 3:18; Rv 1:5–6; 5:13) and **benedictions** (1 Cor 16:23; 2 Cor 13:14; Phil 4:23; 1 Th 5:28; 2 Th 3:18; 2 Tim 4:22; Phm 25). Several of these passages teach that Christ approves of those people offering him worship and prayer. Only *Yahweh* is to be worshiped (Ex 20:3–5; Is 45:23; Rv 19:10:22:8–9); God’s angels and godly church leaders refuse to receive worship (Rv 19:10; 22:8–9; Ac 10:25–26; 14:11–15).
- He is the object of saving faith (Jn 3:16, 36; 14:1; Ac 10:43; 16:31; Ro 10:8–13).

5. Miscellaneous

- **Pre-existed** with God the Father in heaven (Jn 1:1–2, 15, 30; 3:13, 31; 6:38ff, 62; 8:23,¹⁹² 58; 12:41; 16:28; 17:5, 24; Eph 1:4; Phil 2:6–7; Col 1:17; cf. 41 references in the Gospel of John to the Father sending the Son into the world; cf. “I Am” in John, especially Jn 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58–59; 13:19–20; 18:5–8; etc.).
- Unity with God the Father (i.e., a unity of essence) (Jn 10:30).
- The fullness of the infinite God dwells in the Lord Jesus Christ bodily (Col 1:19; 2:9).

¹⁹² Note that in Jn 8:23 Jesus contrasts His heavenly pre-existence with the earthly origins of His hearers. Scripture does not teach the pre-existence of human souls (as Plato taught).

- Possesses all authority in heaven, on earth, and in hell (Mt 28:18; Jn 3:35; Eph 1:20-23; Rv 1:18; cf. Jn 3:31; 17:2).
- Joint possessor with God the Father of: God's kingdom (Eph 5:5; Rv 11:15); the churches (Ro 16:16); the Holy Spirit (Ro 8:9; Phil 1:19; 1 Pt 1:11); the heavenly Jerusalem temple (Rv 21:22); and God's throne (Rv 22:1, 3).
- Joint source with God the Father of God's blessing (1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 6:23; 1 Th 3: 11; 2 Th 2:16-17).
- Jesus Christ's words remain in existence and will remain binding forever (Mt 24:35 // Mk 13:31 // Lk 21:33). His words will be the law at the final judgment (Jn 12:48). In the OT it is *Elohim's* word that stands forever (Is 40:8).
- Lord of the Sabbath (Mk 2:27-28).

The Jews wanted to execute Jesus for blasphemy because they rightly understood that, by His claims, He was "making himself equal with God" (Jn 5:18), and thus making himself God (Jn 10:33).

The Holy Spirit is fully God

1. The Holy Spirit is called by the **names of God**.

- God (Greek "*theos*") (Ac 5:3-4; 1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:22). The temple of God is where God the Holy Spirit dwells (1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 2:21-22).
- *Adonai*, i.e., sovereign Lord (Ac 28:25 + Is 6:1, 8, 11).
- *Yehowah* (Ac 28:25-27 + Is 6:3, 5, 12; Heb 10:15-16 + Jer 31:31-34; Heb 3:7-10 + Ps 95:7-11 & Ex 17:7; 2 Cor 6:16 + Lv 26:12-13; 2 Cor 3:17¹⁹³ + Ex 34:34; Nu 24:2, 13).
- *Elohim*, i.e., God (2 Cor 6:16 + Lv 26:12-13).

¹⁹³ Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 311-313.

2. The Holy Spirit has the **attributes of God**.

- Personal (see above) spirit (life, Ro 8:2).
- Independence or self-existence (*Yehowah*).
- Eternity (Heb 9:14; Jn 14:16).
- Omnipresence (Ps 139:7-8ff; Ezk 36:27).
- Omniscience (1 Cor 2:10f; Is 40:12-14; Jn 14:26; 16:12-15).
- Omnipotence (Ro 15:19; 1 Cor 2:4; 12:11; Ps 33:6; Gn 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30; Lk 1:35).
- Holiness (Holy Spirit, Ro 1:4; Eph 4:30; sanctifies, Ro 15:16; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Th 2:13; 1 Pt 1:2).
- Goodness (love, Ro 15:30; Gal 5:22; grace, Heb 10:29).
- Truth (Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Jn 4:6; 5:7).
- Freedom or sovereignty (2 Cor 3:17-18; 1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:4; Ac 16:6-7).

3. The Holy Spirit performs **the works of God**.

- Creation (Gn 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30; cf. Job 26:13; Ps 33:6).
- Regeneration (Jn 3:5-7; Tit 3:5; Ezk 37:1-14).

4. The Holy Spirit receives the **honor due only to God**,

- The Holy Spirit is presented as equal with the Father and Son in the Trinitarian passages (Mt 28:19 divine Name in baptism; Jn 14:16-17; 1 Cor 12:4-6 gifts; 2 Cor 13:14 benediction; Eph 2:18, 22; 3:16-18 prayer; 4:4-6; 1 Pt 1:2 redemption).

- Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven (in contrast to blasphemy against Christ) (Mt 12:32 // Mk 3:29).

Summary of the doctrine of the Trinity

Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 6 “How many persons are there in the Godhead? A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.” “In the Bible, all divine titles and attributes are ascribed equally to the Father, Son, and Spirit.”¹⁹⁴ The same worship, prayer, adoration, love, and devotion are offered to each person of the Trinity.¹⁹⁵

Importance of the doctrine of the Trinity¹⁹⁶

1. The doctrine of the Trinity distinguishes Christianity from all other religions, e.g., other monotheistic religions such as Islam and Judaism, and polytheistic and pantheistic religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism.
2. Without the Trinity, how could God be both personal and not needing His creation (independent)?
3. Without the Trinity, God’s love would not be directed toward others, but would be self-love. Since Jesus is God, we know that God is not aloof and indifferent to human suffering (caused by sin) in the world. God took on flesh and suffered the penalty for the sins of His people.
4. If Jesus is not God, but merely a created being, then the doctrine of salvation is destroyed. How could a finite man bear the wrath of an infinitely holy God and atone for the sins of the world? How could we trust a finite being for our salvation? Man, not God, would be the Savior, i.e., man would save himself.

¹⁹⁴ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1: 444.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 444, 462, 525f.

¹⁹⁶ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 247, 256f. John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 733–735.

5. If Jesus was not God, then worshiping him (a creature) and praying to him (a finite being who could not hear or answer everyone's prayers) would be sinful.
6. The doctrine of the Trinity is the only solution to the philosophical dilemma of the relationship between the one (i.e., oneness, unity) and the many (i.e., individuality, particulars, diversity).¹⁹⁷ God Himself is the source of perfect plurality and perfect unity—both are equally ultimate. Within the Trinity there is complete equality of the persons (each person is fully God and has all the attributes of God), but the three persons have different roles or functions.¹⁹⁸ Such complementary functions necessitate the exercise of authority coupled with submission to that authority (1 Cor 11:3)—while maintaining equality of essence and mutual honoring. This complementarity has huge social and political implications regarding the proper use of authority in family, church, and state.¹⁹⁹ Egalitarianism produces anarchy in any realm it is allowed to operate—whether in families, church, or state. Conversely, unitarianism produces totalitarianism.²⁰⁰ The unity within the Trinity is the basis for spiritual unity in the church; it is the sphere within which the church's unity exists; and it controls the church's unity (Jn 17:11, 21-23).²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1978); idem., *The Foundations for Social Order: Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1978).

¹⁹⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 248-252, 256f. Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, & Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005).

¹⁹⁹ Robert E. Fugate, *Biblical Patriarchy: Male Headship in Family, Church, and State* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2018).

²⁰⁰ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order*.

²⁰¹ This analogy of unity involves a unity of wills, affections, and goals—while maintaining their distinct personal identities (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT, rev.ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995], 644, 649). “Similarly, the believers, still distinct, are

Applying the Creator-creature distinction in epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics

In our discussion of worldviews we learned that the theological term “Creator-creature distinction” depicts the distinction between God as the Creator and everything else (i.e., the creation; the heavens and earth, other moral beings, etc.). We will mention the Creator-creature distinction throughout this book. Here we will emphasize that the Creator-creature distinction has far-reaching implications for the uniqueness of the God of the Bible in each worldview area: epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics.

What are some of the implications of the Creator-creature distinction in epistemology? First of all, truth is one of the attributes of God. Something is true because God thinks it to be true. God’s thoughts are perfectly self-consistent (coherent). Because God is truth, His Word is truth (Jn 17:17). As truth revealed from God, God’s Word is our criterion or standard of truth. Truth is absolute (i.e., the same for all people in all places for all time); truth is not relative. Man, God’s finite creature, is to be a truth-receiver, not a truth-maker.²⁰²

The following table demonstrates the key differences—as well as some similarities—between God’s thinking and man’s thinking.²⁰³

to be one in purpose, in love, in action undertaken with and for one another, in joint submission to the revelation received” (D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991], 568). This unity is not institutional, but is clearly visible or observable, and it will impact the world (Morris, 651; Carson). It transcends all human unity. Cf. Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 561, 553.

²⁰² Robert E. Fugate, *A Biblical Philosophy of Truth with Contemporary Applications*.

²⁰³ This table is derived from Greg L. Bahnsen lecture, “Van Til and the Copernican Revolution in Apologetics,” #2 and Greg L. Bahnsen, *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1998), 225–235. See also John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 22–26ff.

ASPECTS OF THE KNOWING PROCESS	GOD'S THINKING	MAN'S THINKING
The objects of thought (i.e., what is known/the proposition known)	Same for God and man	Same for God and man
The standard of thought/truth	Same for God and man: God	Same for God and man: God
The process of thinking those thoughts (i.e., the mode or manner of knowing)	Different: God doesn't learn things; He eternally knows everything intuitively; His thought is creative	Different: man learns (and forgets); doesn't create. Discursive (proceeding to a conclusion by reason or argument rather than intuition) ²⁰⁴
The thoughts themselves (i.e., the metaphysical question, "What is the nature of a thought?" What distinguishes one thought from another?")	Different because God's mind and man's mind are different	Different because God's mind and man's mind are different

²⁰⁴ Gordon Clark would clarify that man only knows truth via divine revelation (i.e., the Bible) and valid deduction. And revelation from the Bible requires divine illumination in which God gives knowledge directly to man's mind through the divine light of His Logos (Jn 1:9). Douglas J. Douma, *The Presbyterian Philosopher: The Authorized Biography of Gordon H. Clark*, 111f, 186f.

ASPECTS OF THE KNOWING PROCESS	GOD'S THINKING	MAN'S THINKING
The meaning of sentences that express the thoughts (distinguish referent from connotation and implications)	Same for God and man (although God knows all the relationships and implications immediately)	Same for God and man (although man does not know all the relationships and implications)
The qualities of the thinking or the thought process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Original, uncreated, eternal 2. Creative: His thinking ultimately decrees and causes what comes to pass 3. Criteriological, i.e., the standard of truth (Ro 3:4), reality, and ethics; self-validating 4. Causes awe in mankind, no matter how many of God's thoughts man learns 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not original (Ec 1:9), but created, revealed, temporal 2. Not creative or determinative 3. Not the standard of truth; dependent upon God's prior self-validating knowledge for its justification 4. Does not continue to cause awe

What are some of the implications of the Creator-creature distinction in metaphysics?

- With regard to God: There is only one God, the self-existent, infinite, personal, triune God revealed in the Bible. All other gods are imposters (1 Ki 18:21, 24; Pss 31:6; 96:5; 135:15-18; 115:4-8; Is 41:22-26, 29; 42:17; 43:9; Jer 2:28; 10:5, 10; 18:15; Dn 5:23b; Hab 2:19; Ac 14:15; 19:26; 1 Cor 8:5-7; 10:19-20; 16:22; Gal 4:8; 1 Jn 5:21; Ex 20:3). There is no salvation apart from the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn 14:6; Ac 4:12; 2 Tim 2:10).
- With regard to the universe: God created the space-time universe out of nothing. He providentially controls everything that happens, according to His sovereign, eternal, all-encompassing plan (Heb 1:3; Col 1:17; Eph 1:11).
- With regard to man: God created man—comprised of an immaterial soul and a material body—in His own image. Man is God's dependent creature; he is not divine or autonomous.

In ethics, the Creator-creature distinction means that God is the only ultimate Lawgiver and Judge (Ja 4:12). He alone determines and defines good and evil, justice and injustice. Man, God's finite creature, is to be an ethic-receiver, i.e., to reflect ethically God's moral character as God's image-bearer. The moral law of God defines right and wrong. Thus, ethics are absolute (i.e., the same for all people in all places for all time) and objective, not relative (i.e., different for different individuals, cultures, historical periods) and subjective.

In sum, the uniqueness of the God revealed in the Bible is clearly demonstrated by the facts that: God is both personal and infinite; no other god has the attributes of the Biblical God; God is triune; and the Creator-creature distinction sets apart the Biblical God from everything else, and this distinction has pervasive ramifications throughout all the components of a worldview (epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics).

Cf. WCF 2 (WLC 6-8 // WSC 4-5)

2. Creation

What does the term “creation” mean? “Creation is an act of God alone, by which, for his own glory, he brings into existence everything in the universe, things that had no existence prior to his creative word.”²⁰⁵

Our discussion of creation is built upon the epistemological foundation of the Biblical worldview: God’s Word is truth. Empiricism (which is the basis for science), rationalism, and irrationalism fail to provide a foundation and justification for human knowledge. Our knowledge is based on the God-Who-knows-everything-and-Who-created-everything revealing Himself to us, primarily through His Word.

“In Scripture, there is a ‘beginning’ of all things, and that beginning is when God created the world (Gn 1:1; Job 38:4; Pss 90:2; 102:25; Is 40:21; 41:4; 46:10; Jn 1:1; Heb 1:10; 1 Jn 1:1; Rv 1:8; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13).”²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013), 185.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

“In the beginning God²⁰⁷ created²⁰⁸ the heavens and the earth”²⁰⁹
(Gn 1:1).²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ The Hebrew word *Elohim* is a title for God. It is used in Gn 1:1 to depict Him as the almighty Creator of the universe. *Elohim* is used 35 times for God in Genesis 1:1–2:3. In Genesis 2:4–3:23 (except for the dialogue between Satan and Eve in 3:1–5), *Elohim* is always combined with the only personal name of God, Yehowah (YHWH), which is the personal, covenant name for God, with the combined terms typically translated as “LORD God” (John R. Kohlenberger III and James A. Swanson, *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament* [HECOT] [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998], #s 466 and 3378). The obvious reason for introducing the personal, covenantal name of God in Genesis chapter two is the covenant relationship Yehowah establishes with Adam (cf. the fourth pillar of the Biblical worldview, covenant theology). “The linking of YHWH with Elohim shows that the covenant God is one and the same as Elohim, the almighty Creator” (Jonathan D. Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1–11* [Powder Springs, GA: Creation Ministries International, 2015], 28).

The plural noun *Elohim* combined with the singular verb *bara'* (created) teaches both the unity and the plurality within the Godhead, a truth confirmed in Genesis 1:2 (“the Spirit of God”) and the “let Us . . . Our . . . Our” in Genesis 1:26 (cf. 3:22; 11:7; etc.).

²⁰⁸ “In the OT בָּרָא [*bara'*, create] is a specifically theological term, the subject of which is invariably God” (*Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* [HALOT]; cf. William L. Holladay, ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament Based Upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988], 47). “God is always the subject of the expression [create], indeed, always Israel’s God, never a foreign deity” (*Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* [TLOT], eds. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, 3 vols. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997], 1:255). No material from which God “creates” is ever mentioned (in the accusative or with a preposition). What is created is “special, extraordinary, new” (TLOT, 1:255).

²⁰⁹ “The heavens and the earth” (Gn 1:1) is a merism meaning the entire universe, every physical and invisible thing (Col 1:16), totality

In a nutshell, the Bible teaches²¹¹ that the infinite, tri-Personal²¹² God, as a free act of His will (Rv 4:11), created the space-time²¹³ universe:

(Rv 4:11 “all things”). (A merismus is a figure of speech in which two parts, often opposites, are combined to indicate the whole. In Gn 1:1 this was necessary because the Hebrew language had no term for universe or cosmos.)

²¹⁰ Genesis 1:1 is an independent clause; not a dependent clause (i.e., when God began to create the heaven and the earth) (contra NRSV). Edward J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 1-7; summarized by Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology*, 389f. “Valid lexical, grammatical, syntactical, comparative, and stylistic arguments have been advanced to substantiate the translation *In the beginning*” (Victor P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, NICOT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990], 106).

Genesis 1:1-5 constitute day 1, in which God created: the heavens and the earth (v. 1), darkness, water, and oceans (v. 2), light (v. 3), and day and night (vv. 4-5).

²¹¹ Gn 1; Ex 20:11; Ps 33:6; Jn 1:3, 10; Ac 4:24; 14:15; 17:24; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Heb 11:3; Rv 4:11; 10:6; etc.

²¹² The Father (1 Cor 8:6), the Son (Jn 1:1-3, 10; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:1-2, 10), and the Holy Spirit (Gn 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4, 6; Ps 104:30) were all involved in creation.

²¹³ In Scripture, “the beginning” was the beginning of time and space (John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 363f). “There is a considerable likelihood that the early Christians understood the Genesis creation story to imply that the beginning of time was simultaneous with the beginning of the creation of the world, especially since the chronological scheme takes its departure from this date” (James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, Studies in Biblical Theology # 33 [London: SCM, 1962], 75; cited by Frame; Barr cites Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3/2, 438). “God’s dominion over time is most clearly revealed by the fact that he created time along with the universe as its creature form of existence. Time has its beginning, from which point the days can be numbered (Gn 1)” (Ernst Jenni, “Time,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* [IDB], ed. George Arthur Buttrick, 4 vols. + Suppl. [Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1962], 4:647). Time is “a created sphere in which God’s redemptive plan is

out of nothing (Gn 1:1ff; Jn 1:3; Ro 4:17; Heb 11:3; Ps 33:6, 9);²¹⁴ in six literal days (i.e., in six twenty-four hour, consecutive, contiguous days); “very good” (Gn 1:31); to show His glory (Ps 19:1-2; Is 43:7; Rv 4:11). God created man in His image (Gn 1:26-27; 5:1, 3; 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Ja 3:9; cf. Ps 8:5).²¹⁵ Man is God’s dependent creature; he is not divine or autonomous (i.e., a law unto himself).²¹⁶ This Creator-creature distinction is fundamental to all of Scripture and to sound theology.²¹⁷ The universe had a beginning, and it is moving toward an

actualized” (Carl F.H. Henry, “Time,” EDT₂, 1201 = *Baker’s Dictionary of Theology*, 523).

²¹⁴ “Nothing” means “not anything,” i.e., there were no preexisting materials.

²¹⁵ See Robert E. Fugate, “What Is Man? Man’s Origin, Purpose, Nature, Problem.”

²¹⁶ The word “autonomous” (Greek *autos*—self + *nomos*—law) literally means “a law unto oneself.” It denotes thought and behavior independent of, and not submitted to, God’s revealed Word. This is the paradigm attitude of unbelievers.

²¹⁷ This truth precludes the error of early church father Irenaeus (130–200) that became Eastern Orthodox doctrine, i.e., that salvation involves deification or divinization (*theosis* or *apotheosis*), in which man becomes divine or a god (John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*, 96).

2 Peter 1:4 does speak of believers being “partakers of the divine nature,” but, “The passage itself is not at all metaphysical, but ethical” (John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 1012). Note the ethical context of verses 3–11: righteousness (v. 1); godliness and virtue (v. 3); corruption and lust (v. 4); the eight ethical traits and directives in verses 5–7; cleansed and sins (v. 9). “Peter’s thought has to do with moral transformation and not divinization or becoming divine men . . . the acquisition of moral character” (Gene L. Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, BECNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008], 186f). “Sharing in the divine nature does not mean ‘deified.’ Instead Peter maintained that believers will share in the moral qualities of Christ” (Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003], 295f). Thus, believers, on a creaturely level, reflect God’s communicable attributes, such as, knowledge, wisdom, truthfulness, goodness, holiness, righteousness-justice, etc.

end (contra all non-Biblical accounts of creation). Having been created by the Tri-Personal God, the universe is personalistic and purposeful.

Since our discussion of creation is focused on creation as a pillar of the Biblical worldview, we will not be dealing with detailed scientific questions. (And this author is not trained to do so.) However, there are two excellent Creation science ministries that are Biblically presuppositional: Answers in Genesis²¹⁸ and Creation Ministries International.²¹⁹ They have excellent scientists who are true to Scripture. It seems that God has raised them up, for such a time as this, as a rebuke to seminary professors and denominational church leaders who have almost universally compromised the Genesis account of creation, capitulating to autonomous scientism and, thereby embracing syncretism.²²⁰

²¹⁸ <https://answersingenesis.org>. Founder Ken Ham is a follower of former Westminster Seminary philosopher-apologist Cornelius Van Till and his protégé, Greg L. Bahnsen.

²¹⁹ <https://creation.com>. Founder Jonathan D. Sarfati is a follower of philosopher-apologist Gordon H. Clark.

²²⁰ Unfortunately, many late 19th and early 20th century stalwart Presbyterian defenders of the faith from Princeton Seminary—being infected by Enlightenment philosophy with its autonomous reason in the areas of science, history, apologetics, and textual criticism—denied the literal 24-hour days of Genesis 1. These outstanding professors include: Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, B.B. Warfield, J. Gresham Machen, and Oswald T. Allis. They were followed by Westminster Seminary professors Meredith G. Kline and Edward J. Young (the latter convincingly refuted Kline’s framework hypothesis). Today, almost no seminaries in the United States teach six, normal-day creation. (Exceptions include: Whitefield Theological Seminary; Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary; Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary; and Mid-America Reformed Seminary.)

Terry Mortenson, “‘Deep Time’ and the Church’s Compromise: Historical Background,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, 79–104. Terry Mortenson, “Why Don’t Many Christian Leaders and Scholars Believe Genesis?”

Historical background

Let's begin our study of Biblical creation by providing a few introductory remarks that can help put contemporary debates regarding Genesis 1–3 into historical perspective. None of the church fathers believed that the world is tens of thousands of years old on the grounds that the days of creation are used figuratively for long periods of time. “The writings of the Church Fathers prove that the early Christians were essentially all young-earth creationists.”²²¹ Thus, they rejected the theories of evolution taught by some ancient Greek philosophers.²²² Reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin believed

5/31/2010, <https://answersingenesis.org/genesis/why-dont-many-christian-leaders-and-scholars-believe-genesis>. Douglas F. Kelly, *Creation and Change: Genesis 1.1–2.4 in the Light of Changing Scientific Paradigms* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Mentor, 1999), chapter 2. Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible* (Exeter, Devon, England: Paternoster, 1983).

Some evolutionists claim that B.B. Warfield believed in theistic evolution; but they are mistaken (Fred G. Zaspel, “Additional Note: B. B. Warfield Did Not Endorse Theistic Evolution as It Is Understood Today,” in *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*, eds. J.P. Moreland, *et al.* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017], 953–972).

²²¹ Terry Mortenson, “Orthodoxy and Genesis: What the Fathers Really Taught: A Review of Genesis, Creation and Early Man by Fr Seraphim Rose,” *Journal of Creation* 16:3 (December 2002): 48–53; available at <https://answersingenesis.org/reviews/books/orthodoxy-and-genesis-what-the-fathers-really-taught>. Seraphim Rose, *Genesis, Creation and Early Man* (Plantina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2000). James R. Mook, “The Church Fathers on Genesis, the Flood, and the Age of the Earth,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, 23–51.

²²² “Some of the ancient philosophers before Christ—such as Empedocles (d. 435), Democritus (d. 370), Epicurus (d. 270), and Lucretius (d. 55)—had evolutionary ideas that life arose spontaneously and that different life forms arose from one another” (Terry Mortenson, “Orthodoxy and Genesis: What the Fathers Really Taught: A Review of Genesis, Creation and Early Man by Fr Seraphim Rose,” *Journal of Creation* 16:3 [December 2002]:48–53;

the Genesis account of six-day creation (with its young earth) and the Fall; the same was true for John Wesley.²²³ The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) teaches that God created the world “in the beginning . . . in the space of six days”:

It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Heb 1:2; Jn 1:2-3), for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness (Ro 1:20; Jer 10:12; Pss 104:24; 33:5-6), **in the beginning**, to create or make of nothing [*ex nihilo*] the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, **in the space of six days**, and all very good (Gn 1; Heb 11:3; Col 1:16; Ac 17:24).²²⁴

<https://answersingenesis.org/reviews/books/orthodoxy-and-genesis-what-the-fathers-really-taught/>). Unbiblical philosophies and religions are fundamentally evolutionary in nature (Henry Morris, *The Long War Against God: The History and Impact of the Creation/Evolution Conflict* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989), chapter 5).

²²³ Joel R. Beeke, “What Did the Reformers Believe about the Age of the Earth?” in *The New Answers Book 4*, ed. Ken Ham (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2013), 101-110. David W. Hall, “A Brief Overview of the Exegesis of Genesis 1-11: Luther to Lyell,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, 53-78. Thane H. Ury, “Luther, Calvin, and Wesley on the Genesis of Natural Evil: Recovering Lost Rubrics for Defending a Very Good Creation,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, 399-423. Jonathan D. Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1-11*, 378f. Edward M. Plass, ed., “World, Material,” in *What Martin Luther Says: An Anthology*, 3 vols. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 3:1521-1524 § 4925-4938. Jonathan Sarfati, “Calvin said: Genesis means what it says,” *Creation* 22:4 (September 2000):44-45, <https://creation.com/calvin-said-genesis-means-what-it-says>.

²²⁴ WCF, 4:1, citing Dennison, 4:239 (bold added). The key truths of the WCF 4 are reiterated in the WLC 15-17 and the WSC 9-10. The phrase “in the space of six days” previously occurred in the Irish Articles of Religion (1615): “**In the beginning of time, when no creature had any being**, God, by His Word alone, **in the space of six**

However, beginning primarily in the nineteenth century, Christian scholars began kowtowing to Enlightenment-based,²²⁵ autonomous “science” that (a) asserted that the earth was thousands of years older than a straightforward reading of the Bible would allow, and (b) began to embrace Darwinian evolution.²²⁶ This “science” was founded upon the anti-Biblical philosophy of naturalism or uniformitarianism. Commentaries on Genesis began to be rewritten—not on the basis of better exegeting the Hebrew text of Scripture—but to conform to the dictates of pagan “science.”²²⁷ However, the historical fact that the

days, created all things” (Dennison, 4:93 paragraph 18 [bold added]; SCC, 3:529). Calvin used similar language in his commentary on Genesis 1:5 (p. 78).

David W. Hall, “What Was the View of the Westminster Assembly Divines on Creation Days?” in *Did God Create in Six Days?* eds. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall (Taylor, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999), 41–52.

²²⁵ Robert E. Fugate, *Modernism and Postmodernism: Their History, Beliefs, Cultural Influence—and How to Refute Them* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2015).

²²⁶ It should be duly noted that, even by hypothesizing an old earth, the Genesis account of creation cannot be reconciled with modern evolutionary dogma (John Byl, “The Cost of an Old Earth: Is It Worth It?” 10/24/2009, <http://bylogos.blogspot.com/2009/10/cost-of-old-earth-is-it-worth-it.html>). Cf. John Byl, “Grudem’s Old Earth Inconsistency,” 7/5/2012, <http://bylogos.blogspot.com/2012/07/grudems-old-earth-inconsistency.html>.

²²⁷ Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*, chapter 6. Douglas F. Kelly, *Creation and Change: Genesis 1.1–2.4 in the Light of Changing Scientific Paradigms* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Mentor, 1999), chapter 2. Cameron writes, “As the new scientific thinking, first in geology and then in biology, began to take hold in the nineteenth century, biblical commentators hastened to accommodate their interpretation of Scripture to the latest orthodoxy in science” (72). He cites numerous examples throughout the rest of chapter 6. Regarding the religiousness of evolutionary thinking, creation scientist Duane T. Gish gave the classic quote: “Now,

Christian church held no such views for about 1,700 years is strong evidence that the text of Genesis does not teach long ages or an old earth. With this historical introduction, let us examine the Genesis account of creation.

Genre of Genesis 1–11 is historical narrative

As a prologue to studying the Genesis account of creation, it is vital to recognize that the genre of the book of Genesis—including the first eleven chapters—is historical narrative, recording real space-time history, history that actually happened.²²⁸ This may be demonstrated in several ways.

Literary structure

The literary structure of the entire book of Genesis authenticates the historicity of Genesis 1–11. After the prologue (Gn 1:1–2:3), the entire book is structured into ten sections beginning with the phrase “the family history (generations) of . . .” (i.e., the Hebrew *toledot* formulas).²²⁹ By this literary device Moses ties each of the historical

evolution is the substance of fossils hoped for, the evidence of links not seen.”

²²⁸ In the third century, the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture—in sharp contrast to the Antiochian grammatical-historical method—was developed by Clement of Alexandria and Origen, who were indebted to the unbelieving Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria. One of the two key motivations in the Alexandrian school was to make the Old Testament compatible with Greek philosophy. Allegorical interpretation looks beyond the historical (literal, plain) sense of the words to a hidden, so-called spiritual meaning. This hermeneutical approach is based on Platonic dualism (spirit vs. matter). Allegorical hermeneutics produced fanciful interpretations never imagined by the Biblical author or his intended audience, doing considerable damage in church history. James D. Hernando, *Dictionary of Hermeneutics* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2005), 43–45.

²²⁹ The ten *toledot* (pronounced to-led-aw') occur in: Gn 2:4 (heavens and earth); 5:1 (Adam); 6:9 (Noah); 10:1 (sons of Noah); 11:10 (Shem), 11:27 (Terah); 25:12 (Ishmael), 25:19 (Isaac); 36:1, 9 (Esau); 37:2 (Jacob) (Gordon J. Wenham, *Exploring the Old Testament: A*

sections together into a unified whole, indicating that the book is to be understood as history-writing throughout. Adam and Eve are as historical as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Additionally, the prologue of Genesis (1:1-2:3) should also be viewed as the historical prologue of the covenant of creation/Edenic covenant (Gn 1:26-28; 2:15-17).²³⁰ (See our fourth pillar of the Biblical worldview.) Everyone agrees that Genesis 12-50 are historical narrative genre. But, the tightly-knit literary structure of the book indicates that the entire book should be treated as historical narrative.

Hebrew grammar

It is sometimes asserted that the Genesis account of the Creation and the Fall is Hebrew poetry, not history. But, Genesis 1-3 display a complete lack of the main trait of Hebrew poetry, Hebrew

Guide to the Pentateuch [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003], 18f; Iain Provan, *Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015], 1-4; Willem VanGemeren, *The Progress of Redemption: The Story of Salvation from Creation to the New Jerusalem* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988], 70-71ff; cf. HECOT, # 9352).

Each *toledot* is the title to the following section, not a summary of the previous section. “The person named in the heading is the father of the chief actor in the subsequent story” (Wenham, 39). With regard to Gn 2:4, the meaning is “these are the things begotten or produced by heaven and earth.” “The phrase ‘These are the generations of the heavens and the earth’ tells us that we are not going to read further about creation, but about something that came from heaven and earth, and in particular, man, whose body comes from the created earth” (Edward J. Young, *In the Beginning* [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976], 62f; cf. 61-65). It is thus very likely that Genesis 2:5-6 describes the situation pertaining to the garden of Eden and not to the earth at large (Robert L. Reymond, *Contending for the Faith* [Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus/Mentor, 2005], 50; Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., “From Chaos to Cosmos: A Critique of the Non-Literal Interpretations of Genesis 1:1-2:3,” in *Did God Create in Six Days*, eds. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall, 157-159).

²³⁰ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006), 119.

parallelism. For a poetic depiction of creation see Psalm 104. Walter Kaiser elaborates:

Genesis 1-11 is prose and not poetry. The use of the [Hebrew] *waw* consecutive with the verb to describe sequential acts, the frequent use of the direct object sign and the so-called relative pronoun, the stress on definitions, and the spreading out of these events in a sequential order indicates that we are in prose and not in poetry. Say what *waw* will, the author plainly intends to be doing the same thing in these chapters that he is doing in chapters 12-50.²³¹

Robert Reymond concurs:

[In Genesis 1:1-2:3] the *waw* consecutive verb [occurs] some fifty-five times throughout the record to describe narrational sequential events, the sign of the accusative twenty-six times, and the relative pronoun twelve times, as well as the stylistic, syntactical, and accent rules of Hebrew narrative rather than Hebrew poetry. In sum, the Hebrew gives every indication that Moses intended Genesis 1 and 2 to be taken as straightforward historical narration of early earth history.²³²

Thus, the Hebrew grammar of the first chapters of Genesis indicates that it is historical narrative.

Historical details preclude mythological literature

The minute historical and cultural details do not fit mythological literature. Genesis 1-11 contains

64 geographical terms, 88 personal names, 48 generic names, and at least 21 identifiable cultural items (such as gold, bdellium, onyx, brass, iron, gopher wood, bitumen, mortar, brick, stone, harp,

²³¹ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Literary Form of Genesis 1-11," in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970), 59f. Cf. Jonathan D. Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1-11*, 48f.

²³² Robert L. Reymond, *Contending for the Faith*, 49.

pipe, cities, towers). The significance of this list may be seen by comparing it, for example, with the paucity of references in the Koran. The single tenth chapter of Genesis has five times more geographical data of importance than the whole of the Koran.²³³

Thus, the minute historical details indicate that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are historical narrative.

Continuous history

There is no break between the end of the pre-Abrahamic material (chapter 11) and the Abrahamic material (beginning with chapter 12). The historical account of the Tower of Babel (11:1-9) leads to the genealogical table, which traces the history from Shem to Abraham's father, Terah (11:10-26). Who Shem is can only be learned from the table of nations (10:21-31) and from the historical narrative of Noah, which includes him blessing his son Shem (9:26). However, it is plain that the goal of the genealogy is Abram (11:26-30). Thus, any sharp disjunction between Genesis chapters 11 and 12 is totally artificial and does not comport with the text itself.²³⁴

The fact that there is no break between Genesis 11 and 12 is also demonstrated in the pattern of divine judgments being followed by divine grace (Gn 3-12): God's covering of our first parents after He had pronounced judgment upon them; His protection for Cain after He had judged him; and His establishing His covenant with Noah after the judgment of the Flood. The divine judgment of dispersing the human race into nations after the Tower of Babel incident (Gn 11) was followed by divine grace in making the Abrahamic Covenant in which all the dispersed nations of the earth would be blessed (Gn 12:1-3).²³⁵ Again, this continuous history precludes any break between Genesis chapters 11 and 12. (Of course, the Old Testament Hebrew manuscripts contain no chapter or verse divisions.) This continuous

²³³ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Literary Form of Genesis 1-11," in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne, 59.

²³⁴ David J.A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, JSOT Suppl. # 10 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1984), 77f.

²³⁵ Robert L. Reymond, *Contending for the Faith*, 34f.

history recorded in Genesis demonstrates the historical narrative genre of the entire book.

Genealogies

The Biblical genealogies found in 1 Chronicles 1 and Luke 3:23–38 take the genealogies of Genesis 5, 10, and 11 as accurate history.²³⁶ Luke traces Jesus’ genealogy all the way back to Adam, “the son of God” (Lk 3:38)—not the son of an ape! In so doing Luke reaffirmed the Genesis account that Adam had no earthly father. The book of Jude confirms that “Enoch [was] the seventh from Adam” (Jude 14). Thus, later Scripture writers’ usage of the early genealogies of Genesis argues that they regarded these genealogies as historically accurate and true.²³⁷ It should also be noted that the Biblical historian Luke (Lk

²³⁶ Floyd N. Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to the Basics*, 14th ed. (The Woodlands, TX: Kingsword Press, 1999), 29–46. Travis R. Freeman, “Do the Genesis 5 and 11 Genealogies Contain Gaps?” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, 283–313 (with regard to Luke’s second Cainan, correct with F.N. Jones). Jonathan D. Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2004), 289–297, 393.

²³⁷ The genealogy in Matthew 1:1–17 is different. “Matthew’s genealogy was clearly intended to be incomplete, expressly stated to be three groups of 14 names (Mt 1:17). This is in turn probably due to the fact that the Hebrew letters for the name of David add up to 14” (Jonathan Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*, 292). “Matthew is not interested in giving a full genealogy here (unlike the chronogenealogies in Genesis)—he is only interested in establishing Jesus’ claim to the throne [of David], and he gives enough of the genealogy to do so” (Lita Cosner, “The Genealogies of Jesus,” <https://creation.com/jesus-genealogies>). “The purpose of Matthew’s genealogy was to trace the legal line of rightful heirs to the throne of David. This of course included biological descent, but also some ‘adoptive’ relationships where a man had no descendant, or whose descendants were disqualified. Matthew’s genealogy used obvious ‘telescoping’ where less important people were omitted” (Lita Cosner, “Are There Gaps in the Biblical Genealogies?” <https://creation.com/genealogy-gaps>). For additional theological

1:1–4) bases his theological teaching of Jesus as the world’s Redeemer on Jesus’ historical genealogy that traces back to Adam. For Luke, the historical and the theological cannot be divorced.

Subsequent Old Testament prophetic authors, Jesus Christ, and His Apostles authenticated the historicity of Genesis 1–11

Subsequent Old Testament prophetic authors, Jesus Christ, and His Apostles authenticated many of the historical events recorded in Genesis. Henry Morris, the father of the modern creation science movement, elaborates:

In the Old Testament, for example, Adam is mentioned by name in the Books of Deuteronomy, Job, and 1 Chronicles; and Noah is mentioned in 1 Chronicles, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. Abraham is mentioned by name in 15 books of the Old Testament and 11 of the New. Jacob is named in 20 books (other than Genesis) of the Old Testament, and in at least 17 of the New Testament. . . .

The New Testament is, if anything, even more dependent on Genesis than the Old. There are at least 165 passages in Genesis that are either directly quoted or clearly referred to in the New Testament. Many of these are alluded to more than once, so that there are at least 200 quotations or allusions to Genesis in the New Testament.

It is significant that the portion of Genesis which has been the object of the greatest attacks of skepticism and unbelief, the first eleven chapters, is the portion which had the greatest influence

reasons why Matthew omitted certain kings involving intermarriage with Omri’s line see Floyd N. Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to the Basics*, 38–46.

Thus, it is special pleading, and perhaps disingenuous, to focus on Matthew’s genealogy to prove gaps in Biblical genealogies.

Matthew’s wording in Mt 1:1, Βίβλος γενέσεως (book of genealogy), is significant. It occurs nowhere in the Septuagint except Gn 2:4 and 5:1; so it links to the opening chapters of Genesis (R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007], 26 n 1).

on the New Testament. Yet there exist over 100 quotations or direct references to Genesis 1-11 in the New Testament. Furthermore, every one of these eleven chapters is alluded to somewhere in the New Testament, and every one of the New Testament authors refers somewhere in his writings to Genesis 1-11. On at least six different occasions, Jesus Christ Himself quoted from or referred to something or someone in one of these chapters, including specific reference to each of the first seven chapters.

Furthermore, in not one of these many instances where the Old or New Testament refers to Genesis is there the slightest evidence that the writers regarded the events or personages as mere myths or allegories. To the contrary, they view Genesis as absolutely historical, true, and authoritative.²³⁸

In my book, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, I wrote a three-page listing of Old Testament historical events that Jesus Christ and the Apostles authenticated in the New Testament as accurate historical events. I then devoted five more pages to the doctrines that Christ and the Apostles based on Genesis 1-11.²³⁹ The following table is a brief excerpt from that work, demonstrating the extent to which Jesus and the Apostles implicitly trusted Genesis 1-11, basing their doctrines and arguments upon its actual historicity.

²³⁸ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976), 21f; cf. 677-679; cf. idem., *Biblical Creationism: What Each Book of the Bible Teaches about Creation and the Flood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993). For additional lists and discussion see: Walter T. Brown, *In the Beginning*, 7th ed. (Phoenix, AZ: Center for Scientific Creation, 2001), 283f; Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren *The Greek New Testament* (UBS₂), 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: United Bible Societies, 1968), 897; Ron Minton, "Apostolic Witness to Genesis Creation and the Flood," in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, 347-371.

²³⁹ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, 110-117; cf. 76f.

PERSON / EVENT	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Creation of the universe	Gn 1-2	Mk 13:19; Jn 1:1-3, 10; Ac 14:15; 17:24; Ro 1:20; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; 1 Tim 4:4; Heb 1:2, 10; 11:3; 2 Pt 3:4-5; Rv 3:14; 4:11; 10:6; 14:7; cf. Ro 4:17; 1 Cor 15:38-39
Creation of mankind as male and female	Gn 1:26-28; 2:7, 18-25; 5:1-2	Mt 19:4-6 // Mk 10:6-9; Lk 3:38; Ac 17:26; 1 Cor 6:16; 11:3, 7-9; 15:45, 47; Eph 5:31; Col 3:10; 1 Tim 2:13; Ja 3:9; cf. Heb 2:7-8
The Sabbath as creation ordinance	Gn 2:1-3	Heb 4:3-4, 10ff
Tree of life	Gn 2:9; 3:22	Rv 2:7; 22:14, 19
Fall of man	Gn 3	Ro 5:12-19; 8:20-22; 1 Cor 15:21-22; 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14
Serpent/Satan in Garden	Gn 3:1-5, 13-15	Rv 12:9; 20:2; cf. Jn 8:44
Cain & Abel	Gn 4:1-15	Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51; Heb 11:4; 12:24; 1 Jn 3:12; Jude 11
Enoch translated	Gn 5:21-24	Heb 11:5; cf. Jude 14-15

PERSON / EVENT	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Noah and the Flood	Gn 6-8	Mt 24:37-39; Lk 17:26-27; Heb 11:7; 1 Pt 3:20; 2 Pt 2:5; 3:6

A few additional observations from the teaching of our Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul are worth highlighting.

Jesus’ taught that man was present at the beginning of creation

Jesus taught that Adam and Eve were present at the beginning of creation, not billions of years later:

“But **from the beginning of the creation**, God ‘made them male and female [Gn 1:27; 5:2].’⁷ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,⁸ ‘and the two shall become one flesh [Gn 2:24]’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.⁹ “Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Mk 10:6-9 // Mt 19:4-6).

Jesus placed Abel (Gn 4) very close to the beginning of creation, not billions of years later:

that the blood of all the prophets which was shed **from the foundation of the world** may be required of this generation,⁵¹ from the blood of **Abel** to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation (Lk 11:50-51).²⁴⁰

Man’s sufferings started very near the beginning of creation, not billions of years later:

²⁴⁰ The judgment Christ prophesied regarding Jerusalem in A.D. 70 presupposes the genealogical continuity between Abel (Gn 4) and the apostate Jews of His day.

For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been **since the beginning of the creation which God created** until this time, nor ever shall be (Mk 13:19).

The Holy Spirit prophetically spoke through Zacharias asserting that God had spoken through His holy prophets “**since the world began**” (Lk 1:67, 70). Similarly, the Apostle Peter referred to the prophetic messages “which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets **since the world began**” (Ac 3:21).

Man being present at the beginning, i.e., at creation, as clearly taught in the above verses, contradicts all day-age theories.

The Apostle Paul taught that man was present at the beginning of creation

“For **since the creation of the world** His [God’s] invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they [all mankind] are without excuse” (Ro 1:20). Again, man being present at the beginning contradicts all day-age theories.

To summarize the New Testament teaching regarding the historical persons of Adam and Eve:

Without exception, the New Testament writers uphold the full historicity of both Adam and Eve, affirming many specific details about their lives as recorded in Genesis 1–3. They clearly regard Adam and Eve to be the first human beings, having been specially created by God. They affirm both the order in which they were created (Adam, then Eve) and the fact that Eve was specially created from Adam. They understand every human being to be descended from Adam. They recognize that Eve was deceived by Satan. They confess Adam to be the man through whom sin entered into the world, and the occasion of the creation’s subjection to futility.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ Guy P. Waters, “Theistic Evolution Is Incompatible with the Teachings of the New Testament,” in *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific,*

In all the ways discussed above, the subsequent Old Testament prophetic authors, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and His Apostles authenticated the historicity of Genesis 1-11.

Theological and ethical significance of Genesis²⁴²

The early chapters of Genesis have major theological and philosophical significance. Let us consider the theological significance. As we examine how our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles quoted and applied the Genesis account of creation, the Fall, etc., it is apparent that they believed the Biblical account to be historically accurate. Not only did they unquestioningly accept Genesis (and all of the Old Testament) as historical and true, they founded their doctrine and ethics (praxis) upon it. Consider the following examples.

1. Creation. The Genesis account of creation (Gn 1-2) is used by our Lord Jesus and His Apostles (as well as the Old Testament prophets) as the foundation for numerous doctrines:
 - The created universe reveals something of God and His attributes to all mankind, i.e., general revelation (Ro 1:18-20ff; Ac 14:15-17; 17:24-31);
 - Christology regarding Christ's human nature ("son of Adam," Lk 3:38);

Philosophical, and Theological Critique, eds. J.P. Moreland, *et al.*, 902. Cf. Robert W. Yarbrough, "Adam in the New Testament," in *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives*, eds. Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2014), 33-52; Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *No Adam, No Gospel: Adam and the History of Redemption* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 2015); J.P. Versteeg, *Adam in the New Testament: Mere Teaching Model or First Historical Man?* 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2012).

²⁴² Adapted from Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, 113-115. Cf. Henry M. Morris, *Biblical Creationism: What Each Book of the Bible Teaches about Creation and the Flood*, 228-232.

- The preeminence of Jesus Christ Who created the cosmos (Col 1:16);
 - The new creation in Christ (1 Cor 15:45, 47; Col 3:10);
 - Sabbath rest (Ex 20:8-11; 31:17; Heb 3-4);
 - The sanctity of the marriage covenant (between one man and one woman who complement each other) and the evil of divorce (Mt 19:4-6//Mk 10:6-9);
 - The headship of the husband over his wife (1 Cor 11:3, 7-9; Eph 5:31);
 - Women not teaching or governing men in the church (1 Tim 2:11-13);²⁴³
 - The evil of sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:16);
 - Illumination (2 Cor 4:6);
 - Worship (Rv 4:11; 14:7);
 - Personal and social ethics (Ja 3:9; 1 Jn 3:12), including no racism (Ac 17:26);
 - Dominion Covenant/Creation Mandate (Gn 1:26-28; Ps 8:3-8);
 - Spiritual warfare (2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14; Rv 2:9; 20:2).
2. Fall and redemption. Likewise, the historical Fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden is foundational to the New Testament doctrine of salvation, as well as to social ethics.
- death and corruption through Adam, but salvation, resurrection from the dead, and new creation through Christ

²⁴³ For exegesis of 1 Tim 2:11-14 see Robert E. Fugate, *Biblical Patriarchy: Male Headship in Family, Church, and State*, 82-99.

(Ro 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22, 38-39ff)²⁴⁴—that affect the entire cosmos (Ro 8:20-22; Col 1:20; Eph 1:10; Rv 21:1);

- women not teaching or governing men in the church (1 Tim 2:11-12, 14-15);
- justification by faith. The Apostle Paul builds his defense of justification by faith on the historical detail that Abraham was justified by faith prior to being circumcised (Ro 4:1-12; cp. Ro 9:10-13). (See Hebrews 11:7-22 recounting the historical deeds of men and women of faith as had been recorded in Genesis.)

3. Judgment. Jesus and the Apostles repeatedly used Old Testament examples of God's judgments within history as types of future judgment—especially eschatological judgment (Mt 10:15; 11:23-24; 12:41; 23:35-36; 24:37-39; Lk 10:12; 11:32, 50-51; 17:26-32; 1 Cor 10:5-12; 2 Pt 2:5-9, 15-16; 3:4-9; Jude 7, 11, 14-15). Note especially their use of

the Noahic Flood (Mt 24:37-39; Lk 17:26-27; 2 Pt 2:5; 3:4-6), and

Sodom and Gomorrah (Mt 10:15; 11:23-24; Lk 10:12; Lk 17:28-29, 32; 2 Pt 2:6-8; Jude 7).

Clearly, if Christ and His Apostles were mistaken regarding the historicity, truthfulness, and authority of the Genesis narratives, the doctrines they erected upon such an unreliable foundation are unsupportable. In that case, not only would Christ's and His Apostles' doctrine of Scripture be called into question, but all their doctrines would be called into question.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ Guy P. Waters, "Theistic Evolution Is Incompatible with the Teachings of the New Testament," in *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*, eds. J.P. Moreland, et al., 903-910.

²⁴⁵ I am arguing in an *ad hominem* manner toward those wishing to reject the historical accuracy of the Bible while accepting much Biblical teaching (e.g., its theology and ethics). As a

The above examples demonstrate that Old Testament scholar Gordon Wenham is quite correct in saying,

As far as the New Testament and early Christian writers were concerned this [Genesis 1-11] was the part of the Old Testament that was **most influential in the formation of Christian doctrine**. . . . For the New Testament writers the opening chapters of Genesis are foundational to their theology. . . . The New Testament draws on nearly every element in these opening chapters.²⁴⁶

In sum, all the above lines of Biblical evidence we have marshaled clearly demonstrate that the genre of Genesis 1-11 is historical narrative prose (not poetry, myth, saga, allegory, etc.).²⁴⁷ Biblical history—including Genesis 1-11—is real, space-time history that actually happened. It is the objective history in which we presently live. This provides vital hermeneutical direction in the interpretation of the Genesis account of creation.

Textual arguments for 24-hour, sequential days in Genesis I

Let us now examine textual evidence found in the first two chapters of Genesis that validates the position that the six days of creation and the seventh day of rest were normal, 24-hour,²⁴⁸ sequential days.

presuppositionalist, I would argue that anyone not beginning from the Bible as his starting point and his ultimate authority cannot justify any claim to historical or scientific knowledge.

²⁴⁶ Gordon J. Wenham, *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch*, 9, 33f (bold added).

²⁴⁷ The genre of Genesis 1-11 is “historical narrative-prose, interspersed with some lists, sources, sayings, and poetical lines” (Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “The Literary Form of Genesis 1-11,” in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne, 61).

²⁴⁸ Scientist Jonathan D. Sarfati makes the qualification that “a day is not exactly 24 hours—more like 23 hours and 56 minutes . . .” (*Refuting Compromise*, 68).

1. Primary meaning. The overwhelming majority of the 2,302 occurrences of *yom* (day) in the Old Testament clearly refer either to a normal, full day-and-night cycle, or to the lighted portion of that cycle (e.g., Gn 1:5b, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; 2:2-3).²⁴⁹ Theologian Louis Berkhof gives us the simple application, “In its primary meaning the word *yom* denotes a natural day; and it is a good rule in exegesis, **not to depart from the primary meaning of a word, unless this is required by the context.**”²⁵⁰ In the case of the days of creation in Genesis, no such contextual requirement can be found.

2. Temporal clarification. Moses clarifies the meaning of *yom* as a 24-hour day by adding the phrase “evening and morning” (Gn 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). Evening marks the conclusion of the daylight hours and morning marks the conclusion of the night, thus constituting one solar day.²⁵¹ Outside Genesis 1, the singular words *eber* (evening) and *bōqer* (morning) appear together 30

²⁴⁹ The two primary lexical definitions of *yom* are: (1) day, daylight hours (the opposite of night); and (2) day of 24 hours. TLOT, 2:527f. HALOT, 2:399ff. Holladay, 130. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT), eds. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, *et al.*, 15 vols. (ET: Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974-2006), 6:25. If a metaphorical meaning is intended, it is made obvious in the context. “In approximately 95% of its occurrences, the literal meaning is clearly intended” (Henry M. Morris, *Scientific Creationism* [San Diego, CA: Creation-Life Publishers, 1974], 223).

²⁵⁰ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 154. Cf. Robert L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (1871; reprint Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1985), 254f.

²⁵¹ Herbert C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1942), 1:57. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *As It Is Written: The Genesis Account Literal or Literary?* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2016), 98-101.

Objectors ask how there could be evening and morning before the sun was created on day 4. “All it takes to have a day-night cycle is a rotating earth and light coming from one direction. Thus, we can deduce that the earth was already rotating in space relative to the light created on day 1” (Jonathan D. Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*, 85).

times in the Old Testament and denote a normal day. Furthermore, the word *eber* (evening) occurs with *yom* (day) 19 times outside Genesis 1; *bōqer* (morning) occurs with *yom* 17 times outside Genesis 1; in each occurrence a 24-hour day is meant.

3. Numerals. Genesis attaches a numeral to each of the days of creation (Gn 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; 2:2-3). Moses affixes numerical adjectives to *yom* 119 times in his writings. These always signify literal days. The same holds true for the 357 times numerical adjectives qualify *yom* outside the Pentateuch. (Cp. the numeral + day pattern in Numbers 7 and 29).²⁵²
4. Numbered series. When *yom* appears in sequentially-numbered, uninterrupted series, it always specifies natural days (e.g., Ex 12:15-16; 24:16; Lv 23:39; Nu 7:12-36; 29:17ff). The historical narrative account of Genesis 1 presents successive acts of creation. Each of the days is built upon what has been created during the preceding days.
5. Coherent/consistent usage. On “the fourth day” of the creation week, God assigned the function of the sun and the moon to demarcate the day (i.e., the daylight portion of the 24-hour day) from the night (daylight plus night constituting one solar day) (Gn 1:14-19). Since God’s purpose for creating the sun and the moon, as stated in the text, is to delineate solar days (vv. 14, 18), we should expect that the fifth through the sixth days would also represent 24-hour days. Furthermore, since the fourth through the sixth “day[s]” denote 24-hour solar days, “day” should have

²⁵² “When modified by a cardinal number (for example, one, two, three . . .) or ordinal number (for example, first, second, third . . .), as used 359 times in the OT outside Genesis 1, *yom* always means a literal day of about 24 hours, or the light portion of the day-night cycle” (Jonathan D. Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*, 73f). “When ‘day’ is accompanied by a definite number (e.g., Gn 1:5, 8; 7:11; Ex 16:1; Lv 23:34) it points only to a 24-hour period” (*Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David N. Freedman [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000], 324).

the same meaning on days 1-3 of the creation week—especially since each of the days are comprised of “evening and morning” and are part of the same numerical sequence.

6. God’s example. God tells man to imitate Him by working six days and resting one (Ex 20:8-11; 31:15-17).

⁸ Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates.

¹¹ For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it (Ex 20:8-11).

¹⁵ Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. . . . ¹⁷ It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed (Ex 31:15, 17).

But, if the days of the creation week are not normal days, what should we imitate? Note that textual argument # 6 is based on the hermeneutical principle of using Scripture to interpret Scripture.

7. The plural “days.” Exodus 20:11 and 31:17 also teach that God created the heavens and the earth “in six days” (*yammim*). “Ages are never expressed by the word *yammim*.”²⁵³ In fact, the plural *yammim* occurs 858 times in the Old Testament, and always refers to normal days.
8. Alternative idiom. The Hebrew language contains several terms that Moses could have used to communicate six eras or ages (e.g.,

²⁵³ Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 394.

olan), if that had been what he intended to say. But none of them are found in Genesis 1-2.²⁵⁴

9. The overall impression left by the wording of God's acts of creation in Genesis 1 is that these results of God's creative fiat were immediate and direct:

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light (1:3). Then God said, "Let there be a firmament . . . thus God made the firmament . . . and it was so (vv. 6-7); Then God said, "Let the waters . . . be gathered together into one place, and let the dry *land* appear"; and it was so (v. 9). Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation" . . . and it was so (v. 11). Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament" . . . and it was so (vv. 14-15). Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature" . . . and it was so (v. 24). Then God said, "Let Us make man" . . . so God created man (vv. 26-27).

This straightforward reading of the text comports with Psalm 33: "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. . . .⁹ For He spoke, and it was *done*; He commanded, and it stood fast" (vv. 6, 9; cf. "the worlds were framed by the word of God," Heb 11:3).²⁵⁵

In sum, in the Old Testament, if "night" is combined with *yom*, it always denotes a 24-hour day. If *yom* is used with either "morning" or "evening," they too refer to a literal day. When "morning" or "evening," are used together with *yom*, it always signifies a solar day, i.e., one axial rotation of the earth. Thus, there is no ambiguity in the meaning of the Genesis account of the days of creation. Moses could not have made it any clearer in the text that God created the whole

²⁵⁴ See Jonathan D. Sarfati for ten examples of possible Hebrew idioms (*Refuting Compromise*, 326-328).

²⁵⁵ Throughout Scripture "the word of the Lord" or "the word of God" is depicted as supernaturally powerful (e.g., Heb 4:12).

universe in the span of six chronologically-successive and contiguous periods of 24-hour durations each.²⁵⁶

No death before Adam sinned²⁵⁷

Biblical definition of death

The term (physical) “death” denotes the total and permanent (i.e., without possibility of resuscitation or recovery) cessation of all the vital functions and signs of person or animal. In determining a Biblical definition for physical death the following concepts are relevant:

- the life is in the blood (Gn 9:4; Lv 17:11, 14; Dt 12:23; cf. Jn 6:53–54);
- the breath of life (Gn 2:7; 6:17; 7:15, 22; Job 7:7; 12:10; 27:3; 33:4; Is 2:22; Ezk 37:5–10; Ac 17:25; Rv 11:11);
- to cease breathing is to die (Gn 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49:33; Jos 10:40; 11:11, 14; 1 Ki 15:29; 17:17; Ps 104:29; Ec 3:19; Mk 15:37, 39; Lk 23:46; Ac 5:5, 10); and
- the heart is the wellspring of life (Pr 4:23) (metaphorical usage).

Since life is in the blood/circulatory system, we must not treat a person as dead as long as his blood continues to provide oxygenation (the

²⁵⁶ Textual arguments 1–8 are adapted from Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *As It Is Written: The Genesis Account Literal or Literary?*, chapter 4. Gentry includes two additional arguments, including argument from scholarly admissions. Argument # 9 is taken from Robert L. Reymond, *Contending for the Faith*, 46.

²⁵⁷ James Stambaugh, “Whence Cometh Death? A Biblical Theology of Physical Death and Natural Evil,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, 372–397. Ken Ham, “Was There Death Before Adam Sinned?” in *The New Answers Book 3*, ed. Ken Ham (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2009), 109–117. Don Batten, ed., *The Creation Answers Book*, 3rd ed. (Eight Mile Planes QLD, Australia: Creation Book Publishers, 2009), 99–108. Jonathan D. Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*, 195–223, 66. Sarfati, *The Genesis Account*, 377–384.

breath of life) to the cells. Once the blood dies (i.e., is coagulated), the person can be treated as dead. This encapsulates the cardio-pulmonary definition of death (i.e., irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions), since the blood carries the oxygen (the breath of life) to the person's body cells.²⁵⁸

Plants do not “die”

The Genesis creation account (Gn 1–2) speaks of “souls/creatures” (*nephesh*) and “living souls/creatures” (*nephesh chayyah*). The Hebrew term *nephesh* (pronounced neh'-fesh) is used of: fish and birds (Gn 1:20–21, 30); land animals, amphibians, and reptiles (1:24, 30; cf. 7:22); and man (2:7). All of these living creatures breathe, and they have blood. The term *nephesh* is not used of plants. Biblically, plants are not “living creatures,” so they cannot die in the sense that people and animals do.²⁵⁹ Instead, in Biblical language, plants wither

²⁵⁸ International Church Council Project, “Concerning the Sanctity of Human Life,” <http://www.churchcouncil.org/22-the-sanctity-of-human-life.html>.

²⁵⁹ “The overwhelming majority of occurrences of the technical word for death, *mut*, refers to human beings, rarely applies to animals (Gn 33:13; Ex 7:18, 21; 8:9 [13]; 9:6–7; Lv 11:39; Ec 3:19; Is 66:24), and is never used for the plants per se. The same perspective is reflected in the use of the word *nephesh*, ‘life,’ whose departure is the equivalent of death, which also applies generally to humans, sometimes to animals, but never to plants” (Jacques B. Doukhan, “‘When Death Was Not Yet’: The Testimony of Biblical Creation,” in *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*, ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015], 339).

“The Bible appears not to regard insects and other invertebrates as ‘living,’ in the same sense as humans and vertebrate animals—the Hebrew never refers to them as *nephesh chayyah* (‘living soul/creature’), unlike humans and even fish (Gn 1:20; 2:7). Also, insects don’t have the same sort of ‘blood’ that vertebrates do, yet ‘the life of the flesh is in the blood’ (Lv 17:11). Therefore, the pre-Fall diet of animals did not necessarily exclude invertebrates” (Jonathan D. Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*, 80f). Ken Ham, “Was There Death

and fade. (Of course, plants do not have a brain to interpret tissue damage as pain.)

Death began with Adam's sin

With this background, we are now in a position to state that, according to the Bible, there was no death in the world until Adam sinned.

Prior to the Fall, Adam and Eve were vegetarians, and animals were not carnivorous; they were herbivores.

And God said, “See, I have given you **every herb that yields seed** which *is* on the face of all the earth, and **every tree whose fruit yields seed**; to you it shall be for food.”³⁰ “Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which *there is* life, *I have given every green herb for food*”; and it was so.³¹ Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was very good*. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day (Gn 1:29–31).

After the Fall, God cursed the earth, subjecting it to futility²⁶⁰ (Gn 3:14, 17–19; Ro 8:19–22; Job 25:5). Animals became carnivorous, but people continued to be vegetarians (Gn 3:17–19). However, after the Noahic Flood, God permitted people to eat meat: “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs” (Gn 9:3; cf. vv. 2–4). Isaiah prophesies a future time during Messiah’s reign in a renewed creation when animals will return to being herbivores, as they were in the original creation (Is

Before Adam Sinned? in *The New Answers Book 3*, ed. Ken Ham, 114f.

Cf. *nep̄esh* in Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (BDB) (reprint: Lafayette, IN: Associated Publishers, 1979), 659f # 5315, def. 1–3; *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (NIDOTTE), ed. Willem A. VanGemeren, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 3:133 # 5883; HECOT, 1099ff.

²⁶⁰ In Romans 8:20 *ματαιότης* denotes futility, frustration, transitoriness (BDAG).

11:6-9; 65:25). What was lost in the Fall is being restored in the new creation in Christ Jesus. Death, sorrow, crying, pain, and curse will pass away, the Edenic tree of life will be restored (Rv 21:4-5; 22:2-3, 14; Ac 3:21).

The Apostle Paul clearly teaches that physical death was the result of the man Adam's first sin, and he contrasts death through Adam with life that comes through the second/last Adam, Jesus Christ (Ro 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22).²⁶¹ (See the fourth pillar of the Biblical worldview, covenant theology.)

For since **by man *came* death**, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead.²² For as in **Adam** all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive (1 Cor 15:21-22).

Therefore, just as **through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin**, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (Rm 5:12).²⁶²

The Apostle Paul

reads Genesis historically, since he speaks of Adam and his act of disobedience as facts of history. The death of those who lived from the time of Adam to the time of Moses is also a fact of history. The whole argument depends on this straightforward understanding of the biblical narrative in its essentials. Without such an understanding, the argument collapses. Christ was a real

²⁶¹ For brief comments see John Murray, "Adam," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE₂)*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, rev. ed., 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979-1988), 1:50. For exposition see Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT and Guy P. Waters, "Theistic Evolution Is Incompatible with the Teachings of the New Testament," in *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*, eds. J.P. Moreland, *et al.*, 902-910. Cf. Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1959).

²⁶² In Romans 5, observe Paul's sustained emphasis on Adam's sin as the *one* sin of the *one* man in distinction from the sinning of "many" or "all" as the *consequence* of *his one* sin (vv. 12, 15-19).

historical man whose death was a real event; there can be no parallel between him and his act of atonement and a mythological Adam whose Fall is only a symbol. The two sides of the parallel stand or fall together.”²⁶³

Romans 8 also demonstrates that the destiny of the cursed universe is directly connected with man.

¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation²⁶⁴ eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected²⁶⁵ to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the **bondage of corruption** into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body (Ro 8:19-23).

When believers receive the full redemption of their bodies the curse will also be removed from the created order. Since the curse and redemption for both man and the universe are intimately interrelated, it implies that animal death also began with man’s sin and God’s subsequent curse (Gn 3:17-19).²⁶⁶

²⁶³ Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*, 87; cf. p. 90.

²⁶⁴ In Romans 8:19 “the creation” probably denotes the “**subhuman creation**”; see Romans’ commentators: Douglas J. Moo, NICNT, rev., 536; C.E.B. Cranfield, ICC, 1:411f; W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, ICC, 207; Frederic L. Godet, 313f; Calvin, 172-174.

²⁶⁵ “The aorist ὑπετάγη [“was subjected”] refers to a particular event. The use of the passive veils a reference to God. There is little doubt that Paul had in mind the judgment related in Gen 3:17-19, which includes (v. 17) the words ‘cursed is the ground for thy sake’” (C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans*, ICC, 1:413).

²⁶⁶ Sid Dyer, “The New Testament Doctrine of Creation,” in *Did God Create in Six Days*, eds. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall, 230f.

Additionally, Paul's phrase, "the bondage of corruption" (Ro 8:21), denotes "the decay and death apparent even **in non-rational creation.**"²⁶⁷ Thus, this verse clearly indicates that

"the bondage of corruption" to which the Apostle is speaking must be to the death in the animal world. Thus, we may conclude that the Bible does teach that death in the animal world or the bondage of corruption was due to the sin of Adam. . . . Animals had not existed over long periods of time prior to the creation of Adam.²⁶⁸

In the new creation sin is totally removed; consequently, there will be no more death, pain, or curse (Rv 21:4-5; 22:3). However, all old-earth theories overthrow the sin-death causality, and in so doing, sabotage the atonement as taught in these Pauline passages of Scripture.

Paul also states that death is "the last enemy" (1 Cor 15:26). However, "All (mis-)interpretations of Genesis which deny its plain meaning, and so involve death before sin, must assert that 'the last enemy' was part of God's 'very good' creation. [Conversely, Jesus regarded death

²⁶⁷ John Murray, *Romans*, NICNT, 1:304 (bold added). Cf. Douglas J. Moo, "the subhuman creation . . . **the nonhuman world**" (*Romans*, NICNT, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018], 539f [bold added]).

²⁶⁸ Morton H. Smith, "The Theological Significance of the Doctrine of Creation," in *Did God Create in Six days?* Eds. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall, 260. I would qualify Smith's statement by distinguishing between "living creatures" (*nephesh chayyah*) and the non-living creation (e.g., plants, rocks, the sun, etc.). Since the Fall of man, all creation experiences decay; living creatures experience death. (Cf. the above subsections, "Biblical definition of death" and "Plants do not 'die.'")

Smith observes that the first mention of animal death was on the very day on which Adam and Eve fell, when God killed (sacrificed?) some animals and made tunics of skin and clothed them (Gn 3:21).

as] an unmitigated tragedy [worthy of tears, Jn 11:35], and hardly something He would call ‘very good.’”²⁶⁹

Church fathers and theologians of various theological persuasions (e.g., Roman Catholic Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Wesley) have consistently seen Adam’s sin as the cause of death in the world.²⁷⁰ In fact, the Council of Carthage (418 A.D.) pronounced an ecclesiastical curse on anyone saying that Adam would have died had he not sinned:

If any man says that Adam, the first man, was created mortal, so that whether he sinned or not he would have died, not as the wages of sin, but through the necessity of nature, let him be anathema.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Jonathan D. Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1-11*, 377. In Genesis chapter one the seven-fold pattern of “good” (Gn 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) expresses the absolute perfection of the work of God (Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible* [Exeter, Devon, England: Paternoster, 1983], 49f). “By the application of the term ‘good’ to everything that God made, and the repetition of the word with the emphasis ‘very’ at the close of the whole creation, the existence of anything evil in the creation of God is absolutely denied” (Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* [KD], [reprint: Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975], The Pentateuch, 3 vols, 1:67).

²⁷⁰ For sample quotes see Jonathan D. Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1-11*, 378f.

²⁷¹ The 16th Council of Carthage, A.D. 418, canon 1, in Charles J. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, 5 vols. (ET, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871-1895), 2:458. It was reaffirmed at the 17th Council of Carthage, A.D. 419, as canon 109 (Hefele, 474; Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series (NPNF2), 14 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979-1983], 14:496). This latter council was commonly called The Code of Canons of the African Church.

The Biblical teaching that death was caused by man’s sin is a complete contradiction of all old-earth, evolutionary hypotheses. Such hypotheses postulate that violence, suffering, death, extinction, and diseases like cancer (as represented in the fossil record) have existed for millions of years. Any professing Christian holding such misguided beliefs is asserting that God called such misery “very good” (Gn 1:31), thereby blaspheming God. Biblical Christianity simply cannot be integrated with natural selection—with its disease and death—and still have a good and loving God. Harmony between the Bible and the theory of evolution is impossible without abandoning the truthfulness, authority, and inerrancy of the Bible, especially rejecting the teaching of Genesis 1-3.²⁷²

Thus, the Bible’s teaching regarding the causal relationship between sin and death is further evidence of a six, 24-hour day creation.

We have already observed numerous doctrines the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles built upon the historical account of Creation. The following table summarizes most of the theological and philosophical truths contained in the Genesis account of creation.

BIBLICAL TRUTH REGARDING CREATION	OPPOSING ERRORS
the space-time world was created out of nothing	the eternity of matter, energy, or time
the Creator-creature distinction	atheism; polytheism; all forms of monism (all is one), e.g., pantheism (God and the universe are one), panentheism (the universe is a part of God); dualism;

²⁷² In particular, “The origin of sin and death and of evil in the world is not capable of being harmonized with evolution” (Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*, 99; cf. 52).

BIBLICAL TRUTH REGARDING CREATION	OPPOSING ERRORS
	animism ²⁷³ ; Unitarianism; humanism
supernatural miracles ²⁷⁴	naturalism (anti-supernaturalism)
the reality of matter	spiritual monism
the reality of spirit	material monism, materialism
the goodness of matter	matter is evil (e.g., Platonism)
begins with the personal, speaking God	begins with the impersonal
the fact of divine order and plan behind the creation	the concept of ultimate chance ²⁷⁵ or contingency; evolution
man as a unique creature, created in God's image, comprised of spirit and body	man as an animal kicked up by some fluke of chance in the

²⁷³ **Animism** is the belief that natural objects (e.g., plants, trees, rivers, stones), natural phenomena (e.g., thunderstorms, earthquakes), and the universe itself possess souls (i.e., conscious life and a discrete indwelling spirit). These spiritual forces reside in and control all the natural world.

²⁷⁴ A miracle (enacted by God) is best defined as a visible, extraordinary work of God whereby He accomplishes His sovereign, redemptive purposes in the realm of nature and human history, bearing witness to Himself (as Redeemer and Judge) and arousing people's awe and wonder.

²⁷⁵ "Chance is a word we use to describe mathematical possibilities, but *chance cannot be a cause of anything because chance is not a being, not energy, not mass, not power, not intelligence, not an entity.* It is only a mathematical concept" (Robert L. Reymond, *Contending for the Faith*, 58; italics in original).

BIBLICAL TRUTH REGARDING CREATION	OPPOSING ERRORS
(Gn 2:7), with singular dignity and importance, e.g., free moral agency and stewardship over God's earth (Dominion Covenant/Cultural Mandate, Gn 1:26-28; Ps 8:3-8)	blind and meaningless evolutionary process. abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, eugenics, organ harvesting, dangerous medical experimentation, torture, human trafficking, forced prostitution, bestiality, transhumanism
male and female, with complementarian roles and male headship (1 Cor 11:3, 7-9; 1 Tim 2:11-13). ²⁷⁶ marriage (heterosexual, monogamous, permanent) and family	egalitarian roles, feminism, unisex appearance and apparel. polygamy, polyandry, group marriages/polyamory; unbiblical divorce; homosexuality, bisexuality, transgender, androgyny, asexuality, etc.
the Creator is the Lawgiver Who determines and imposes absolute, unchanging, ethical laws, through both His Word (i.e., special revelation) (Gn 1:28-30; 2:16-17; 3:8; 9:4-6) and through writing basic requirements of His moral law on the heart of every person (i.e.,	relativistic, evolving, manmade ethics

²⁷⁶ Robert E. Fugate, *Biblical Patriarchy: Male Headship in Family, Church, and State*. Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 30-42, 109ff.

BIBLICAL TRUTH REGARDING CREATION	OPPOSING ERRORS
general revelation) (Ro 1:18-32; 2:14-16). Work and Sabbath rest (Gn 2:2-3; Ex 20:8-11; 31:13-17)	
the unity of the human race ²⁷⁷	racism
in six, 24-hour, consecutive, contiguous days (Gn 1; Ex 20:11; 31:17)	theistic evolution, progressive creation, framework hypothesis, day-age theory, etc.
Trinity: “God [<i>Elohim</i> is a plural noun] created [<i>bara</i> is a singular verb]” (Gn 1:1); “Us . . . Our . . . Our” (v. 26); “the Spirit of God (v. 2)	unitarianism (e.g., Judaism, Islam)

The Biblical doctrine of creation is unique among all the religions of the world.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁷ “It is essential to maintain the fundamental unity of the human race; this conviction is the presupposition of religion and morality. The solidarity of the human race, original sin, the atonement in Christ, the universality of the kingdom of God, the catholicity of the church, and the love of neighbor—these all are grounded in the unity of humankind” (synopsis in Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:511).

²⁷⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 267. Of course, distorted remnants of the Biblical truth regarding creation have filtered down into the creation myths of numerous cultures.

Miscellaneous

The first chapters of Genesis must be seen in the context of the entire Bible. “Everything in the biblical canon should be seen to have its roots in Gen. 1-3 and to move toward its final goal in Rv 21.”²⁷⁹

Creation itself, including the inanimate objects, worships God (Pss 19:1-4; 50:6; 89:5; 98:7-9; 148:1-14; Is 55:12). Consideration of creation leads to people to worship God (Ne 9:6; Pss 8:3-9; 33:6-9; 95:3-7; 146:5-6; Rv 14:7; etc.).

Salvation is depicted in terms of a new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10), with personal regeneration being the beginning of a cosmic renewal, a renewal as comprehensive as was the original creation. Thus, the history of redemption completes the purpose of the original creation, which exists to serve the redemptive ends of God.²⁸⁰

At no point do God’s creatures ever stop relating to God as their Creator. The Creator-creature distinction is inviolable. That is why the Bible ends with God’s people worshiping and serving their Creator-Redeemer (Rv 4:11; 7:15; 10:6; 19:5; 22:3).

Consequences of rejecting 6-day creation

There are consequences for rejecting the Genesis account of creation (i.e., creation in six, 24-hour, consecutive, contiguous days).

1. Undermines the truthfulness, authority, and inerrancy of Scripture.

“If we assert that we can set aside the six-day creation doctrine, we have asserted our supremacy over Scripture. Our mind and our

²⁷⁹ Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 59.

²⁸⁰ John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 189-192; Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology*, 397f. Technically, the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ marked the beginning of the new creation (J.R. Levison, “Creation and New Creation,” *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* [DPL], eds. G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, and D.G. Reid [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993], 189f).

convenience now have a higher authority than the Bible, so that we have denied its authority totally and asserted our authority instead. If we claim the right at any point to set aside Scripture, we have established ourselves as the higher authority at every point. Clearly, therefore, the question of authority is at stake in Genesis 1: God or man? Whose word is authoritative and final?”²⁸¹

“The Bible clearly asserts that God created heaven and earth, the whole created universe, in six days. If this statement be allegorized or interpreted away, no meaning stands in Scripture.”²⁸²

“Every doctrine of Scripture is undermined when strict creationism is undermined. Wherever strict creationism is set aside, the vital nerve of Christianity is cut.”²⁸³

2. Undermines the Reformation doctrines of the sufficiency of Scripture (i.e., *sola Scriptura*) and the clarity of Scripture.

No longer is Scripture considered to be sufficient to interpret Scripture (as taught in WCF, 1:9). “Truths” from autonomous, intellectually-elite scientists, philosophers, and literary critics dictate how Genesis 1-3 must be interpreted (which is a form of neo-Gnosticism). No longer is it possible for the ordinary believer

²⁸¹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 45f.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 49. Liberal exegete Marcus Dods made a similar point: “If, for example the word ‘day’ in these chapters, does not mean a period of twenty-four hours, the interpretation of Scripture is hopeless” (“Genesis,” in *The Expositor’s Bible*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, 6 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956], 1:5).

²⁸³ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 49; cf. Morton H. Smith, “The Theological Significance of the Doctrine of Creation,” in *Did God Create in Six days?* Eds. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall, 243-265. Contra John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 198. Regarding eschatology, Cameron argues that “The same methods of extrapolation which lead men to believe in an evolutionary origin of the universe will also lead them to believe in an evolutionary future and end for it” (Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*, 97).

to understand the six days of creation (which denies the doctrine of the clarity of Scripture,²⁸⁴ WCF, 1:7).

3. **Undermines the epistemological foundation of Biblical Christianity.** Undermining the truthfulness, authority, and inerrancy of Scripture, plus the sufficiency and the clarity of Scripture, undermines the epistemological foundation of Biblical Christianity (see the above section, “The Epistemological Foundation of the Biblical Worldview: The Bible is the Criterion or Standard of Truth”).²⁸⁵
4. **Distorts one’s view of God.** God is the Creator, so any views that diminish His work as Creator distort who God is.

So far as *we* are concerned, we can never think of God without thinking of God as God and of ourselves as his creatures. In other words, the thought of creation, the thought of our dependence upon God, is implicated in any true thought *we* entertain with respect to God. Without the concept of creation, then, we cannot think even one right thought of God. . . . Creation means all things owe their origin and existence to the will and fiat of God.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 352–367.

²⁸⁵ Christian apologist Cornelius Van Til argued, “If the Christian theory of creation by God is not true, then we hold that **there cannot be objective knowledge of anything**” (*The Defense of the Faith*, 43; bold added).

²⁸⁶ John Murray, “The Significance of the Doctrine of Creation,” in *Collected Writings of John Murray*, 4 vols. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976–1982), 1:326f. Elsewhere Murray adds, “The data mentioned in Genesis 1:1, for example, are basic to all Christian thought of God, of reality distinct from God, and of God’s relation to this reality” (idem., “The Origin of Man,” in *Collected Writings of John Murray*, 2:3).

Heretical evolutionary theories that postulate sin and death in the world prior to the “historical” fall of some “Adam” (e.g., theistic evolution) implicitly blame God for creating evil.²⁸⁷

5. **Demeans the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles**, who believed the historicity of the Genesis account of creation and based their teachings on it.
6. **Undermines Biblical ethics.** In the naturalistic, evolutionary worldview, “might makes right” and “only the strong survive.” Aggression and dominance, along with sexual promiscuity, rape, and incest (which are necessary to perpetuate one’s gene pool) are merely evolutionary means of ensuring the survival of the fittest. Consequently, how can anyone be guilty and culpable for committing natural acts, inherent in his DNA, that are merely designed to survive? Thus, evolution justifies and promotes sexual liberation, racism,²⁸⁸ eugenics,²⁸⁹ abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, unjust wars, genocide, population control (“cull the herd”), unethical scientific experimentation on humans, human trafficking, torturing prisoners of war, hastening death or promoting wars for the purpose of organ harvesting, etc. Clearly,

²⁸⁷ Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *No Adam, No Gospel: Adam and the History of Redemption*, 18.

²⁸⁸ Charles Ware and Ken Ham, *One Race One Blood* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2011). Racism may be defined as the belief that one race is inherently superior to another race/s, and that the superior race has the right to dominion over the other/s. Biblically, individual acts of racial prejudice (e.g., refusing to hire or to conduct business with a person of another race) are sins, but they are not crimes to be punished by the state.

²⁸⁹ The term “eugenics” denotes the scientific and social attempt to produce “superior” offspring by processes of selective breeding of humans, encouraging childbearing among those deemed most “fit” and impeding or preventing parenthood among those deemed “inferior.”

evolutionary thought obliterates the sanctity of human life.²⁹⁰ Thus, it is no coincidence that the most murderous Communists and Fascists were Darwinians (e.g., Marx, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Hitler, etc.).

“The rise of evolutionary thinking has produced a world-wide rise of totalitarianism. Since man is no longer seen as a creation by God, he is becoming a creature of the total state, and the total state is determined to remake man in its own image. . . . When men set aside God as Creator, they then set themselves up as man’s recreators, as the new gods over man and the universe.”²⁹¹

7. **Makes the gospel unintelligible.** The gospel itself is incomprehensible apart from the Creation and the Fall narrated in Genesis 1–3.²⁹² That is why the Apostle Paul began with Genesis when preaching the gospel to pagans who were unacquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures (Ac 14:15–17; 17:16–31).

²⁹⁰ International Church Council Project, “Concerning the Sanctity of Human Life,” <http://www.churchcouncil.org/22-the-sanctity-of-human-life.html>.

²⁹¹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 50f.

²⁹² “The truth of the gospel stands or falls with the historicity of Adam as the first human being from whom all other human beings descend. . . . What Scripture affirms about creation, especially the origin of humanity, is central to its teaching about salvation. If it is not true that all human beings descend from Adam, then the entire history of redemption taught in Scripture unravels. . . . Sin, salvation, the Savior—a radically unbiblical conception of each is the price paid for denying the historicity of Adam and Eve as the first human beings as well as all subsequent human beings’ common natural descent from them” (Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *No Adam, No Gospel: Adam and the History of Redemption*, 5, 13f; cf. 22).

Ken Ham, *Gospel Reset: Salvation Made Relevant* (Green Forest, AZ: Master Books, 2018). Idem., *Why Won’t They Listen?* (Green Forest, AZ: Master Books, 2002), chapter 2. Robert E. Fugate, “The Contents of the Gospel Message,” unpublished paper. Idem., “Evangelizing Pagans in Acts 14 & 17.”

Furthermore, to undermine the sin-death causality is to destroy the efficacy and the rationale of blood atonement.²⁹³

8. Since the rejection of 6-day creation involves **syncretism** (i.e., the mixing two alien religions, in this case, Christianity with its Creator-God + autonomous scientism with its anti-Biblical philosophical presuppositions of naturalism, uniformitarianism, etc.), it inevitably **causes division** within Christ's church (2 Pt 3:3-6; Jude 18-19).²⁹⁴ Syncretism is idolatry, and God requires Bible-believing Christians to oppose idolatry.²⁹⁵ (Cf. "Antithesis" under the 5th pillar of the Biblical worldview.)
9. **Brings God's judgment.** The above points demonstrate that the rejection of 6-day creation is sin. Such rejection of God's Word involves intellectual pride and unbelief that must be repented of. Consequently, God will judge those people and churches who refuse to repent of their sin of the rejection of six-day creation.

Why do people reject 6-day creation?

In light of the seriousness of the Biblical doctrine of creation, why do so many people reject the straightforward, Biblical account of the 6-day creation of the time-space universe?

1. All depraved people "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Ro 1:18ff) because they do not want to face the consequences of the Biblical doctrine of creation, i.e.: the Creator is the sovereign

²⁹³ Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*, 52.

²⁹⁴ Don Batten, "But It's Divisive!" <https://creation.com/but-its-divisive>.

²⁹⁵ "Evolution is not a science but a religious faith which has taken over the sciences and rules them dogmatically" (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 48). Science is a "new religion," and scientists are the "new priesthood" (53f). "Evolution is an exclusive faith that defends itself by excluding all others" (Mark R. Rushdoony, "Evolutionary Faith," in *Creation According to the Scriptures: A Presuppositional Defense of Literal, Six-Day Creation*, ed. P. Andrew Sandlin [Vallecito, CA: Chalcedon Foundation, 2001], 16).

Lord Who owns them; He is the Lawgiver (Ja 4:12; Is 33:22) Who defines and determines right and wrong; and He is the Judge (Gn 18:25; Is 33:22) Who will punish them accordingly.²⁹⁶

2. Both **modernism**—with its Enlightenment-based intellectual autonomy and its worldview of naturalism/uniformitarianism—and **postmodernism**—which is based on monism and views people as divine—reject the Biblical worldview, including the Creator-creature distinction and its doctrine of creation.²⁹⁷ Modernism and postmodernism have turned the culture—including the syncretistic, culture-copying portions of the church—against the Genesis account of creation.
3. Liberal scholars, with their anti-supernatural presuppositions, do not believe the Bible is God’s inerrant Word. So, they have no problem relegating the early chapters of Genesis to the categories of myth,²⁹⁸ legend, saga, stories, etc.²⁹⁹ (Cf. # 1 above.)
4. But why do the vast majority of contemporary evangelical Biblical scholars reject six-day creation? The answer is both simple and tragic. Most evangelical scholars reject six-day creation because—

²⁹⁶ “To become truly God-conscious is to become truly creature-conscious, and to become creature-conscious is to become covenant-conscious, and to become covenant-conscious is to become sin-conscious” (Robert L. Reymond, *Contending for the Faith*, 59).

²⁹⁷ *Modernism and Postmodernism: Their History, Beliefs, Cultural Influence—and How to Refute Them*.

²⁹⁸ “If creation is mythical, God is mythical” (Cornelius Van Til, “*The Doctrine of Creation and Christian Apologetics*,” *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1:1, ed. Gary North [Summer, 1974], 73; reprinted in *Creation According to the Scriptures: A Presuppositional Defense of Literal, Six-Day Creation*, ed. P. Andrew Sandlin, 35).

²⁹⁹ An evolutionary worldview creates an evolving god, such as the god of process theology (Rousas J. Rushdoony, “The Importance of Six-Day Creation,” in *Creation According to the Scriptures: A Presuppositional Defense of Literal, Six-Day Creation*, ed. P. Andrew Sandlin, 1).

in the areas of science³⁰⁰ (including evolution, geology, astronomy, paleontology, etc.) and history (including pagan chronologies and histories)—**the Bible is not their ultimate authority!** Pagan scientists—operating with unbiblical philosophical presuppositions that predetermine their interpretation of “facts”—are the ultimate authority for most contemporary evangelical scholars,³⁰¹ in direct contradiction to the Reformation doctrine of *sola Scriptura* (see the 7th pillar of the Biblical worldview below). If one clears away the exegetical and hermeneutical subterfuge and smokescreens, it is not a question of what the Biblical text actually says. They simply refuse to believe the Bible, echoing the serpent’s words, “Did God actually say?” (Gn 3:1). Hence, they invent a myriad of complex, convoluted interpretations of

³⁰⁰ There is really no such thing as authoritative “science.” There are individual scientists with their competing (and often contradictory!) presuppositions, beliefs, and worldviews. Statements regarding “science” and nature can easily fall into the logical fallacy of hypostatization, in which abstract terms are treated as if they were concrete ones; frequently humanlike properties (e.g., intelligence, intention) are ascribed to them. See S. Morris Engel, *With Good Reason*, 109, 113. “Evolutionists often absurdly ascribe foresight, intent, and intelligent development to biological processes or creatures themselves. Thus a creature is said to have ‘adapted itself,’ ‘developed the ability,’ or ‘evolved a unique organ which allows . . .’” (Mark R. Rushdoony, “Evolutionary Faith,” in *Creation According to the Scriptures: A Presuppositional Defense of Literal, Six-Day Creation*, ed. P. Andrew Sandlin, 15).

³⁰¹ “They are teaching the church that science is the final authority in determining the correct interpretation of some or all of Genesis 1–11. . . . None of them seems to understand that what they are using to help them interpret the Bible are not scientific facts or data, but rather evolutionary *interpretations* of *some* of the facts or data, and that those interpretations are based on anti-Biblical philosophical *presuppositions* or *assumptions*” (Terry Mortenson, “Why Don’t Many Christian Leaders and Scholars Believe Genesis?” 5/31/2010, <https://answersingenesis.org/genesis/why-dont-many-christian-leaders-and-scholars-believe-genesis>).

Genesis 1-3 to make the text say the opposite of what it clearly says. It takes a lot of intelligence and “education” to be that foolish! But then, most evangelical seminary professors studied under pagans and liberals at pagan universities and seminaries to become “qualified” to teach in Bible-believing seminaries! Autonomy and unbelief are deadly sins. It is impossible for scholars to understand Genesis 1-3 apart from Biblical faith.

“By faith we understand³⁰² that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Heb 11:3).³⁰³

“Whatever *is* not from faith is sin” (Ro 14:23).³⁰⁴

A related reason why some contemporary evangelical Biblical scholars reject six-day creation is the lust for intellectual respectability in the eyes of academia, i.e., approval from the world. (See our discussion of “Antithesis” under the 5th pillar of the Biblical worldview.)

Summary and conclusion

Robert Reymond gives three implications of the Biblical cosmogony (i.e., study of the origin of the universe) for modern science:

³⁰² “Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore do not seek to understand in order to believe, but believe that thou mayest understand” (Augustine, “Homilies on the Gospel of St. John,” tractate 29, sec. 6, on Jn 7:17; Philip Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series [NPNF1], 14 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980-1983], 7:184).

³⁰³ “The doctrine of creation is known only from revelation and is understood by faith (Heb 11:3)” (Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:408). Faith relates to what is not seen (Heb 11:1, 3, 7, 27; 2 Cor 5:7). Robert Lewis Dabney wrote in 1871 that evolution was one of the “current theories of unbelief”—along with alchemy and astrology (*Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 63f).

³⁰⁴ God does not say, Whatever *is* not from faith is sin—except when doing science or writing commentaries on Genesis!

First, in the search for meaning in his universe, the scientist, in actuality, may only claim to know a fact if he knows that fact as God has interpreted that fact by the creative act and by subsequent interpretive revelation. And among other things, God knows the facts of science to be created facts. No fact, then, is truly known unless its createdness in the Biblical sense is owned by the scientist. But for the scientist to admit the createdness of even one fact would be to admit his own creaturehood. And only a spiritual transformation can make man admit this truth. “By *faith*,” the writer to the Hebrews (11:3) affirms, “we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear.” Man, to be truly scientific, must first be regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God; his mind must be illumined, for only in God’s light can he see light (Ps 36:9). Until he is born again, man cannot see the kingdom of God, or, for that matter, *anything else* truly.

Second, the Biblical cosmogony demands that the scientist reject all evolutionary speculation. No longer should he speak of man as an accident of nature. . . . He must recognize his own creaturehood and no longer regard himself as a final legitimate reference point for his scientific pronouncements. He must recognize that there is a metaphysical discontinuity between the Creator and himself. He must no longer talk about “being” in general and “knowledge” in general; rather he must speak of God’s being as distinct from and as the origin of all created being (Is 40:18, 25) and God’s knowledge as distinct from and as the origin of his own knowledge. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Is 55:8-9).

Third, he must consult the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to learn God’s interpretation of the facts and to discover what is possible and not possible before he makes a final pronouncement in any matter. He must assume no position or principle which would ultimately deny the supernatural or the

miraculous. In brief, he must worship and serve the Creator rather than the creature.³⁰⁵

Presuppositional apologist, Greg Bahnsen wrote a theological-philosophical Reformed Confession of Creation. We will cite “Article 10: The Importance of the Doctrine of Creation”:

10.1 WE AFFIRM that all devout, faithful and biblically based theology presupposes and the very gospel message of salvation itself must be presented within the theological context of the indispensable and foundational truth that God created the heavens and the earth.

10.2 WE DENY that we may know God in any other way but self-consciously as creatures, and that we may know God in any way, either in committed belief or hypothetical abstraction, which disregards that He is our Creator and the Creator of all things.

10.3 WE DENY that any Christian doctrine is properly conceived or faithfully set forth which contradicts, compromises or ignores the biblical teaching about creation.

10.4 WE DENY that the world or any aspect thereof may be correctly understood, or that any intelligible and morally appropriate use and application may be made of such knowledge, apart from the all-embracing, presupposed, theological worldview which affirms God the Creator, based on God's own, ultimately authoritative, self-revelation.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ Robert L. Reymond, *A Christian View of Modern Science* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1964), 10f. At this point, Reymond's thinking is based on Cornelius Van Til.

³⁰⁶ This paper was developed in 1994, primarily by Greg L. Bahnsen for the Confessional Conferences For Reformed Unity. An earlier draft is available at <http://www.cmfnow.com/articles/pt183.htm>. Cf. Cornelius Van Til, “Our Attitude Toward Evolution,” *The Banner*, December 11, 1931.

In sum, the Biblical doctrine of creation is central to the Biblical message and to the Biblical worldview.³⁰⁷ It must not be compromised. Christians should not trust or follow seminary professors and church leaders who compromise the Biblical doctrine of creation or who treat it as unimportant. Logically, we must concur with James Jordan's application of the doctrine of creation:

Our conclusion is that **these modern approaches to Genesis 1 are simply heretical**. Not that those advocating them are [necessarily] heretics, for they sloppily and with happy inconsistency retain most of the Christian religion. But if their hermeneutical procedure is allowed standing within the Church, their disciples will in time carry forth their heresy consistently, and the faith will be lost. Thus it has ever been. For this reason, **no one advocating such views should ever be ordained to the ministry or be allowed to teach in theological seminaries**.³⁰⁸

We conclude our discussion of the Biblical doctrine of creation with a power-packed quote from R.J. Rushdoony:

³⁰⁷ “The Biblical doctrine of creation is the foundational doctrine of all Christian theology and of all Christian thought and action. It is on the basis of this doctrine alone that we can have an understanding of any facts found in the universe. . . . The whole of the Christian system of thought and its world and life view grows [*sic*] out of the Biblical doctrine of creation” (Morton H. Smith, “The Theological Significance of the Doctrine of Creation,” in *Did God Create in Six days?* eds. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall, 243, 245). (Smith seems to be emphasizing metaphysics over epistemology in these statements.)

³⁰⁸ James B. Jordan, “The Framework Hypothesis: A Gnostic Heresy,” *Biblical Horizons Newsletter* # 107 (July 1998), <http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/biblical-horizons/no-107-the-framework-hypothesis-a-gnostic-heresy> (bold added). (This should not be misconstrued as approval of James Jordan's Federal Vision heresy or his interpretive maximalism hermeneutic.) Contra John M. Frame, “Machen's Warrior Children,” in *Alister E. McGrath and Evangelical Theology*, ed. Sung Wook Chung (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 131f and *idem.*, *Systematic Theology*, 198f.

Modern men, scientists and humble believers in evolution alike, are parasites. They are living off the unearned capital of Christian civilization, on the impetus, law, and order of centuries of Christianity.³⁰⁹ Like all parasites, they are destroying the host body, Christendom, and its collapse will be their death also. . . . The moral capital of Christendom is rapidly disappearing; if it disappears entirely, all culture and civilization will go with it, and the decline and fall of the West will be far more devastating than the decline and fall of Rome. The only alternative to this decline and fall is a **renewal of Biblical Christianity, which requires a return to creationism.** This means **renouncing any philosophy, study, or science which seeks to act in complete independence of God.** It means renouncing the idea of brute factuality, that is, the idea that facts exist apart from God and apart from any interpretation. Because God has created every fact in the universe, every fact must be understood in terms of the interpretation placed upon it by God's creative purpose.³¹⁰ (Cf. the 5th pillar of the Biblical worldview, presuppositionalism.)

The next pillar of the Biblical worldview is Reformed theology.

3. Reformed theology

Reformed theology teaches the Biblical view of God, man, the Fall, and salvation.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ "Evolution offers billions of years of chaos and chance but then borrows Christian ideas of law and truth" (Mark R. Rushdoony, "Evolutionary Faith," in *Creation According to the Scriptures: A Presuppositional Defense of Literal, Six-Day Creation*, ed. P. Andrew Sandlin, 16).

³¹⁰ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 57 (bold added).

³¹¹ Four outstanding Reformed systematic theology textbooks are: Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998); John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013); Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) (Reformed Baptist); Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941).

God’s sovereignty (absolute freedom): God is the Lord who reigns over all

God’s perfection of sovereignty or absolute freedom is succinctly depicted in two verses from the Psalms: God “does whatever He pleases” (Ps 115:3); and “Whatever the LORD pleases He does, in heaven and in earth” (Ps 135:6).

“Very simply defined, sovereignty means a monopoly of power and law.”³¹²

Terminology

God’s sovereignty or absolute freedom is expressed in various ways in the Bible.

- The term **Lord**. “In the Bible, the word for *sovereign* is always translated as *lord*: *Adonai* in the Hebrew, and *kyrios* [κύριος] in the Greek. Thus, the most common term for God in the Old Testament is *lord* or sovereign, and the most used designation for Jesus in the New is also *lord*, which is also used to refer to God the Father. The term in Scripture means **owner, the one possessing dominion and rule, authority and power.**”³¹³
- **King**. Because God’s sovereignty denotes the Lord who reigns, it is often expressed in the metaphor of **kingship** (Pss 47:2-3, 7-8; 95:3-5) and the **kingdom of God** (1 Ch 29:11-12; Pss 22:28; 103:19; 145:11-13).

³¹² Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 90f. Elsewhere Rushdoony asserts that “the original meaning of ‘tyrant’ is one who rules without God and His law” (489).

³¹³ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Sovereignty* (Vallecito, CA: Chalcedon/Ross House Books, 2007), 1f (bold added). The term δουλος (slave, bondservant) is used for both Christian leaders and for all believers (the latter in Lk 2:29; Ac 2:18; 4:29; 1 Cor 7:22b; Eph 6:6; 1 Pt 2:16; Rv 1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 19:2, 5; 22:3, 6; cf. 6:11). The corresponding verb δουλεύω is also applied to all believers (Ro 7:6; 12:11; 14:18; Gal 5:13; Col 3:24; 1 Th 1:9; cf. Eph 6:7).

- God’s **will, purpose, or pleasure**. God’s sovereignty is also expressed in references to His (decretive³¹⁴) **will** (Dn 4:35; Mt 10:29; Ro 9:15–20; 1 Cor 12:11; Eph 1:1, 5, 9, 11; Heb 2:4; Ja 4:13–15; Rv 4:11), His eternal **purpose** (Eph 1:9, 11; 3:11), what He **pleases** (Pss 115:3; 135:6; 1 Cor 12:18), or His **pleasure** (Is 46:10; Eph 1:5).³¹⁵ God’s sovereign, purposeful will is the final cause of all things (Eph 1:11).³¹⁶
- **Election and predestination**, which involve God’s free choices and His determined purposes and plans—especially in the sovereign dispensing of His love and grace in man’s salvation (Ac 2:23; 4:28; 13:48; Ro 8:29–30; 9:15–16, 22–23; Eph 1:4–5, 11; 2 Tim 1:9; cf. Ac 17:26).
- God’s sovereignty is manifest in when, and to whom, He **gives or withholds revelation** of the mystery of His will and purposes (Dt 29:4; Mt 11:25–27; 13:9–17 // Mk 4:9–12 // Lk 8:10; Lk 10:21–22; Gal 1:15–16; Eph 1:9, 17; 3:3, 5).

What God’s sovereignty means

God’s sovereignty or freedom means that God is not obligated by anything external to Himself. He is under no rule or law outside of His own nature and will; God is a law unto Himself. God is under no obligation to give an account of His actions to anyone (Dn 4:35; Ro 9:19–20ff; Job 38–41). He alone is the absolute Lord, Master, and

³¹⁴ For examples of theologians distinguishing between God’s decretive/secret will and His revealed/prescriptive/legislative will and Bible references substantiating this distinction see Robert E. Fugate, “Two Wills in God,” unpublished paper.

³¹⁵ The freedom of God is not pure indifference, but rational self-determination. God has reasons for willing as He does, which induce Him to choose one end rather than another, and one set of means to accomplish one end in preference to others. There is in each case a prevailing motive, which makes the end chosen and the means selected the most pleasing to Him, though we may not be able to determine what this motive is” (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 78).

³¹⁶ This includes evil (Gordon H. Clark, “God and Evil,” *Religion, Reason and Revelation*, 194–224; this chapter was reprinted as a separate book, *God and Evil: The Problem Solved*). Cf. WCF, 3.

King. God wills as He chooses and carries out all that He wills (Pss 115:3; 135:6; Pr 21:1; Is 46:10; Jer 27:5; Mt 20:15; Ro 9:15-18, 20-21; 1 Cor 12:11; Rv 4:11). No one can restrain His hand (Dn 4:35; Job 11:10; Is 45:9) or thwart His plans,³¹⁷ for “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (Is 46:10). Indeed, Isaiah proclaims a prophetic “Woe to him who strives with his Maker!” (Is 45:9; cf. v. 7; Ps 2).

God’s sovereignty is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.

The Sovereignty of the God of Scripture is absolute, irresistible, infinite. When we say that God is Sovereign we affirm His right to govern the universe which He has made for His own glory, just as He pleases. We affirm that His right is the right of the Potter over the clay, i.e., that He may mold that clay into whatsoever form He chooses, fashioning out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor. We affirm that He is under no rule or law outside of His own will and nature, that God is a law unto Himself, and that He is under no obligation to give an account of His matters to any.³¹⁸

God’s sovereignty or freedom interpenetrates all His other attributes. For example, God is sovereign in the exercise of His power, manifesting it when He wills, where He wills, and how He wills (Jn 5:3ff; Lk 4:25-27). God is sovereign in revealing and hiding truth (Mt 11:25-27; Lk 10:21-22). God is also sovereign in the exercise of His love and grace, that is, He savingly loves those whom He chooses (elects) to love; He loves according to His own good pleasure or “free will” (Ro 9:13-18; Eph 1:4-5, 11; cf. Jn 1:13). (Deserved grace is a contradiction of terms. God’s grace can only be sovereign grace because God is absolutely sovereign.)

³¹⁷ J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 33.

³¹⁸ Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God* (reprint: Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984), 21; available at <http://www.reformed.org/books/pink>.

As Creator and Lord, God possesses the right of the potter over the clay; thus He may mold that clay into whatever form He chooses, even fashioning out of the same lump of clay one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor (Ro 9:20–23 [cf. vv. 11–19]; Jer 18:1–6; Is 29:16; 45:9).

The triune God is also sovereign over the church, calling men to specific ministries and distributing gifts of the Spirit as He wills (1 Cor 12:11, 18, 28; Heb 2:4; cf. Ro 12:3, 6; Eph 4:8, 11; cf. Paul called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ “by the will of God”: 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1).

God’s sovereign free will is

the final cause of all things. Everything is derived from it: creation and preservation (Ps 135:6; Jer 18:6; [27:5; Ne 9:6; Ac 17:28; Ro 11:36;] Rv 4:11); [civil] government (Pr 21:1; Dn 4:35); election and reprobation (Ro 9:15–16; Eph 1:[4–5,]11); the sufferings of Christ (Lk 22:42; Ac 2:23 [Ac 4:27–28]); regeneration (Ja 1:18 [Jn 1:13]); satisfaction (Phil 2:13); sufferings of believers (1 Pt 3:17 [1 Sm 3:18; Job 2:10; 1:21]); man’s life and destiny (Ac 18:21; Ro 15:32; Ja 4:15); and even the smallest things of life (Mt 10:29).³¹⁹

“The assertion of God’s absolute sovereignty in creation, providence,³²⁰ and grace is basic to biblical belief and biblical praise”³²¹ (Ne 9:6; Rv 4:11; 19:1–7a, 11, 15–16).

Arminians affirm God’s sovereignty, but then covertly retract it by saying that God chose to make every individual person’s “free will” sovereign in the arena of his or her personal salvation. But God cannot give away one of His attributes and still be God. God cannot

³¹⁹ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 76; based on Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:229. God’s free will includes His works of creation, redemption, and providence. “God’s necessary will includes everything that he must will according to his own nature” (Ex 3:14) (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 212f; cf. Berkhof, 78; Bavinck, 2:233f).

³²⁰ Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Topical Analysis of the Bible*, 189–221.

³²¹ J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology*, 33.

be sovereign in some areas and not in others; sovereignty is all-encompassing. “God cannot be ‘robbed’ of sovereignty at one point without soon being denied sovereignty at all points.”³²²

To reject the doctrine of God’s sovereignty is to reject the God of the Bible and fail to glorify Him.

How different is the God of the Bible from the God of modern Christendom! The conception of Deity which prevails most widely today, even among those who profess to give heed to the Scriptures, is a miserable caricature, a blasphemous travesty of the Truth. The God of the twentieth century is a helpless, effeminate being who commands the respect of no really thoughtful man. The God of the popular mind is the creation of maudlin [excessive emotional] sentimentality. The God of many a present-day pulpit is an object of pity rather than of awe-inspiring reverence.³²³

Aspects or facets of God’s sovereignty or lordship

1. God has absolute and total government (1 Ch 29:11-12; Pss 22:28; 47:2-3, 7-8; 95:3-5; 103:19; 145:11-13; Dn 5:23; Ac 17:28; pervasive occurrences of God saying “I will cause” and “I have caused”); “appoints”/“appointed time” (Dn 5:21; 8:19; 10:1; 11:27, 29, 35). God’s absolute government includes:

- the hearts of rulers (Pr 21:1; Cyrus, King of Persia, ordering the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, 2 Ch

³²² Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Sovereignty*, 74. “It is not an accident that the rise of Arminianism coincided with the rise of the modern state” (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Sovereignty*, 464; cf. 74). The heresy of open theism (which preaches a finite god that does not know the future) came out of Arminianism. Cf. Otto Scott, *et. al*, *The Great Christian Revolution: The Myths of Paganism and Arminianism* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991).

³²³ Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, 19f.

36:22-23 = Ezr 1:1-2,³²⁴ and Is 44:28-45:1; King David ordering a census, thereby incurring God's judgment on Israel, 2 Sm 24:1; Pul/Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, invading Israel, 1 Ch 5:26; God hardening Pharaoh's heart;³²⁵ Rehoboam rejecting the advice of the elders of Israel and, consequently, losing ten tribes, 2 Ch 10:15);

- appointing and removing civil rulers (Ro 13:1; Jer 27:5-7; Dn 1:2; 2:21, 37; 4:17, 24-25, 32; 5:18-19, 21, 26-28; 7:4, 6, 14, 25; 8:12; Rv 13:5, 7)—even by their death (1 Ki 22:30, 34³²⁶);
- giving land to nations (taking it from other nations), setting their geographical boundaries (Ac 17:26; Gn 15:18; Dt 2:5, 9, 12, 19, 24);
- causing war (2 Ki 24:2-3; 1 Ch 5:26; 2 Ch 21:16-17; 24:24; 33:11; Is 5:26; 7:18; Rv 6:4, 8);
- not letting enemies attack (Ex 34:24; Ps 105:14-15);

³²⁴ With regard to the repetition of these verses, successive prophets wrote the ending to their predecessors' last book ("colophon principle"; Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, 386f).

³²⁵ Ex 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17; cf. Ro 9:17-18.

³²⁶ Vern S. Poythress, *Chance and the Sovereignty of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 33f.

- sending judicial spiritual blindness over a nation (Is 19:14;³²⁷ 29:9-10³²⁸ and Ro 11:7-8) and bringing various covenant curses;

³²⁷ Isaiah 19:11-15 is a prophecy against “the internationally famous political wisdom of the Egyptian court” (Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, AB [New York, NY: Doubleday, 2000], 315). “In spite of the Egyptians’ vaunted claims of being the source of true wisdom . . . Yahweh has rendered their knowledge helpless” (Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001], 143). Egypt “seems to have no discernible policy to meet the Assyrian threat and seems to be blind to the rising power of Ethiopia” (John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, WBC [Waco, TX: Word, 1985], 255).

The “perverse spirit” (NKJV)/“spirit of confusion” (ESV, NRSV)/“spirit of distortion” (NASB) probably operated through Egypt’s priestly caste, producing “false counsels and hopes” (*Isaiah*, KD, 1:361). “The folly therefore which characterized Egypt did not come about in the ‘natural course of events,’ nor was it accidental, but resulted from a direct supernatural judicial action pronounced [by Yehowah] against the nation. As a result of this spirit Egypt will be led astray in all its work, namely, its economic procedure, daily business, and occupation” (Edward J. Young, *Isaiah*, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969], 2:30). Cf. 1 Ki 22:19-23; 2 Th 2:11.

Note that confusion/stumbling is one of the curses of the law (Lv 26:36-37; Dt 28:29; 32:35); a blessing of the law included God bringing such judicial confusion upon enemies (Ex 23:27; Dt 7:23; cf. Robert E. Fugate, “Confuse and Divide Enemies to Destroy Each Other,” unpublished paper).

³²⁸ “The ultimate cause was God Himself, who in His sovereign good pleasure had decreed that the nation should persist in blindness and spiritual drunkenness” (E.J. Young, *Isaiah*, 2:316)—as prophesied in Is 6:9-11. “When men are blind, and especially in things so plain and obvious, we perceive his [God’s] righteous judgment” (John Calvin, *Isaiah* [reprint: Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984], 2:320, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom14.xviii.i.html>).

- imparting knowledge to man (e.g., for his trade, Is 28:24–29; cf. Dt 8:18);³²⁹
 - causing plants to grow (Job 38:27; Ps 104:14) and feeding animals and birds (Pss 104:27; 147:9; Mt 6:26; Lk 12:24);
 - the birth and death of individual animals and birds (Ps 29:9; Mt 10:29–30);
 - sending animals for provision (Ex 16:12–13; Nu 11:31–32; Ps 105:41; 1 Ki 17:4, 6) or for judgment (Nu 21:6; 2 Ki 17:25);
 - the results of (Biblical) casting lots (Pr 16:33);³³⁰ and
 - “upholding all things by the word of His power” (Heb 1:3; cf. Col 1:17).
2. God ordained and predestined all things (Ac 15:18; Ro 8:30; 9:8–24; Pr 16:4). (“The state which claims to be sovereign must therefore aim at total control and planning, i.e., the ordination and the predestination of all things by man.”³³¹)
 3. God knows all things (Heb 4:13). (The “sovereign” state aims at omniscience through total surveillance.)
 4. God owns the earth and all it contains (Ex 9:29; 19:5; Lv 25:23; Dt 10:14; 1 Ch 29:11; Job 41:11; Pss 24:1; 50:12; Dn 4:25; 1 Cor 10:26, 28)—including: land (Lv 25:23); silver and gold (Hg 2:8); animals, fish, and birds (Ps 50:10); and all people (Ps 24:1; Ezk 18:4).

³²⁹ This includes general revelation (Ps 19:1–4; Ac 14:15–17; 17:22–31; Ro 1:18–32; 2:14–16), which is God’s revelation of Himself to all persons at all times in all places through creation, through His providential governing of history, and through man’s mind and conscience (see above).

³³⁰ Robert E. Fugate, *God’s Revelation*, 27. Vern S. Poythress, *Chance and the Sovereignty of God*, 65–67.

³³¹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 489.

5. God reserves to Himself the right to set the boundaries of man's rule.
- God established separate jurisdictions of family, church, and state—each being subordinate to His written Word.³³²
 - God gave Biblical qualifications for church leaders (1 Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9) and for civil magistrates.³³³
 - God restricts the authority of kings or supreme rulers (Dt 17:14-20; Mt 14:4³³⁴).³³⁵

³³² Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations* (Omaha, NE: Thy Word Is Truth, 2007), 19-26, 110.

³³³ Robert E. Fugate, "Biblical Qualifications for Civil Magistrates," LordoftheNations.com.

³³⁴ John the Baptizer rebuked Herod Antipas, the tetrarch or King of Galilee and Perea, for his adultery and incest with his brother Philip's wife, Herodius. John kept telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have her" (Mt 14:4 // Mk 6:18; cf. Lk 3:19). "Additional examples include Nathan rebuking King David (2 Sm 12:1-14), an unnamed prophet rebuking King Jeroboam (1 Ki 12:31-13:10), Elijah rebuking King Ahab (1 Ki 18:18; 21:17-26), the priest Azariah rebuking King Uzziah (2 Ch 26:16-23), and Daniel rebuking the pagan Babylonian King Belshazzar (Dn 5:17-28) for violating God's law" (Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government*, 20).

³³⁵ "The meaning of the kingship of God, according to the Bible, is the denial to mankind of the concentration and permanence of power" (Matitahu Tsevat, "The Biblical Account of the Foundation of the Monarchy in Israel," 91; cited by Bill T. Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003], 150).

- God limits civil taxation to the head tax (½ ounce silver annually for each adult male, Ex 30:11-16³³⁶) (contra confiscatory taxation in 1 Sm 8:7-18).³³⁷
- God punishes civil magistrates who usurp the role of the church (e.g., Saul, 1 Sm 13:8-14; Jeroboam, 1 Ki 12:31-13:5; Uzziah, 2 Ch 26:16-23).³³⁸

6. God reserves to Himself the authority to:

- determine law (Ja 4:12 “one Lawgiver”; Is 33:22 Judge, Lawgiver, King; 1 Ch 28:7);³³⁹
- define justice/righteousness (Heb 2:2; 1 Ch 22:13);³⁴⁰ and

³³⁶ Robert E. Fugate, *Toward a Theology of Taxation* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2009), 54f.

³³⁷ Ibid. For a discussion of 1 Samuel 8 see 15-23.

³³⁸ God rejects Erastianism/Prelacy, in which the state controls the church and the church is a department of the state. This was the case in: Eastern Orthodoxy of the Byzantine Empire (emperor was head both of state and church, i.e., a caesaropapist); England; and Germany (Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government*, 109).

³³⁹ Robert E. Fugate, “Unjust Civil Magistrates and Unjust Laws,” unpublished paper.

³⁴⁰ In the New King James version, there are at least 45 occurrences of the phrase “evil in the sight of the Lord” in the books of Judges, 1 & 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles (along with 4 occurrences elsewhere). There are 18 occurrences of the phrase “right in the sight of the Lord” in the books of Deuteronomy, 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles. Slight variations of wording add up to 82 occurrences of “in the sight of the Lord” in the entire Bible. These phrases describe God’s value judgments on the behavior of specific individuals (especially the kings of Israel and Judah)—value judgments based on God’s objective standard of righteousness-justice, not man’s standard.

- regulate courts (Is 33:22; Gn 18:25; Dt 1:16-18; 33:21; 2 Ch 19:6-7).³⁴¹

Scripture is God's sovereign law-Word that rules over us

Because God is sovereign—possessing all authority and power, and being the absolute Source of law and ethics—God's Word³⁴² possesses His absolute authority and power, and it functions as our supreme source of law and ethics. God's Word is His law-Word. It reveals His prescriptive or legislative will.

We possess God's living, unalterable words in the Bible. In my book on bibliology I demonstrate that Scripture is the product of God's creative breath (2 Tim 3:16), and that it contains God's very words. The Scriptures are “the sum total of the revelations of God which were infallibly recorded in a God-breathed, written form, designed to be the permanent deposit of divine truth and the permanent rule of faith and life to the universal Church.”³⁴³ “The Bible is: (1) the Word of God written; (2) the criterion of truth; (3) the rule of faith and life; and (4) a means or channel of God's grace.”³⁴⁴ Consequently, “Scripture, in some measure, shares some of God's own

³⁴¹ These six points are derived from Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 489f (most of the sub-points and Scripture references are added). Cf. Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), 1:210f; Robert E. Fugate, “Biblical Qualifications for Civil Magistrates,” LordoftheNations.com.

³⁴² The term “word of God” includes three forms of the revelations of God: (1) the *Logos*, the eternal Son of God, is the personal Word of God (Jn 1:1, 14; 1 Jn 1:1-2; Rv 19:13); (2) the revelatory messages that came from God, i.e., the Law on Mount Sinai, the “word of the Lord” spoken through the Old Testament prophets, and the oral preaching and teaching by Christ and the Apostles before the New Testament was completed; (3) the Scriptures, the God-breathed written Word of God (Jn 10:35; Ro 9:6; etc.; cf. Ps 119).

³⁴³ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, 308, 341; idem., *God's Revelation*, 86f.

³⁴⁴ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, 711.

characteristics.”³⁴⁵ Thus, it is quite proper to say that the sovereign God sovereignly rules over us through His written Word, which is the sovereign rule, the ultimate authority, over our faith and life.

However, Scripture is more than God’s sovereign authority that rules in the lives of individual believers and in Christ’s church. John Calvin described the Bible as “God’s scepter” by which He rules His universe.³⁴⁶ J. Gresham Machen added, “It is the charter upon which all human liberty depends.”³⁴⁷ Johannes Vos observed that in whatever nations the Bible has been freely circulated and believed, those “nations have gained liberty, enlightenment, justice, and prosperity.”³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 711f.

³⁴⁶ John Calvin, “Prefatory Address to King Francis I of France,” *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1:12. The three citations in the above paragraph (and their corresponding footnotes) are taken from Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 712f.

³⁴⁷ John Gresham Machen, *God Transcendent*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse (1949; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1982), 120. R.J. Rushdoony demonstrates that

where there is no transcendental law and power in a separate and omnipotent being, then power has a wholly immanent and immediate source in a state, group, or person, and it is beyond appeal. The state becomes the saving power and the source of law; it becomes the priestly agency of its own total power and the manifest power of its divinity. Such a state becomes god walking on the earth [Hegel], and its every tyranny is identified as liberty, because being and meaning are both identifiable in terms of the state. Since it is held that there is no law beyond the state, meaning is what the state defines, and liberty is what the state provides. In this faith, for man to be free means to be in the state. More than that, for man *to be*, he must be a member of the state, for being is one and continuous, and salvation is a metaphysical unification of all being (*The One and the Many*, 60f).

³⁴⁸ Johannes G. Vos, “Bible,” *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, eds. Jay Green, *et. al*, vol. 1 (Wilmington, DE: The National Foundation for Christian Education, 1964) 1:662. “Everywhere it [the Bible] has been the precursor of civilization and liberty, driving out barbarity and

In light of these facts, what will happen to any nation that rejects the applicability of the Bible to society (i.e., to civil law, judicial system, monetary system, medical practice, public education, counseling, etc.)?

Christians who oppose the application of the Bible to the state and to culture

Sadly, large segments of Bible-believing Christians oppose and prohibit the application of the Bible to the state and to culture, for example:

- Lutherans—two-kingdom theology;
- Pietists—spiritual vs. secular/worldly;³⁴⁹
- Dispensationalists—the church is the spiritual people of God with a spiritual destiny; God’s earthly kingdom (which comes

despotism. . . . It has dispelled ignorance and superstition” (Lorraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1962], 96; cf. 97-103, 379f, 430-446). Cf. Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World*; Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1976), 249-251, 105-112; in *Complete Works*, 5:248f, 135-140; Douglas F. Kelly, *The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World* (Phillipsburg, PA: P&R, 1992).

³⁴⁹ See Robert E. Fugate, “A Summary of Crucial Errors of Pietism,” available at LordoftheNations.com.

In declaring, “My kingdom is not of this world . . . My kingdom is not from here” (Jn 18:36), Jesus is asserting that His kingdom/dominion/rule does not have an earthly **origin** or an earthly **source of authority**; rather, it comes from His Father in Heaven. Jesus’ statement should not be misconstrued to mean that His kingdom is not active in this world, or has nothing to do with this world, or is not ruling over this world (Mt 28:18). Additionally, neither Jesus (Jn 8:23; 17:14; cf. 3:31), nor His disciples are “of this world” (Jn 15:19; 17:14, 16)—but they certainly were active in the world, were overcoming the world (Jn 16:33; 1 Jn 5:4-5), and were transforming the world (Ac 17:6).

with the second coming of Christ) is for God’s earthly people, the Jews (e.g., Protestant-Thomist Norman Geisler);

(Note: All three of these views are based upon an unbiblical, Platonic, spirit vs. matter dualism); and

- Many contemporary Reformed scholars, such as:

Meredith Kline—intrusionist ethics (virtually a Reformed type of dispensationalism);³⁵⁰

Herman Dooyeweerd—principled pluralism / sphere sovereignty / cosmonomic philosophy;³⁵¹ and

³⁵⁰ Key problems in Kline’s system include: (1) the sharp distinction between “life-norms” and “faith-norms” (resulting in the Old Testament not being part of the “canon” or “life-norms” of the Christian community, since it is the covenant document for the Mosaic Covenant, not the new covenant); (2) the assertion that the Noahic Covenant teaches a religiously-neutral state (as a non-holy sphere or order of common grace); and (3) the New Testament is the sole canon of the Christian Church (John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 221, 219, 535f; cf. 339f, 825, 828, 949, 951–956). Frame writes, “I don’t see any biblical basis for the distinction between life and faith, or individual and community, that Kline sets forth. Faith is part of life, and both individual and community life are under God’s’ covenant” (219). Cf. Robert E. Fugate, *Some Continuities and Discontinuities between the Older Testament and the Newer Testament* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2001), especially 4f, 9–13, 31–33). (Kline was militantly anti-theonomic and anti-postmillennial.)

For further critique see: John M. Frame, *The Escondido Theology: A Reformed Response to Two Kingdom Theology* (Lakeland, FL: Whitefield Media Productions, 2011), 151–198; Greg L. Bahnsen, “A Critique of M.G. Kline,” in *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1984), 571–584; = 3rd ed. (Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2002), 551–563.

³⁵¹ Dooyeweerd’s principled pluralism/sphere sovereignty postulates 15 irreducible law-spheres. The Bible is irrelevant to 14 of the 15 spheres! Consequently, the Bible cannot provide any principles for ethics, civil government, economics, science, art, etc. The Bible only

Reformed scholars reverting to the Lutheran two-kingdom theory (e.g., Michael Horton, R. Scott Clark, David Van Druenen).³⁵²

In denying the applicability of the Bible to society, these Christians assert that culture is to be governed by “natural law” and “common grace.”³⁵³ **But if God rules through His law-Word, then to denounce the applicability of God’s Word to culture is, in practice, to deny God’s sovereignty!** Thus, many Presbyterian scholars, who vociferously assert the sovereignty of God, in their practice deny the sovereignty of God. To deny absolute, universal sovereignty to God by denying the applicability of His law-Word to certain spheres of life implicitly **promotes polytheism** (cf. 1 Ki 20:23–24, 28 gods of the hills/plains/valleys).³⁵⁴

deals with matters of faith. Natural revelation, common grace, and natural law must govern all other aspects of life and culture.

For critiques by Gordon Clark, Frame, Nash, Rushdoony, etc. see Robert E. Fugate, “Herman Dooyeweerd,” unpublished paper.

³⁵² John M. Frame, *The Escondido Theology* critiques Reformed scholars Meredith Kline, Michael Horton, R. Scott Clark, David Van Druenen, Darryl Hart, and Jason Stellman.

³⁵³ According to Scripture, God only gives grace to His elect. Thus, despite its lofty Reformed heritage, the term “common grace” is unbiblical. Furthermore, it undermines the Biblical doctrines of total depravity and antithesis (between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, and between the church and the world). See: Herman Hoeksema, *A Triple Breach in the Foundation of the Reformed Truth: A Critical Treatise on the “Three Points” Adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches in 1924* (reprint: Grandville, MI: Evangelism Committee of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, 2001); David J. Englesma, *Common Grace Revisited* (Grandville, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2003).

³⁵⁴ The plagues in Egypt were against her gods (Ex 12:12; Nu 33:4) that ruled various spheres (John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*, rev., [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994], 85).

Sovereignty inescapable

Sovereignty is an inescapable concept. When people reject the sovereignty of the triune God (Ro 1:18-19, 32; Ps 2:1-3; Lk 19:14), they transfer sovereignty somewhere else, such as to:

- the individual (e.g.: the philosophical ethics of egoism; political libertarianism);
- the state—whether as a collective entity (e.g., democracy), an oligarchical elite group (e.g., Senate, Parliament, Supreme Court, scientific technocrats, UN), or an individual, all-powerful dictator;
- the church (e.g., the Roman Catholic Church with its infallible pope); or
- some abstract, impersonal concept (e.g.: ancient Greek Fate; Hegel’s Absolute Mind; New Age divinized nature or karma; or Hindu Brahman).

God’s sovereignty—even as expressed in election and foreordination/predestination—does not negate human responsibility and accountability³⁵⁵

PEOPLE / EVENTS	DIVINE FOREORDINATION	HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY
Pharaoh	God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Ex 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17; cf. Ro 9:17-18).	Pharaoh hardened his heart (Ex 8:15, 32; 9:34).

³⁵⁵ No one has ever demonstrated that the concept of responsibility is in any way dependent on a prior state of free will (Gordon H. Clark, “God and Evil,” *Religion, Reason and Revelation*, 194-224; chapter five was reprinted as a separate book, *God and Evil: The Problem Solved*).

PEOPLE / EVENTS	DIVINE FOREORDINATION	HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY
Judas ³⁵⁶	<p>“Jesus knew from the beginning . . . who would betray Him” (Jn 6:64)</p> <p>“the Son of Man goes as it has been determined” (Lk 22:22).</p> <p>// “just as it is written” (Mt 26:24 // Mk 14:21).</p> <p>“none of them is lost except the son of perdition, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (Jn 17:12; cf. 13:18).</p>	<p>“but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born” (Mk 14:21 // Mt 26:24 // Lk 22:22).</p>
Jewish and Roman leaders	<p>“against Your holy Servant Jesus . . . Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done” (Ac 4:27-28).</p>	<p>“Rulers of the people and elders of Israel . . . whom you crucified . . . rejected by you” (Ac 4:8, 10-11).</p> <p>“whom you murdered by hanging on a tree” (Ac 5:30).</p> <p>“the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers</p>

³⁵⁶ The devil also influenced Judas (Lk 22:3; Jn 13:2, 27). Cf. Jn 6:70-71.

PEOPLE / EVENTS	DIVINE FOREORDINATION	HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY
	<p>“You [Pilate] could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above” (Jn 19:11).</p> <p>“the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, [they] have fulfilled them in condemning Him. . . . They had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him” (Ac 13:27, 29).</p>	<p>and murderers” (Ac 7:52).</p>
Men/people of Israel	<p>“delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God” (Ac 2:23).</p> <p>“against Your holy Servant Jesus . . . Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done” (Ac 4:27-28).</p>	<p>“you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death. . . . Repent” (Ac 2:23, 38).</p> <p>“you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses” (Ac 3:14-15).</p> <p>“the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own</p>

PEOPLE / EVENTS	DIVINE FOREORDINATION	HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY
		prophets . . . and they do not please God and are contrary to all men . . . as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost” (1 Th 2:14b-16).
Salvation (including calling, repentance, faith, sanctification)	<p>“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. . . . No one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father” (Jn 6:44, 65).</p> <p>“I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from <i>the</i> wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight” (Mt 11:25-27; cf. Lk 10:21-22; Mt 16:17).</p> <p>“It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,</p>	<p>“The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. . . . If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” (Jn 6:37; 7:37).</p> <p>“Come to Me, all <i>you</i> who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).</p>

PEOPLE / EVENTS	DIVINE FOREORDINATION	HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY
	<p>but to them it has not been given” (Mt 13:11).</p> <p>“if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will” (2 Tim 2:25-26).</p> <p>“As many as had been appointed to eternal life believed” (Ac 13:48; cf. 16:14).</p> <p>“ . . . for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil 2:13b; cf. Col 1:29b).</p> <p>God’s preservation of the saints.³⁵⁷</p>	<p>“Their eyes they have closed” (Mt 13:15).</p> <p>“God . . . commands all men everywhere to repent” (Ac 17:30).</p> <p>“Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mk 1:15).</p> <p>“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Ac 16:31).</p> <p>“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling . . .” (Phil 2:13a; cf. Col 1:29a).</p>

³⁵⁷ D.N. Steele, C.C. Thomas, S.L. Quinn, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004), 64-71.

PEOPLE / EVENTS	DIVINE FOREORDINATION	HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY
		The perseverance of the believer in faith and obedience to the end. ³⁵⁸
gifts of the Spirit and ministries (including miracles, healings, deliverances)	<p>“God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. . . . God has appointed these in the church . . .” (1 Cor 12:18, 28).</p> <p>The resurrected Lord Jesus “gave gifts . . . He Himself gave some <i>to be</i> . . .” (Eph 4:8, 11)</p> <p>The Holy “Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor 12:11).</p> <p>“God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will” (Heb 2:4).</p>	<p>“If a man aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task” (1 Tim 3:1 conflating NJKV and ESV).</p> <p>“Desire earnestly the best gifts. . . . Desire spiritual <i>gifts</i>, but especially that you may prophesy. . . . Desire earnestly to prophesy” (1 Cor 12:31; 14:1, 39).</p>

³⁵⁸ D.N. Steele, C.C. Thomas, S.L. Quinn, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, 147-155.

PEOPLE / EVENTS	DIVINE FOREORDINATION	HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY
	<p>“God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. . . . Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, <i>let us use them</i>” (Ro 12:3, 6).</p> <p>“ . . . as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Ac 2:4).</p> <p>. . . Jesus commanded Peter, “Come . . .” (Mt 14:29).</p> <p>Jesus gave the twelve disciples “power [δύναμις] and authority [ἐξουσία] over all demons” (Lk 9:1) “to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease” (Mt 10:1).</p> <p>“ . . . the Lord working with <i>them</i> and</p>	<p>“they . . . began to speak with other tongues . . .” (Ac 2:4).</p> <p>“command me to come to You on the water. . . . when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water” (Mt 14:28-29).</p> <p>“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons” (Mt 10:8 Majority Text).</p> <p>“They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat” (Mt 14:16 // Mk</p>

PEOPLE / EVENTS	DIVINE FOREORDINATION	HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY
	<p>confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mk 16:20).</p> <p>“God has dealt to each one a measure of faith” (Ro 12:3).</p>	<p>6:37 // Lk 9:13; cf. “to test” Philip, Jn 6:6).</p> <p>“they went out and preached everywhere . . .” (Mk 16:20).</p> <p>“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes” (Mk 9:23; cf. 11:22-24; 16:17-18; Jn 14:12).</p>
all things	God “works all things according to the counsel of His will” (Eph 1:11).	God will judge every man and angel regarding all their: deeds (Ro 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; Rv 20:12-13; 22:12; Ec 12:14); thoughts and motives (Ro 2:16; 1 Cor 4:5); spoken words (Mt 12:36-37).

R.J. Rushdoony quotes

“Sovereignty is an attribute of God alone, not of man nor the state. God alone is Lord or Sovereign over all things; over state, school, family, vocations, society and all things else.”³⁵⁹

³⁵⁹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 1114. Significantly, no form of the word “sovereign” occurs in the United

“To talk about sovereignty is to talk about our god; this god can be the state, ourselves, or the God of Scripture. Whatever our god is, there too is sovereignty, authority, morality, and ultimacy.”³⁶⁰

A sovereign state decrees (in its own way), “‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me,’ and it seeks to destroy all who stand in the way of its claim to total sovereignty.”³⁶¹

“A sovereign [ruler] is not under law because he is the source of law; this is the premise of the modern state.”³⁶²

“In the modern world, sovereignty or lordship has ceased to be the attribute of God and has become the attribute of either man or the state, or shared by both. Even those theologians who talk much about God’s sovereignty tend to limit it to salvation, the church, and theology, which means in effect to deny God’s sovereignty. . . . The Sovereign or Lord is the source of government, law, and taxation.”³⁶³

“The state which claims to be sovereign must therefore aim at total control and planning, i.e., the ordination and the predestination of all things by man.”³⁶⁴

“For a theologian to discuss the doctrine of God without dealing with the usurpations of humanistic civil governments and schools is to deny God. It is impossible to discuss the doctrine of God in an ecclesiastical vacuum. God is not a mere Idea, after the Greeks.”³⁶⁵

“Religions which deny the sovereignty of their ‘god’ become polytheistic. It is logically impossible to ascribe sovereignty to any being other than God and still retain a god in one’s system. The

States Constitution (Dennis L. Bizzoco, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance to the United States Constitution . . .* [Chattanooga, TN: The Foundation Press, 1994], 58, 108).

³⁶⁰ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 493.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 495.

³⁶² Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Sovereignty*, 467.

³⁶³ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 89, 98.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 489.

³⁶⁵ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, 1:210.

transfer of sovereignty to the state means that law-making and lordship are transferred to the state. The power to make laws is the power to declare things to be good and evil. . . . To acknowledge the sovereignty of and predestination by the triune God is to deny the sovereignty of the state and predestination (i.e., total planning and control) by the state. Sovereignty and predestination are exclusive attributes. If God is the Lord, if there is no god but God, then neither man nor the state can be the sovereign or lord. If essential and ultimate determination, planning, and control belong to God alone, then no man nor state can assume such a prerogative unto itself. Men and nations then must acknowledge God's sovereignty, and men and nations must seek to know their place and calling in God's plan."³⁶⁶

"To limit the jurisdiction of the God of Scripture to the soul of man and to the church is to deny Him. . . . [Such] theology allows the state to be sovereign or lord, it offers no resistance to statist controls. . . . [It] is implicit polytheism. . . . To claim neutrality for any realm is to deny God created it, and to posit neutrality is to cease to be a Christian. . . . [It] proclaims the death of God, because a limited God ceases to be God."³⁶⁷

Regarding the law of Rome: "Two rival doctrines of sovereignty and law were at war with one another, the sovereignty of God and His law versus the sovereignty of man, the state, and man-made law. From the days of Rome to the present, history has been witness to this continuing battle. In any system of thought, the sovereign is the law-maker and thus the de facto god. Sovereignty, or lordship, and law-making are inseparable. The power to make laws is a manifestation of ultimacy and sovereignty in a society and over a society. It is a religious fact, and it manifests the god of that system. . . . Any study of the history of the West which is separated from theology is an exercise in evasion and futility. To chronicle events is not to

³⁶⁶ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 180f.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 183f.

understand history. . . . The law of God speaks from beyond history to judge and govern all within history.”³⁶⁸

“Totalitarianism begins with the belief that human sovereignty or state sovereignty exists. . . . If the state is sovereign or lord, man has no rights nor freedom as against the state.”³⁶⁹ “Because today the sovereignty of God is denied, the sovereignty of man and the state is affirmed.”³⁷⁰

“The alternative to the sovereignty, government, and providence of the triune God is in practice the sovereignty, government, and providence of church, state, or some agency of man. It means freedom from God for the slavery of sin and rebellion. The man who is in revolt against God’s reign will soon be the slave, not only of sin, but of apostate institutions, churches, states, families, men, women, and children. For such a slave, freedom is intolerable. . . . To affirm the sovereignty of God means to deny the sovereignty, government, and providence of man, the state, the church, and all other man-made agencies. Their only role is to obey God as defined by God’s word. All else is usurpation and sin.”³⁷¹

Summary

The doctrine of God’s Sovereignty then is no mere metaphysical dogma which is devoid of practical value, but is one that is calculated to produce a powerful effect upon Christian character and the daily walk. The doctrine of God’s Sovereignty lies at the foundation of Christian theology, and in importance is perhaps second only to the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures. It is the center of gravity in the system of Christian truth: the sun around which all the lesser orbs are grouped. It is the golden milestone to which every highway of knowledge leads and from which they all radiate. It is the cord upon which all other doctrines are strung like so many pearls, holding them in place and giving them unity.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 187f.

³⁶⁹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Sovereignty*, 4, 5.

³⁷⁰ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 701.

³⁷¹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, 1:211, 213.

It is the plumbline by which every creed needs to be measured, the balance in which every human dogma must be weighed. It is designed as the sheet-anchor for our souls amid the storms of life. The doctrine of God's Sovereignty is a Divine cordial to refresh our spirits. It is designed and adapted to mold the affections of the heart and to give a right direction to conduct. It produces gratitude in prosperity and patience in adversity. It affords comfort for the present and a sense of security respecting the unknown future. It is, and it does all, and much more than we have just said because it ascribes to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the glory which is His due, and places the creature in his proper place before Him—in the dust.³⁷²

What does it mean then to believe in sovereignty, government, and providence as a Christian? It means that my life and being are under the sovereignty and government of the all-wise and most holy Trinity, whose ordering, preserving, and government of all things is for His own purpose and glory, and that my only joy and purpose is to acknowledge that sovereign, governing providence, and to rest in its sufficiency. It means that, in every area of life, I must acknowledge and establish rule, law, and authority only in terms of His law-word and in faithfulness to His Kingship.³⁷³

“Satan’s greatest deception is to persuade us that we do not need to acknowledge the sovereignty of God. As with Adam and Eve, he continues to deceive human beings regarding God’s authority,” to bolster his own usurpatory authority.³⁷⁴

Applications³⁷⁵

1. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty dethrones man (the creature) and exalts the triune God (the Creator) as absolute Lord, thereby:

³⁷² Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, 214f; available at <http://www.reformed.org/books/pink>.

³⁷³ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, 1:211.

³⁷⁴ T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem* (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity, 2008), 118.

³⁷⁵ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, 1:211-212.

destroying the idolatry of man as god (Gn 3:5); destroying humanism (i.e., the false religion of man being the center of all things); and humbling man's pride.

- It takes away the pride of man being sovereign in his salvation (Eph 2:8-10).³⁷⁶
2. The doctrine of God's sovereignty denounces all false gods and false religions: polytheism, animism, monism, dualism, Satanism, divinized statism, messianic education, etc.
 3. The doctrine of God's sovereignty lays the foundation of man's mission, which is expressed in the Dominion Covenant (Gn 1:26-28; Ps 8:4-8) and in the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20), thereby sanctifying all areas of life. "In every area of life and thought, I must assert the crown rights of Christ the King and bring all things into captivity to Him. . . . The theologian who believes in God's sovereignty, government, and providence must challenge the things which are the humanistic usurpers of God's honor."³⁷⁷

³⁷⁶ "Lord, I thank thee I am not like those poor presumptuous Calvinists. Lord, I was born with a glorious free-will; I was born with power by which I can turn to thee of myself; I have improved my grace. If everybody had done the same with their grace that I have, they might all have been saved. Lord, I know thou dost not make us willing if we are not willing ourselves. Thou givest grace to everybody; some do not improve it, but I do. There are many that will go to hell as much bought with the blood of Christ as I was; they had as much of the Holy Ghost given to them; they had as good a chance, and were as much blessed as I am. It was not thy grace that made us to differ; I know it did a great deal, still I turned the point; I made use of what was given me, and others did not—that is the difference between me and them" (excerpt from Spurgeon's *Sermons*, v. 1, # 52, "Free Will—A Slave"; available at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/free-will-a-slave>).

³⁷⁷ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, 1:211f.

4. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty encourages submission to God’s will (Is 45:9; 64:8; 1 Sm 3:18; 2 Sm 15:26; Job 9:12; 33:13; 40:2).
5. In the midst of all our planning, we must acknowledge that the sovereign God may allow our plans to succeed, or He may alter or overrule our plans (Ja 4:13–16).
6. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty provides peace, security, and comfort to the believer (Ro 8:28ff; 12:2).
7. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty guarantees the final triumph of good over evil, of truth over falsehood, of the kingdom of God over the kingdom of Satan.
8. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty evokes adoration and worship of the triune God (Ne 9:6; Rv 4:11; 19:1–7a, 11, 15–16).

Cf. Eternal decree WCF 3 (WLC 12–14 // WSC 7–8); temporal providence WCF 5 (WLC 18–19 // WSC 11).

Fall

What is sin?

The Bible tells us, “sin is lawlessness” (1 Jn 3:4). Thus, we define sin: “**Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.**”³⁷⁸ “Sin is essentially rebellion against the claims of absolute lordship and rule which the Creator makes on his creation.”³⁷⁹

The extent of man’s depravity

Every part of man’s being is affected by sin—our intellect, our emotions, our will (including our desires, goals, and motives), our

³⁷⁸ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 490. Cf. “Sin is any lack of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God” (1 Jn 3:4) (WSC 14). Every person sins in “thought, word, and deed” (WSC 82).

³⁷⁹ G. Goldsworthy, “Kingdom of God,” *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (NDBT), eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, Goldsworthy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 618.

conscience,³⁸⁰ and our physical body. Theologians designate this natural condition of all mankind as “total depravity” (i.e., pervasive depravity) (the “T” in the acronym TULIP).³⁸¹

7 consequences of the historical Fall³⁸²

1. Man’s moral innocence and original righteousness were lost; real guilt and moral corruption replaced them (Gn 3:7–11ff).
2. The image of God was fractured and distorted. After the Fall (Gn 3), the image of God became badly distorted (like a badly shattered mirror), but not obliterated. Thus, even non-Christians still reflect something of God’s nature (Gn 5:1ff; 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Ja 3:9; Pr 14:31; Ps 8).³⁸³ God’s fractured image is being progressively restored in Christians as they grow in moral excellence (Ro 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:10, 18; Eph 4:22–24; Phil 3:21; Col 3:10; 1 Jn 3:2). (Cf. p. 3.)
3. Fellowship between God and man was broken, resulting in alienation between them (Gn 3:8–12ff, 23–24).
4. Fellowship between people was broken, resulting in alienation between them (Gn 3:12; 4:8).
5. Man’s environment was cursed. Because of man’s sin, God cursed the entire created order, and it is presently abnormal (Gn 3:14, 17–19; Ro 8:20–22; Job 25:5). What exists in nature (e.g.: thorns, thistles, cruelty, death, and decay; man’s corrupt nature and behavior; etc.) is not what is “normal” or “right.”

³⁸⁰ Robert E. Fugate, “Conscience,” unpublished paper.

³⁸¹ Robert E. Fugate, “What Is Man? Man’s Origin, Purpose, Nature, Problem,” 9–17.

³⁸² Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 446–449.

³⁸³ John Murray, *Collected Writings*, 2:35–41. John M. Frame, “Men and Women in the Image of God,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, eds. J. Piper and W. Grudem, 226.

6. The man and the woman were judicially condemned by God (Gn 2:17; 3:16–19, 23). Pain in childbearing, the hardship of making a living, death,³⁸⁴ etc. are God’s curses on disobedient humanity.
7. Adam and Eve’s posterity inherit real guilt and a sinful nature³⁸⁵ (see below).

5 Lessons from the historical Fall of man (Gn 3)

1. Sin brings judgment from God.
2. Sin has negative relational consequences—it breaks one’s fellowship with God, and with other people.
3. Sin requires a substitutionary, blood atonement that only God can provide (cf. Gn 3:15,³⁸⁶ 21).
4. Since nature is cursed and is not normative, every attempt at deriving ethics (including civil law) from either nature or from man himself is doomed to failure.³⁸⁷
5. Submissively agree with the only living and true Creator-God that: (a) His Word alone is truth and the basis for knowledge (epistemology); (b) we are God’s finite, dependent creatures, not autonomous gods determining truth and morality for ourselves (metaphysics); (c) His Word alone is the basis for and the definer of moral standards (ethics).

³⁸⁴ People and animals did not die prior to Adam and Eve’s sin (Ro 5:12ff). This precludes the science fiction of macro evolution.

³⁸⁵ The theological term commonly used is “original sin.”

³⁸⁶ By the promise that the seed of the woman would destroy Satan (Gn 3:15) God inaugurated the covenant of grace (Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 449). The “covenant of grace” is perhaps better termed the “covenant of redemption” (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1981], 55–57).

³⁸⁷ Robert E. Fugate, *A Brief History and Critique of Natural Law Theory*, 19–21. Furthermore, to attempt to derive “ought” from what “is” commits the naturalistic fallacy, i.e., a logical fallacy.

Natural state of fallen man (6 aspects)

As we have stated above, all men are created in God's image. However, "We are not all special creations as was Adam, and also Eve. Our image is transmitted through and derived from Adam, and we bear the image as affected by Adam and his Fall. Thus, the sons of Adam were (and are) born 'after his image' (Gn 5:3)."³⁸⁸

I. Inherited guilt: God counts everyone guilty because of Adam's sin (Ro 5)

God regards the human race as an organic whole, a unity, represented by Adam as its covenantal head.³⁸⁹ It was as the covenantal, representative head of the human race that Adam sinned. Therefore, God counts not only Adam guilty, but all his descendants (i.e., the entire human race) are counted legally guilty as well. God tells us in Romans 5,

Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (v. 12). . . . Through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation (v. 18). . . . By one man's disobedience many were made sinners (v. 19).³⁹⁰ Cf. 1 Cor 15:22.

"The Scripture has confined all under sin" (Gal 3:22).

(Of course, everyone has personally sinned against God, and God will judge them on the basis of their own sinful thoughts, words, and acts. See: Ro 2:6, 16; 2 Cor 5:10; Rv 20:12f; Ec 12:14; Mt 12:36f; etc.)

³⁸⁸ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, 2:929.

³⁸⁹ Romans 5 also teaches that God thinks of the new "race" of Christians, i.e., those who are redeemed by Christ, as an organic whole, a unity represented by Christ as Head of His people (vv. 12-21). Christ's righteousness is credited (imputed) to them. John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1959). Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 436-439.

³⁹⁰ The word "one" occurs twelve times in Ro 5:12-19.

2. Inherited corruption: Everyone has a sinful nature because of Adam's sin

In saying that people have a sinful nature we mean that everyone has an inherited or **inborn disposition to sin**. Doing evil comes naturally—even young children sin without being taught to do so (Pss 51:5; 58:3).

“The imagination of man’s heart *is* evil from his youth/childhood” (Gn 8:21).

“Surely I have been a **sinner from birth**, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Ps 51:5 NIV).

“The wicked are estranged from the womb; **they go astray as soon as they are born**, speaking lies” (Ps 58:3).

“Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness *is* in their hearts while they live” (Ec 9:3).

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jer 17:9).

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness” (Mk 7:21f; the parallel Mt 15:19 adds false witness).

“You should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to sensuality, so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more” (Eph 4:17-19).

“We all once conducted ourselves [before God saved us] in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature** children of wrath, just as the others” (Eph 2:3).

“To the pure [Christians] all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving [non-Christians] nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled” (Tit 1:15).

Romans chapter 7 describes the power of man's sinful nature, with vv. 7-13 describing the non-Christian's inability to keep God's holy law and vv. 14-25 describing the Christian's struggle with indwelling sin.³⁹¹

("Pelagianism is almost an inevitable result of the denial of the historical Adam and Eve."³⁹²)

3. Universality of sin: Everyone commits sins

As it is written: "There is **none righteous**, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is **none who seeks after God**. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; There is **none who does good**, no, **not one**." "Their throat *is* an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps *is* under their lips"; "Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet *are* swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery *are* in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." . . . **All have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God (Ro 3:10-18, 23; cf. Pss 14:1, 3; 53:1, 3).

"How much less man, *who is* abominable and filthy, who drinks iniquity like water!" (Job 15:16).

"In Your [God's] sight no one living is righteous" (Ps 143:2).

"There *is* not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin" (Ec 7:20).

³⁹¹ This is the common interpretation (e.g., David N. Steele, and Curtis C. Thomas, "Does Romans 7:14-25 Describe Paul's Experience Before or After His Conversion?" in *Romans: An Interpretive Outline* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1967], 126-130). However, it is quite possible that verses 14-25 describe unbelievers rather than believers (Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 1127-1132).

³⁹² John D. Currid, "Theistic Evolution Is Incompatible with the Teachings of the Old Testament," in *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*, eds. J.P. Moreland, *et al.*, 878 n 115.

“**All** we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, **every one**, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Is 53:6).

“We are **all** like an unclean *thing*; And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags” (Is 64:6).

“There is **no one** who does not sin” (1 Ki 8:46; 2 Ch 6:36).

“**No one** *is* good but One, *that is*, God” (Mt 19:17 // Mk 10:18 // Lk 18:19).

Ro 1:18–32

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us” (1 Jn 1:8, 10).

4. Total (pervasive) depravity: Every part of man is corrupted by sin
Every part of our being is affected by sin—our intellect, our emotions, our will (including our desires, goals, and motives), our conscience, and our physical body.

Unbelievers’ minds are depraved:

- can’t know God (1 Cor 1:21; 2:14)
- futile/useless (Ro 1:21; 1 Cor 3:20; Eph 4:17)
- depraved (Ro 1:28; Gn 6:5; Jer 17:9)
- blinded by Satan (2 Cor 4:4)
- foolish (Ro 1:21–22; 1 Cor 1:19–10)
- ignorant, without understanding (Ro 1:31; 3:11; Eph 4:18)
- opposed to/enemy of God, His wisdom & His law (1 Cor 1:18–29; 3:18–20; Ro 8:7; Eph 2:3; Phil 3:18–19; Col 1:21; cf. Ja 4:4)
- enslaved by spirits (Gal 4:8–9, 3)

- false knowledge (1 Tim 6:20)
- defiled (Tit 1:15)
- empty deception (Col 2:8)
- suppresses the truth (Ro 1:18)

Unbelievers' wills are depraved:

- “suppress the truth” (Ro 1:18);
- “exchange the truth of God for the lie” (Ro 1:25; cf. 2 Th 2:10–12);
- repudiate their knowledge of God (Ro 1:18, 21f, 28, 32; 3:10–11ff);
- make idols (Ro 1:23, 25; Ac 14:11–13, 15; 17:16, 23, 29; etc.);
- reject God’s law (Ro 1:18ff; Ps 2:1–3; Lk 19:14), while pursuing autonomy (i.e., self-law—“I live by my own rules”);
- become their own gods, determining good and evil for themselves (cf. Gn 3:5);
- love darkness and hate the light, because their deeds are evil (Jn 3:19f).

They:

- are devoid of the fear of God (Ro 3:18); and
- are slaves to sin (Ro 6:17).

“There is none who seeks after God (Ro 3:11).”

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that every intent* of the thoughts of his heart *was only evil continually*” (Gn 6:5; cf. 8:21).

“They say to God, ‘Depart from us, For we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways’” (Job 21:14).

“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed” (Jn 3:19-20; cf. Job 24:13-17).

“Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them” (Ro 1:32).

Unbelievers know God exists, but they suppress the truth (Ro 1:18ff). Thus, the real nature of unbelief is not a neutral or unbiased attempt to account for experience, but a rebellious running away from the God we all know.

Conscience depraved:

As noted above, natural man’s conscience is: evil—πονηρός (Heb 10:22); corrupted/defiled—μυαίνω (Tit 1:15); seared—καυτηριάζω (1 Tim 4:2; cf. Eph 4:19); defiled/polluted/contaminated—μολύνω (1 Cor 8:7); weak/feeble/infirm/sick—ἀσθενής (1 Cor 8:7, 10, 12).

Bodily depravity:

Disease, pain, death, genetic defects, etc. are the result of man’s apostasy against his Creator (Gn 2:17; 3:16, 19). Furthermore, our physical bodies develop sinful habits that enslave us (Ro 7:18, 23-25; 6:6, 12-13, 19).

Social depravity:

Mankind’s rebellion against God brought about disruption in interpersonal relationships (Gn 3:12; Ja 4:1-2), including both tyrannical rule and usurpation of authority (Gn 3:16).³⁹³

³⁹³ “You will want to **control your husband**” (Gn 3:16 NET). Wayne Grudem notes that in the Hebrew text of Gn 3:16 and 4:7, six words are the same words and found in the same order (*Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 37-40). Susan T. Foh, “What Is the Woman’s Desire?” *WTJ* 37 (1975), 376-383. “After the fall, the husband no longer rules easily; he must fight for his headship. **The**

Some qualifications:

In saying that all human beings are totally depraved, we do not mean that they always act as badly as they could. The basic requirements of God's moral law written on the human heart (Ro 2:14f), the innate awareness of God and His judgments (Ro 1:20f, 32), the conscience, and the three God-ordained institutions—family, church, and state—all provide restraining influences on the sinful tendencies of the human heart.

The doctrine of total depravity does not deny that non-Christians perform acts that outwardly appear to be good works.³⁹⁴ Yet, these imitation “good works” are sin. From God's perspective, good works are “those only which proceed from true faith (Ro 14:23), and are done according to the Law of God (1 Sm 15:22; Eph 2:10), unto His glory (1 Cor 10:31), and not such as rest on our own opinion (Dt 12:32; Ezk 20:18, 20; Is 29:13) or the commandments of men (Mt 15:9)”³⁹⁵ The good works performed by the Christian “are done by

woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship), and he must master her. . . . Wives do have a desire, whether overt or covert, conscious or unconscious, to **control or manipulate** their husbands” (Susan T. Foh, *Women and the Word of God: A Response to Biblical Feminism*, 69; cf. 67–69). “The chiasmic structure of the phrase pairs the terms ‘desire’ and ‘rule over,’ suggesting that **her desire will be to dominate**. This interpretation of an ambiguous passage is validated by the same pairing in the unambiguous context of 4:7” (Bruce K. Waltke with Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001], 94). “The precise parallelism of ‘desire’/‘rule’ in both 3:16 and 4:7 in the same *toledah* [history] (2:4 – 4:26) and the context of judgment on the woman favor the negative interpretation” (Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007], 243). Cp. NIDOTTE 4:341.

³⁹⁴ 2 Ki 10:30; 12:2; Lk 6:33; Ro 2:14.

³⁹⁵ Heidelberg Catechism (1563), Lord's Day 33, Question 91, in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation*, ed. James T. Dennison, 2:790. The Heidelberg

the grace of God through His Holy Spirit.”³⁹⁶ That is why **God considers even the prayers** (Pr 28:9), **the sacrifices** (Pr 15:8; 21:27; Gn 4:5),³⁹⁷ **and the honorable work** (e.g., farming, Pr 21:4 NKJV) of **non-Christians to be sinful and abhorrent** in His sight. Such acts are all manifestations of unbelievers’ lawlessness and self-righteousness.

5. Total inability: Spiritually dead and powerless to change

Since every aspect of fallen man’s nature is corrupted by sin, non-Christians are unable to act righteously and please God. Furthermore, the non-Christian is incapable of changing his nature or character.

“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one!” (Job 14:4).

“Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil” (Jer 13:23).

“A bad tree **cannot** bear good fruit” (Mt 7:18; cf. 12:33).

“Unless one is born again [**from above**]³⁹⁸, he **cannot** see the kingdom of God. . . . Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he **cannot** enter the kingdom of God” (Jn 3:3, 5).

Catechism is one of the most frequently translated and widely circulated and used books in history (Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 6th ed., 3 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983], 1:536). Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, 16:1–2; Belgic Confession, 24; Second Helvetic Confession, 16:2–4. For a convenient harmony see Joel R. Beeke and Sinclair B. Ferguson, eds., *Reformed Confessions Harmonized* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999).

³⁹⁶ Second Helvetic Confession, 16:6 (in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation*, ed. James T. Dennison, 2:843). Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, 16:3.

³⁹⁷ 1 Sm 15:22; Is 1:11–14; Jer 6:20; Ezk 20:39; Am 5:21–23; Mc 6:7; Mal 1:10. Note that “non-Christian” includes hypocrites professing to be Christians.

³⁹⁸ In Jn 3:3, 7 ἄνωθεν probably denotes “from above” (BDAG, 92; TDNT, 1:378; L-N # 84.13), as translated by the NET and NRSV. “From above” is certainly the meaning in the other three occurrences in the Gospel of John (3:31; 19:11, 23).

“**No one can come to Me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent Me draws him. . . . No one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father**” (Jn 6:44, 65).

“The world **cannot** receive [the Spirit of truth], because it neither sees Him nor knows Him” (Jn 14:17).

“As the branch **cannot** bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me [Jesus]. . . . Without Me you **can do nothing**” (Jn 15:5; cf. 2 Cor 3:5).

“The sinful mind does not subject itself to the law of God, for **it is not even able to do so. . . .** Those who are in the flesh **cannot please God**” (Ro 8:7f NASB).

“The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; **nor can he know them**, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14).

“Without faith *it is impossible* to please Him [God]” (Heb 11:6).

“**No man can** tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (Ja 3:8).

In sum, non-Christians are not able to come to God in their own strength (Jn 6:44). They are spiritually “**dead** [not sick!] in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1; cf. Col 2:13; Gn 2:17). Non-Christians are in bondage to their sinful nature (i.e., their sinful mind, will, and emotions). They are “**slaves**” to sin (Jn 8:34; Ro 6:20; Tit 3:3). According to God’s standard of righteousness, **non-Christians cannot do good, understand good, or desire good**. They freely make their own choices, but their sinful depravity renders them unable to choose to turn to Christ and to live righteously. Repentance (Ac 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim 2:25; Heb 12:17),³⁹⁹ faith (Ezk 36:26; Mt 11:25–27; Jn 3:3–8;

³⁹⁹ Repentance denotes “a radical moral turn of the whole person from sin and to God . . . [and] a new way of life” (William D. Mounce, ed., *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006], 580f). See

6:44, 65; Ac 13:48; 14:27; 16:14; 18:27; 1 Cor 2:4f, 14; 12:3; Eph 2:1-10; 6:23; Ph 1:29; 1 Th 1:5f, 2:13; 2 Pt 1:1; cf. Heb 12:2), and a new heart (Ezk 36:26) are gifts from God.

6. Children of Satan

“You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it” (Jn 8:44).

“To open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in *Me*” (Ac 26:18).

“And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Eph 2:1f).

“In humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will” (2 Tim 2:25).

“In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother” (1 Jn 3:10).

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one” (1 Jn 5:19).

Application

1. Only the Biblical doctrine of the total depravity of human nature correctly diagnoses peoples’ true problem, and the true cause of alienation and conflict in society. Man’s problem is ethical, i.e., sin (Ro 1-3); it is not metaphysical, e.g.:

the discussion of repentance in Robert E. Fugate, *Psycho-Heresy: Christianizing pagan Psychologies*, 134-148.

- not his finiteness;
- not his superstition and ignorance, i.e., lack of education⁴⁰⁰—contra **naturalism** (which teaches salvation through scientific advancement and technology);
- not alienation because of economic inequality—contra **Marxism** (which teaches salvation through economic revolution to transform society [abolish private property, become classless, stateless society], through the Communist Party);
- not neuroses from repressing basic instincts, caused by norms imposed by society and family—contra **Freud’s Instinctualism** (which teaches salvation through psychoanalysis to restore harmony by learning to express repressed drives, i.e., follow one’s instincts);
- not being wrongly influenced by his environment and circumstances—contra **Skinner’s Behaviorism** (which teaches salvation through reconditioning or reprogramming man by manipulating his environment, using positive and negative stimuli/reinforcement, i.e., the psychological engineering of human lab rats);

⁴⁰⁰ Unitarian Horace Mann, the father of American public education, clearly viewed public education as messianic (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Messianic Character of American Education* [Nutley, NJ: Craig, 1979], 30), calling each public school building a “temple” with a “sacred” objective (Samuel L. Blumenfeld, *Is Public Education Necessary?* [Boise, ID: Paradigm, 1985], 192). Horace Mann wrote, “The Common School is the greatest discovery ever made by man. . . . Other social organizations are curative and remedial; this is preventive and an antidote; they come to heal diseases and wounds; this to make the physical and moral frame invulnerable to them. Let the Common School be expanded to its capabilities, let it be worked with the efficiency of which it is susceptible, and nine-tenths of the crimes in the penal code would become obsolete; the long catalogue of human ills would be abridged; men would walk more safely by day; every pillow would be more inviolable by night, property, life and character held by a stronger tenure; all rational hopes respecting the future brightened” (*Common School Journal*, vol. 3 [January 1, 1841], 15; cited by Rushdoony, 29).

- not low self-esteem—contra **self-esteem psychologies** (e.g., Carl Rogers) (which teach salvation through releasing potential within the self by drawing out inner answers and positive thinking);
- not his ignorance of his true divine-human potential—contra **New Age** (which teaches salvation through transformation of consciousness [enlightenment] to realize one’s divine nature);
- not his ignorance of religious knowledge—contra Pelagians and semi-Pelagians (including Roman Catholics); Gnostics; etc.

Philosophy, all non-Christian religions and cults, psychology, the messianic state, etc. are humanistic attempts to diagnose and solve man’s problem. However, their wrong diagnoses lead all of them to wrong solutions. The correct diagnosis points to the correct remedy—salvation from sin and its consequences through the Lord Jesus Christ (Who will “save His people from their sins,” Mt 1:21). Only regeneration (“born from above”), followed by progressive sanctification, can transform a person’s nature, making it possible to disciple and transform individuals, families, churches, cities, and nations. And God primarily regenerates people through the means of His people fully proclaiming God’s holy law and the gospel of the kingdom (which includes the call to repentance and faith and submission to the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ).

2. The doctrine of total depravity renders all human good works and religious rituals absolutely ineffectual in saving anyone.
3. The doctrine of total depravity renders all humanistic attempts at building political and economic utopias on earth as delusional dreams (e.g., all forms of socialism, Liberalism’s view of the kingdom of God as culture, and liberation theologies).⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰¹ When God brings about another (full-orbed) Reformation, regenerating massive numbers who live lives of self-government

4. The doctrine of total depravity renders absurd psychologists' claims to be able to form righteous character and conduct through psychology.
5. The doctrine of total depravity removes all grounds for human pride and self-righteousness, since we are totally dependent on the undeserved grace, mercy, and transforming power of God.
6. The doctrine of total depravity teaches Christians to be humble toward other sinners, knowing that there is no sin that, apart from the grace of God, we could not fall into.
7. The doctrine of total depravity teaches that the ability to repent and the desire to commit one's life to Christ are not naturally ours, but are given by the prompting of the Holy Spirit; they will not last forever. Therefore, repent of your sins and give your life unreservedly to the Lord Jesus Christ today (Heb 3:15)!⁴⁰²

The historicity of the Fall in Genesis 3 refutes many errors, such as: the essential goodness and perfectibility of man; the divinity of man; Darwinian evolution;⁴⁰³ etc.

I am not aware of any non-Christian world religion or religious cult that holds to the Biblical doctrine of the depravity of man.

The Biblical teaching on depravity precludes the world's (pseudo-) "wisdom" in: philosophy; psychology; education; science; history; politics; ethics; marriage; child raising; etc. We must heavily emphasize that it is not enough to profess Reformed soteriology (i.e.,

under God's law, then civil governments and economic systems will change (as Biblical postmillennialists teach).

⁴⁰² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 408.

⁴⁰³ Darwinian evolution implies that "sin" was present in humans from the beginning. "Theistic Darwinism's denial of the Fall undermines the Christian doctrine of salvation. If human beings were sinful to begin with, what is Christ saving us from? God's original botched job?" (John G. West, "Darwinian Utopia," in *The Coming Pagan 'Utopia,'* ed. Peter Jones (Escondido, CA: TruthXChange, 2013), 120f. Cf. Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Word to You*, 114.

the doctrine of salvation); we must have a comprehensive Reformed/Biblical worldview and apply it to all of life!

Cf. WCF 6 (WLC 21-29 // WSC 13-19).

Redemption

In our study of God's sovereignty we learned that God is sovereign over everything, including man's salvation. Our examination of the Fall demonstrated that all unregenerate people are spiritually dead (Eph 2:1); their minds and wills are so depraved that they cannot chose to follow Christ. Thus, Reformed theology teaches that *God actually saves sinners* and that *salvation is all of Him*. Jesus' death on the cross did not make it possible for you to save yourself (as Arminianism teaches). Repentance (Ac 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim 2:25; Heb 12:17),⁴⁰¹ faith (Ezk 36:26; Mt 11:25-27; Jn 3:3-8; 6:44, 65; Ac 13:48; 14:27; 16:14; 18:27; 1 Cor 2:4-5, 14; 12:3; Eph 2:1-10; 6:23; Phil 1:29; 1 Th 1:5-6, 2:13; 2 Pt 1:1; cf. Heb 12:2), and a new heart (Ezk 36:26) are gifts that God gives to everyone the God the Father has elected in His Son and the Holy Spirit regenerates (i.e., causes to be born again). Salvation is entirely of God's grace, apart from human works (Eph 2:8-9).

God saves the whole man, soul and body.

God saves and re-creates the entire cosmos (Col 1:20; Eph 1:10; 2 Pt 3:12-13; Rv 21:1-2, 5; Is 65:17; 66:22).

Calvinism vs. Arminianism

What is today called "Calvinism" (specifically its teaching on God's sovereignty, the depravity of man, and its salvation) is actually the historic teaching of the Christian church. This theology is taught in Scripture. It was taught by the man universally recognized as the

⁴⁰¹ Repentance denotes "a radical moral turn of the whole person from sin and to God . . . [and] a new way of life" (William D. Mounce, ed., *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 580f). See the discussion of repentance in Robert E. Fugate, *Psycho-Heresy: Christianizing pagan Psychologies*, 134-148.

greatest theologian in the early church, Saint Augustine. It was taught by the forerunner (morningstar) of the Reformation, John Wycliffe. It was taught by all the Protestant Reformers: Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, Jerome Zanchius, Heinrich Bullinger, Martin Bucer, etc.—as well as by their successors in Presbyterian and Reformed churches. It was taught by most of the Puritans, including the greatest Puritan theologian, John Owen (a Congregationalist), as well as by the great revivalists George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, songwriter Augustus Toplady, imprisoned preacher and writer John Bunyan, John Newton, missionary William Carey, Baptist pastor Charles H. Spurgeon. It was taught by many outstanding Presbyterian theologians: Francis Turretin, Charles Hodge, William Cunningham, W.G.T. Shedd, Herman Bavinck, B.B. Warfield, Abraham Kuyper. It was taught by renowned Baptist theologians John Gill and Augustus H. Strong.⁴⁰⁵

J.I. Packer makes the historical observation regarding Arminianism, “This perversion appeared before in the Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism of the Patristic period and the later Scholasticism, and has recurred since the seventeenth century both in Roman theology and, among Protestants, in various types of rationalistic liberalism and modern Evangelical teaching.”⁴⁰⁶

Packer also makes the important analysis that Arminianism stemmed from two philosophical principles: (1) divine sovereignty is incompatible with human freedom and responsibility; and (2) ability

⁴⁰⁵ For a plethora of evidence and documentation from both Scripture and from church history, see John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth* (1733–1738; various reprints).

⁴⁰⁶ J.I. Packer, “Introductory Essay,” in John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989), 9; downloadable in multiple formats at <https://www.monergism.com/introductory-essay-john-owen%E2%80%99s-death-death-death-christ>. Packer’s essay should be read by all Bible-believing Christians.

limits obligation.⁴⁰⁷ Our first comment is to ask the normal epistemological questions: How do Arminians know this? and, What is the source of their definition of justice or fairness? The short answer is that these two philosophical principles did not come from Scripture. With regard to the first of these Arminian principles (actually assumptions), we demonstrated in our study of God's sovereignty that Scripture teaches the opposite of Arminianism: God's sovereignty is compatible with human freedom and human responsibility. With regard to the second assumption, the brilliant philosopher-apologist Gordon Clark makes the categorical statement, "No one has ever demonstrated that the concept of responsibility is in any way dependent on a prior state of free will."⁴⁰⁸ John Frame argues that Scripture never grounds human responsibility/accountability in libertarian freedom (or any other kind of freedom). God made us and owns us. God's authority (not our inability) is the necessary and sufficient ground of human responsibility.⁴⁰⁹

Packer makes several helpful contrasts between Calvinism and Arminianism, several of which we have summarized in the following table:

⁴⁰⁷ J.I. Packer, "Introductory Essay," in John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, 3.

⁴⁰⁸ Gordon H. Clark, "God and Evil," *Religion, Reason and Revelation*, 194-241; chapter 5 reprinted as separate booklet, *God and Evil: The Problem Solved*. Robert E. Fugate, "Free Moral Agency and God's Foreordination vs. Libertarian Freedom," unpublished paper.

⁴⁰⁹ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 140; idem., *Systematic Theology*, 827.

	BIBLICAL GOSPEL (CALVINISM)	PSEUDO-GOSPEL (ARMINIANISM)
Primarily concerned with:	glorifying God	helping man
Center of reference:	God	man
Chief aim (content):	teach men to worship God	make men feel better (self-esteem)
Subject:	God and His ways with men	man and the help God gives him
Results:	produces God-centered and God-fearing people	produces self-centered people who try to use God
Proclaims:	God who saves	God who enables man to save himself
three redemptive acts—election, redemption, and calling:	directed toward the same persons and secures their salvation	directed toward different persons; doesn't secure the salvation of any of them
Faith:	part of God's gift of salvation	man's own contribution to salvation
Election:	God's choice of particular, undeserving persons to be saved	God's resolve to receive those who will believe (if any)
Redemption:	Christ's actual substitutionary	the removing of the obstacle of unsatisfied

	BIBLICAL GOSPEL (CALVINISM)	PSEUDO-GOSPEL (ARMINIANISM)
	enduring of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners; Christ's atonement ensured that the elect would be saved and receive every spiritual blessing	justice that prevented God from pardoning sinners as He desired to do; it secured for God the right to offer pardon, but didn't ensure that anyone would ever accept it; hypothetical salvation for hypothetical believers
Internal grace:	irresistibly enlightening and regenerating the elect, giving them a new heart and will	an enlightening; a bare bestowal of an understanding of God's truth

Arminianism operates with different definitions of election, redemption, and effectual calling than Calvinism. And the Arminian definitions do not comport with Scripture. Other Biblical concepts, such as “the love of God,” the “covenant of grace,” “save,” etc., are also defined in a different, man-centered way in Arminianism.⁴¹⁰ (See also Appendix A: Arminianism’s Five Points vs. Calvinism, and, Appendix B: Frame’s rebuttal of libertarian freedom.)

The average contemporary evangelical Arminian does not realize his theology actually teaches:

⁴¹⁰ J.I. Packer, “Introductory Essay,” in John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, 8.

- If the Father and the Son intended to save everyone (i.e., universal atonement), then they failed, and Christ died in vain for some.
- God provided a **hypothetical salvation** for hypothetical believers. For all God could do, Christ might have died and none at all have been saved.
- **Christ's atoning death made it possible for us to save ourselves.** God built the machinery of salvation, but man operates it. In Arminianism, **my salvation depends not on what Christ has done for me, but on what I subsequently do for myself.** In Arminianism, Christ, having made redemption possible, has left us to become **our own saviors!**
- God's love is an impotent wish or desire. (Contrast this with Scriptural theology, in which all of God's attributes interpenetrate all His other attributes. Thus, God's love is omnipotent.)
- Arminianism **destroys the Scriptural ground of assurance of salvation.**
- Arminianism **denies God's sovereignty.**⁴¹¹

And, as we have seen, Arminianism does not come to grips with the Bible's teaching regarding the **total depravity** of man.

Neither can Arminianism provide an adequate basis for the **doctrine of Scripture**, specifically, how God could so providentially prepare and control the human authors of Scripture that they wrote exactly what He directed them to write in the exact words He wanted, while still using their distinct personalities and vocabularies.⁴¹² Furthermore,

⁴¹¹ J.I. Packer, "Introductory Essay," in John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*.

⁴¹² B.B. Warfield brilliantly describes God's meticulous providential preparation of the human authors of the Scriptures: "... a preparation physical, intellectual, spiritual, which must have attended them throughout their whole lives, and, indeed, must have had its

beginning in their remote ancestors, and the effect of which was to bring the right men to the right places at the right times, with the right endowments, impulses, acquirements, to write just the books which were designed for them. . . . If God wished to give His people a series of letters like Paul's, He prepared a Paul to write them, and the Paul He brought to the task was a Paul who spontaneously would write just such letters. . . . Consider, for example, how a piece of sacred history—say the Book of Chronicles, or the great historical work, Gospel and Acts, of Luke—is brought to the writing. There is first of all the preparation of the history to be written: God the Lord leads the sequence of occurrences through the development He has designed for them that they may convey their lessons to His people: a 'teleological' [final purpose] or 'aetiological' [causal] character is inherent in the very course of events. Then He prepares a man, by birth, training, experience, gifts of grace, and if need be, of revelation, capable of appreciating this historical development and eager to search it out, thrilling in all his being with its lessons and bent upon making them clear and effective to others. When, then, by His providence, God sets this man to work on the writing of his history, will there not be spontaneously written by him the history which it was Divinely intended should be written? Or consider how a psalmist would be prepared to put into moving verse a piece of normative religious experience: how he would be born with just the right quality of religious sensibility, of parents through whom he should receive just the right hereditary bent, and from whom he should get precisely the right religious example and training, in circumstances of life in which his religious tendencies should be developed precisely on right lines; how he would be brought through just the right experiences to quicken in him the precise emotions he would be called upon to express, and finally would be placed in precisely the exigencies which would call out their expression. Or consider the providential preparation of a writer of a didactic epistle—by means of which he should be given the intellectual breadth and acuteness, and be trained in habitudes of reasoning, and placed in situations which would call out precisely the argumentative presentation of Christian truth which was required of him" (Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration," in *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, 155-157

how could depraved men possessing libertarian freedom write the infallible Scriptures? (Regarding libertarian freedom see Appendix B: Frame’s rebuttal of libertarian freedom.)

Arminianism, with its “God” Who is not sovereign and its man-centered “gospel” and mission, cannot provide an adequate theological basis for the Biblical worldview.

Conversely, the Reformed faith teaches the comprehensive covenant Lordship of God over all of life and culture, instructing us to live all of life *coram deo*, in the presence of God and for the glory of God. The Reformed faith or Calvinism provides the only adequate theological basis for the Biblical worldview.

We will conclude our discussion of Arminianism by recalling some facts from our discussions of God’s sovereignty and man’s depravity. In our discussion of Biblical terms that demonstrate God’s sovereignty, we cited several verses mentioning: (a) God’s sovereign will, purpose, or pleasure; (b) God’s sovereign election and predestination; and (c) God’s sovereign giving or withholding revelation (see above). Many of these verses directly relate to God’s sovereignty in man’s salvation. Also, in our lengthy demonstration of Biblical teaching regarding the depravity of man, we observed that man is unable to repent and believe the gospel. Additional Scriptures could be added. We will mention only two. Jesus taught, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him” (Jn 6:44). During the Apostle Paul’s first missionary tour we read, “as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed” (Ac 13:48).

Reformed soteriology alone does not constitute Reformed theology

Theologically, Reformed theology (or Calvinism) requires adherence to the Three Forms of Unity⁴¹³ and/or other Reformed confessions of

(= *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 1:101; first appeared as “Inspiration,” ISBE, 3:1480f).

⁴¹³ The “Three Forms of Unity” is a collective name for the Belgic Confession (1561), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and the Canons of Dort (1618-1618), which define the doctrinal

faith,⁴¹⁴ primarily the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) with its Larger and Shorter Catechisms.⁴¹⁵ Reformed Baptists (including the “New Calvinists”) claim to be Reformed, since they adhere to Reformed soteriology (i.e., the so-called Five Points of Calvinism⁴¹⁶). However, their rejection of covenant theology and its corollary doctrine, infant baptism, is contrary to the Reformed faith. Reformed Baptists hold to much less continuity between the Old Testament and

commitments of European continental Calvinism and are accepted as official statements of doctrine by many of the Reformed churches.

⁴¹⁴ *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation*, ed. James T. Dennison.

⁴¹⁵ The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), with its Larger and Shorter Catechisms (1647), were the British standards of faith. Since they built on the earlier continental Reformed confessions, the British standards are a more complete articulation of the Reformed faith.

The Savoy Declaration of Faith (1658) is nearly identical to the Westminster Confession of Faith, with the exception of its church government, which is local presbyterian rather than hierarchical, national Presbyterian. This Confession was framed by the great Puritan scholar and pastor, John Owen, together with some Independents/Congregationalists who had been part of the Westminster Assembly.

⁴¹⁶ See “Appendix A: Arminianism’s Five Points vs. Calvinism.” “We should not look at the five points as a summary of the Reformed system of doctrine. At Dort, the five topics were in effect selected by the Arminians, not the Calvinists. The five points are actually a summary of ‘what Arminians don’t like about Calvinism,’ rather than a summary of Calvinism itself. They summarize, not Calvinism as such, but the controversial aspects of Calvinism. I suspect that had the synod been asked for an actual summary of the Reformed faith, they would have structured it rather differently—more like the Belgic and Westminster Confessions. Controversial points are not necessarily the most fundamental concerns of a system” (John M. Frame, “Introduction to the Reformed Faith,” in *John Frame’s Selected Shorter Writings*, vol. 1 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2014), 86; downloadable at <https://frame-poythress.org/introduction-to-the-reformed-faith>).

the New Testament, and they also have a lower estimation of God's law.

“In the case of the Reformed faith, the doctrinal system is far more than five points; it is a comprehensive understanding of Scripture, and thus a comprehensive world-and-life view. . . . The Reformed faith teaches the comprehensive covenant Lordship of God.”⁴¹⁷

This leads us to the fourth pillar of the Biblical worldview, covenant theology.

4. Hermeneutical framework: covenant theology (unity of the entire Bible)

Use entire Bible

Since the entire Bible is truth, Christians must use all of Scripture to formulate their doctrines in each area of study (2 Tim 3:16-17⁴¹⁸). Continuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament is based upon the doctrine of the unity of Scripture⁴¹⁹ and on God's unchanging nature. The obvious reason for the unity of the Bible is that it has one ultimate Author, God Himself.

A few Christians object to using the Old Testament. However, this dispensational (semi-Marcionite⁴²⁰) view is quite unbiblical, for the

⁴¹⁷ John M. Frame, “Introduction to the Reformed Faith,” in *John Frame's Selected Shorter Writings*, 1:86, 88.

⁴¹⁸ Note that when the Apostle Paul wrote (about A.D. 58) that “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for doctrine . . .” (2 Tim 3:16), he was referring primarily to “the sacred writings” that Timothy had known from childhood (v. 15), i.e., the Old Testament Scriptures.

⁴¹⁹ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Word to You*, 173f, 599-605.

⁴²⁰ Marcion (died approximately A.D. 154) was the first significant heretic the post-apostolic church had to refute. Marcion taught a complete discontinuity between the Old and the New Testaments, with the Old Testament not being a valid standard for Christian doctrine and ethics. Sadly, “Marcion's perversion has become ‘dispensational truth.’ In creating a division in the Bible, Marcion was the father of both modernist critics and of dispensationalism. . . .

Bible is one unified book. The Old Testament was Christ's and the Apostles' Bible. By precept and by practice they taught the ongoing authority of the Old Testament (Mt 4:4; 5:17-19; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Ro 15:4; Ac 24:14; 26:22; 17:11; 1 Cor 10:1-11; Jer 31:33 & Heb 8:10; cf. Heb 3-4; Dt 4:2; Ps 119:160).⁴²¹ Let's look at a few of these shorter passages:

But He [Jesus] answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Mt 4:4; citing Dt 8:3).

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.¹⁸ "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law **till all is fulfilled**.¹⁹ "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these [Old Testament] commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mt 5:17-19).

Until Marcion, Christians saw the Bible as one book. . . . For us to read the Bible as two books rather than as one unified word of God is to fall under Marcion's influence. . . . Marcion destroyed the unity of God's revelation" (Rousas J. Rushdoony, "Marcionism," Chalcedon Position Paper # 57, in *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 259, 261). Robert E. Fugate, *Some Continuities and Discontinuities between the Older Testament and the Newer Testament*.

⁴²¹ Christ and the Apostles constantly appealed to the absolute authority of the Scriptures. The New Testament contains over 1,600 citations of the Old Testament, and many more allusions to it! The principle of intertestamental continuity is also compelling taught by the New Testament when it cites over 20 Old Testament case laws, presupposing without qualification that they are still authoritative and binding on the church. See Robert E. Fugate, "The Moral and the Civil Law of God Apply to Gentiles," in *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 99-107; idem., *God's Royal Law: Foundation of Moral Order* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2015), 50-52, 59-62.

For **whatever** things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope (Ro 15:4).

But this I [Paul] confess to you [Roman Governor Felix], that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, **believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets** (Ac 24:14).

Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I [Paul] stand, witnessing both to small and great, **saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come . . .** (Ac 26:22; cf. 17:11).

Now these things [recorded in the Old Testament] became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. . . .¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were **written for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come (1 Cor 10:6, 11).

Since the Old Testament was written for the New Testament church, everyone must continue to **obey the Old Testament teaching except where the New Testament has abrogated it or modified its application.**⁴²² Failure to do so places one under God's censure (Dt 4:2; 17:20; Mt 5:19). In the words of Jesus:

⁴²² E.g., laws concerning: the priesthood and sacrificial system; Jewish calendar of festivals; national Israel being the only people of God—a separate and privileged race until the birth of the Messiah; and the Promised Land. See Robert E. Fugate, “Some Continuities and Discontinuities Between the Older Testament and the Newer Testament.”

Thus, we are looking for “**standing law**—policy directives applicable over time to classes of individuals (e.g., do not kill; children, obey your parents; merchants, have equal measures; magistrates, execute rapists), in contrast to particular directions for an individual (e.g., the order for Samuel to anoint David at a particular time and place) or positive commands for distinct incidents (e.g., God's order for Israel

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these [OT] commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mt 5:19).

This covenant theology position is diametrically opposed to dispensational discontinuity, which postulates—without exegetical basis—that Old Testament commands are not binding upon Christians unless they are reaffirmed in the New Testament. But neglecting this principle of continuity has always brought grave moral consequences.⁴²³

Exegesis cannot be philosophically, theologically, or morally neutral. One's principles of hermeneutics must be derived from Scripture itself. The unity that results from the inspiration of the prophetic-apostolic Scriptures is the basic presupposition underlying the hermeneutical principle that Scripture interprets Scripture.⁴²⁴

to exterminate certain Canaanite tribes at a certain point in history)” (Greg L. Bahnsen, *By This Standard*, 360).

⁴²³ “Over the centuries, virtually all heresies have been hostile to the Old Testament, or have decreed that it is now an ended dispensation, or in one way or another have down-graded it in part or in whole. . . . Down-grading the Old Testament is a way of re-writing the New, because the meaning of the New is destroyed if the Old Testament is set aside in any fashion. As a result, the ‘New Testament Christianity’ of such heretics winds up being no Christianity at all” (Rousas J. Rushdoony “Gnosticism,” Chalcedon Position Paper # 74, in *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 325). “Wherever it [Marcionism] has been accepted, the result has been irreparable damage to the Christian faith. . . . To loosen the bond between the Testaments seems always to go hand in hand . . . with damage to the gospel” (John Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1967], 76, 79). Cf. Robert E. Fugate, *Antinomianism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: An Illustration of the Consequences of Rejecting God’s Law* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 1999).

⁴²⁴ “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be

Having introduced the importance of the unity of Scripture, we must ask the question: What binds the Old and New Testaments together? The best answer is God's redemptive covenants. Let us look more closely at covenant theology.

What is a covenant?

First, what is a Biblical covenant? A covenant may be defined as “a solemn commitment, guaranteeing promises or obligations undertaken by one or both parties, sealed with an oath.”⁴²⁵

There are two types of covenants in the Bible: (1) covenants made by man with man; and (2) covenants initiated by God (the sovereign party or suzerain) with men (the dependent vassals).⁴²⁶ Our focus will be on those covenants that God made with men. This type of covenant was known in the ancient Near East as a suzerainty covenant or treaty, which was made between a suzerain (king) and his vassals. It was comprised of at least five components:

searched and known by other places that speak more clearly” (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1:9). Contra allegorical interpretations and postmodern literary deconstruction.

⁴²⁵ Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007)*, 43. Other important definitions of covenant include: “a covenant is a bond in blood (or a bond of life and death), sovereignly administered” (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 4); and “an enduring agreement which defines a relationship between two parties involving a solemn, binding obligation(s) specified on the part of at least one of the parties toward the other, made by oath under threat of divine curse, and ratified by a visual ritual” (Daniel C. Lane; cited by P.J. Gentry and S.J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 132).

⁴²⁶ With regard to God's suzerainty covenants, “God always is the subject in concluding the covenant, and afterwards He is always said to have ‘concluded’ (*karath*), ‘established’ (*heqini*), ‘founded’ (*sin*) or ‘given’ (*nathan*) the covenant!” (Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* [Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1958], 141). Cf. Robert E. Fugate, “Three Types of Biblical Covenants” (which adds covenant renewals) (unpublished paper).

1. Identification of the covenant giver/the preamble (the name of the great king identified him as the author of the covenant document).
2. Historical prologue recorded the previous aid extended by the suzerain to his vassals and their debt to him.
3. Stipulations—both those demanded of the vassal (i.e., laws that the vassal was expected to obey in gratefulness for the great king’s past beneficence) and those pledged by the sovereign.⁴²⁷
 - (a) General command, demanding the vassal’s exclusive covenant loyalty/love to the suzerain;
 - (b) Specific commands, showing the outworkings of that covenant loyalty, i.e., the ways in which this exclusive suzerain expected his vassal people to behave.
4. Blessings for covenant keeping (i.e., obedience) and curses for covenant breaking (or altering) (i.e., disobedience).
5. Future administrative continuity of the covenant, which included: provision for the deposit of the text (usually in the temple); the mandatory, periodic, public reading of the written text of the covenant; royal succession; adjudication of disputes; etc.⁴²⁸

Additional elements might also be included in the structure of the suzerainty covenant, such as a list or invocation of (divine) witnesses, and the imposition of curses. Not all elements were present in every covenant. There was typically a ratification ceremony, which often included animal sacrifices and/or a covenant meal.

⁴²⁷ Note the Biblical phrase, “as for Me” (Gn 9:9; 17:4; Is 59:21; Ezk 9:10).

⁴²⁸ G.E. Mendenhall, “Covenant,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ABD), ed. David N. Freedman, 6 vols. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 1:1180ff. J.A. Thompson, “Covenant,” *ISBE*₂, 1:790; cf. *Expositors Bible Commentary*, 1:388). W. Dryness, *Themes of the Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 114ff.

This suzerainty structure is quite important in Scripture.⁴²⁹ The entire Bible makes clear that God's covenants contain both blessings for obedience (covenant keeping) and curses for disobedience (covenant breaking).⁴³⁰

As a background to our study of the covenants that God made with men, note that Yehowah, the personal name of God (occurring 6,828 times in the Hebrew Old Testament⁴³¹), is particularly associated with God's covenants.⁴³² This Biblical fact alone should cause us to seriously consider the importance of covenant.

Seven covenants

God inaugurated seven main covenants with men. Each of God's covenants contains the same promise of eternal life, the same mediator Jesus Christ, and the same condition of faith.⁴³³

⁴²⁹ To give only one example, the book of Deuteronomy is structured according to a suzerainty covenant (Peter C. Craige, *Deuteronomy*, NICOT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976], 22f; James B. Jordan, *Covenant Sequence in Leviticus and Deuteronomy* [Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989]).

⁴³⁰ For an excellent listing of covenant curses and blessings of the Law of Moses see *Douglas Stuart, Hosea-Jonah*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), pp. xxxiii-xlii.

⁴³¹ HECOT, # 3378.

⁴³² ISBE₂, 2:506f ("the covenant name: Yahweh"). John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 17-20. Frame asserts that, in the Bible, the term "Lord names the head of a covenant" (20).

Many modern Bible translations translate the Hebrew Yehowah as "LORD" (all caps).

⁴³³ Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*, 2 vols. (Escondido, CA: The den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1990), 292. Robert E. Fugate, *Some Continuities and Discontinuities between the Older Testament and the Newer Testament*.

1. The Covenant of Creation⁴³⁴ (Gn 1:26–28; 2:15–17; Ho 6:7; Jer 33:20–21, 25–26⁴³⁵).⁴³⁶ God made the Covenant of Creation with

⁴³⁴ Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*, 42f. Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 430–440. Meredith G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1980), 19f. William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 34f. Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, SOTBT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 143–150.

Some have rejected the Creation Covenant on the ground that the word “covenant” is not found in Genesis 2 (an argument from silence). However, “The word *b’rit* [covenant] does not have to be actually used at the time a covenant is made in order for a covenant to be present, as is made clear from 2 Samuel 7, where, although the word is not employed, according to Psalm 89:19–37 God *covenantally* promised David that his dynastic house would rule over Israel” (Reymond, 430).

But, even though the word “covenant” does not occur in Genesis 1–2, the constituent elements of covenant making were clearly present: (1) the identification of the covenant giver/preamble (Gn 1:1); (2) the historical prologue (Gn 1); (3) the stipulations/law “that Adam with Eve and all his descendants should obey God perfectly,” with the focus being not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gn 2:17); and (4) blessings (life in Gn 2:9; 3:22) and curses (Gn 2:17) (John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, 116f; Gordon J. Spykman, *Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992], 260).

⁴³⁵ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 19–22, 274.

⁴³⁶ Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology*, 405 n 23; 418, 430. Robertson prefers the terms covenant of creation and covenant of redemption to covenant of works and covenant of grace (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 55–57; cites Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968], 32); cf. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*; and the sources listed in J. Ryan Lister, *The Presence of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 97 n 27.

Adam, the original, representative man or covenant head of the Adamic race (Ho 6:7 ESV, NASB, ASV⁴³⁷). This covenant included both man’s dominion (Gn 1:26–30) and probation (Gn 2:15–17).⁴³⁸ Genesis 2 introduces the personal, covenantal name of God, Yehowah (Gn 2:4–5, 7–9, 15–16, 18–19, 21–22), precisely because of the covenant relationship Yehowah establishes with Adam in the Garden of Eden. After man’s Fall, the three creation ordinances of work, marriage, and Sabbath continue. Furthermore, Scripture never repeals the Dominion Covenant/Creation Mandate; rather, it is reaffirmed in the Noahic Covenant (Gn 9:1–2, 7). The New Testament clearly confirms Adam’s covenantal, representative headship of the entire human race (Ro 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:22, 45, 47). The Covenant of Creation is also called the covenant of life or the covenant of works.⁴³⁹ The full breadth of the Covenant of Creation must be maintained to develop a full-orbed Biblical worldview.⁴⁴⁰

2. The post-lapsarian (i.e., after the Fall) covenant God made with Adam promises Christ’s victory over Satan (Gn 3:14–19). In the

⁴³⁷ Benjamin B. Warfield, “Hosea vi:7: Adam or Man?” in *Selected Shorter Writings*, 1:116–129. Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, NAC (n.p., Broadman & Holman, 1997), 163f.

⁴³⁸ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 22–24.

⁴³⁹ “Covenant of life” (WLC Q 20; WSC Q 12) and “covenant of works” (WCF 7:2; 19:1, 6; WLC 30; 97) are used interchangeably in the Westminster Standards. “The term ‘covenant of life’ emphasizes that life was the reward for Adam if he had kept the covenant. The term ‘Covenant of Works’ highlights that the condition of the covenant is perfect obedience” (Richard P. Belcher Jr., *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology* [Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2020], 30).

⁴⁴⁰ “By thinking too narrowly about the covenant of creation, the Christian church has come to cultivate a deficiency in its entire world-and-life view. Instead of being kingdom-oriented, as was Christ, it has become exclusively church-oriented” (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 68).

post-lapsarian covenant, God declared perpetual warfare (personal hostility, antithesis) between the elect seed of the woman and the reprobate seed of Satan (Gn 3:15),⁴⁴¹ resulting in Satan being crushed by the Seed of the woman. God's promise in this verse (called the *protevangelium*) marked the first proclamation of the gospel and the inauguration of the covenant of grace.

3. The Noahic Covenant promising preservation of the earth (Gn 6:17-22; 8:20-22; 9:1-17; cf. Jer 33:20-21, 25-26⁴⁴²).⁴⁴³ The

⁴⁴¹ In Genesis 3:15, the woman's seed (Hebrew *zera*, a collective noun that may be either singular or plural) connotes those descendants of Eve who are at enmity with Satan's seed, i.e., the regenerate (Herbert C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 1:167, 169). Satan's (spiritual or ethical) seed (collective noun) connotes unregenerate people (Mt 13:38; Lk 3:7; Jn 8: 8:34, 44; 1 Jn 3:8, 10; Ac 13:10) and possibly non-elect angels/demons in Satan's kingdom (Young, 116; Belcher, 39). The two singular third person masculine pronouns, "He" and "His," refer to the individual champion, who descended from and represents the woman's seed, who shall conquer Satan (who was called "he" in 3:1), i.e., Jesus Christ. See: Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 38-42; Charles A. Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy* (1886; reprint: Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 71-77; Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), 115f, 120; James E. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches about the Promised Messiah* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 38-43; Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, NAC (n.p.: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 247f; Richard P. Belcher Jr., *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology*, 38-41; C. John Collins, "A Syntactical Note on Genesis 3:15: Is the Woman's Seed Singular or Plural?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 48:1 (1997): 141f.

⁴⁴² O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 19-22, 274.

⁴⁴³ "God's covenant with Noah in its broadest structures reflects on creational ordinances. The ordering of day and night under Noah presumes creational ordinances" (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 21f n 1). For parallels between the post-flood world and Eden see Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 61.

Noahic Covenant included Noah's sons and their wives (Gn 6:18; 7:1; 9:9) and "every living creature of all flesh" (Gn 9:9-17). God's covenanting word to Noah remains in effect, preventing the immediate and total destruction of all the wicked (Gn 8:20-22; 9:9-17; cf. Is 54:9; 2 Pt 3:5-7). The Noahic Covenant reaffirms the Dominion Covenant/Cultural Mandate (cp. Gn 1:26-28 with 9:1-2, 7), or, to state it another way, the cultural mandate is the stipulation/law of the Noahic covenant.⁴⁴⁴

4. The Abrahamic Covenant, in which God redeems a people for Himself, to bless all nations (Gn 12:1-3; 13:14-16; 15:18-21; 17:1-16, 19; 22:16-18).⁴⁴⁵
5. The Mosaic Covenant, which formally established the rule of God's law and the nation of Israel (Ex 24:3, 7-8; 34:27; Dt 5:2; 29:12).
6. The Davidic Covenant of enduring kingdom rule (2 Ch 21:7; Ps 89:3-4, 29, 36; 2 Sm 7:11-16; 22:51; 23:5; cf. Jer 30:9; 33:17, 21-22; Ho 3:4-5; Is 55:3-4; 9:7).
7. The new covenant (i.e., the covenant of consummation) (Jer 31:31, 33; Ezk 37:26; Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8, [10], 13; 9:15; [10:16, 29]; 12:24).⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, 123.

⁴⁴⁵ It is important to observe that Scripture always speaks of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as one covenant (contra several contemporary scholars). See Jeffrey J. Niehaus, "God's Covenant with Abraham," *JETS* 56/2 (2013), 249-271, available at http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/56/56-2/JETS_56-2_249-271_Niehaus.pdf. God's covenants with Isaac and Jacob are renewals of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gn 17:19, 21; 26:3-4; 28:13-15; 35:12; Ex 2:24; Ps 105:8-10, 42-43; etc.) (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 27).

⁴⁴⁶ "The [OT] prophets anticipated the new covenant in Ho 2:18-23; Is 54:5-10; 59:21; Jer 31:31-34; 32:40; 50:4-5; Ezk 16:59-63; 36:34-38; 37:12; 37:18-28" (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Prophets*, 183); cf. 273f, especially note 1.

God's covenants are intertwined, not merely successive

There is an interconnectedness between all God's covenants in redemptive history. The promises of the six Old Testament covenants that God made with man are incorporated into the new covenant, as the Apostle Paul states in 2 Corinthians 1:20: "For all the promises of God in Him [Jesus Christ] are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." Except for the covenant of creation, all these covenants may be viewed as various administrations of one covenant of redemption/grace that runs throughout Scripture—what the book of Hebrews calls "the everlasting covenant" (singular) (Heb 13:20).⁴⁷ The following Scripture passages illustrate the fact that God's covenants are interconnected, like strands of a rope.

Dt 7:6-13 ⁶ "For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. [Ex 19:5-6] [Mosaic Covenant] ⁷ "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸ "but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the **oath** which He **swore to your fathers** [Abrahamic Covenant], the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from

Several Old Testament expressions can be equated with the new covenant: the "everlasting covenant" (Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezk 16:60; 37:26; Is 24:5; 55:3; 61:8); a "new heart" or a "new spirit" (Ezk 11:19; 18:31; 36:26; Jer 32:39 LXX); the "covenant of peace" (Is 54:10; Ezk 34:25; 37:26); and "a covenant" or "my covenant" which is placed "in that day" (Is 42:6; 49:8; Ho 2:18-20; Is 59:21). Walter C. Kaiser, "The Old Promise and the New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34," JETS 15:1 (Winter 1972) 14.

⁴⁷ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*. Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 512-537. Robert E. Fugate, *Some Continuities and Discontinuities between the Older Testament and the Newer Testament*, 9-13. Idem., "Blessings of Abrahamic Covenant: Our Inheritance in Christ," unpublished paper.

the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.⁹ “Therefore know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; [Ex 20:5-6] [Mosaic Covenant] ¹⁰ “and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. ¹¹ “Therefore you shall keep the **commandment**, the **statutes**, and the **judgments** which I command you today, to observe them [Mosaic Covenant]. ¹² “Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the **covenant** and the mercy which He **swore to your fathers** [Abrahamic Covenant]. ¹³ “And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock [Dt 28:4] [Mosaic Covenant], in the **land** of which He **swore to your fathers** to give you [Abrahamic Covenant]. (Observe the name “Abraham” throughout Exodus and Deuteronomy.)

Ezk 37:24-26 “**David** My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd [Davidic Covenant]; they shall also walk in **My judgments** and **observe My statutes**, and do them [Mosaic Covenant]. ²⁵ “Then they shall dwell in the **land** that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, **forever** [Abrahamic Covenant]; and My servant **David** shall be their prince **forever** [Davidic Covenant]. ²⁶ “Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an **everlasting covenant** with them [new covenant]; I will establish them and **multiply them**, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst **forevermore**. [David had been dead for 400 years.]

Ezk 36:26-28 “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh [new covenant]. ²⁷ “I will put My Spirit within you [new covenant] and cause you to walk in **My statutes**, and you will keep **My judgments** and do them [Mosaic Covenant]. ²⁸ “Then you shall dwell

in the **land** that I gave to your fathers [Abrahamic Covenant]; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

Ezk 34:23-24 “I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them-- My servant **David**. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 “And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant **David** a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken. [Davidic Covenant and new covenant]

[In these prophecies by Ezekiel, we learn that God’s new acts of redemption are “in grand fulfillment of the creation, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants.”⁴⁸]

Jer 31:31-34 “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah--³² “not according to the [Mosaic] covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.³³ “But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of **Israel** after those days, says the LORD: I will put **My law** [Mosaic Covenant] in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.³⁴ “No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘**Know the LORD,**’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (cf. Heb 8:8-12; 10:16-17).

Jer 33:22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants [Abrahamic Covenant] of David My servant [Davidic Covenant] and the Levites who minister to Me [Mosaic Covenant].

Lk 1:32-33, 54-55, 68-73³² “He [Jesus] will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father **David**.³³ “And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end [Davidic

⁴⁸ Willem A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word*, 332.

Covenant].” . . . ⁵⁴ He [God] has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of *His* mercy, ⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers, To **Abraham** and to his seed forever [Abrahamic Covenant].” . . . ⁶⁸ “Blessed *is* the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, ⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant **David** [Davidic Covenant], ⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who *have been* since the world began, ⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, ⁷² To perform the mercy *promised* to our **fathers** And to remember His holy **covenant** [singular], ⁷³ The oath which He swore to our father **Abraham** [Abrahamic Covenant].⁴⁴⁹

Ac 2:29–36, 39 ²⁹ “Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch **David**, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ “Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,⁴⁵⁰ ³¹ “he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. ³² “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ³³ “Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He

⁴⁴⁹ On the basis of these verses, “**The entire gospel of the kingdom can be explained in the categories of the covenant promised by God**” (Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* [Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1962], 201).

⁴⁵⁰ “In his ascension, however, Jesus entered into a new exercise of His messiahship. This is expounded in Acts 2:24–35. Jesus has been seated at the right hand of God and installed upon the **throne of David** (2:30). Here Peter under inspiration reinterprets the prophecy of Ps 110:1. **The throne of David is no longer in Jerusalem; it is in heaven** at the right hand of God. Jesus is even now reigning as messianic king (Messiah). . . . The most instructive passage is 1 Cor 15:24–26, which reflects the theology of Christ’s session at the right hand of God and His messianic reign. The purpose of the reign is to put His enemies under His feet” (George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of God,” in ISBE₂, 3:29).

poured out this which you now see and hear. ³⁴ “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”’ ³⁶ “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ [Davidic Covenant]. . . . For the promise is to you and to your children [Abrahamic Covenant], and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Ac 3:25–26 ²⁵ “You are sons of the prophets, and of the **covenant** which God made with our **fathers**, saying to **Abraham**, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed’ [Abrahamic Covenant]. ²⁶ “To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one *of you* from your iniquities” [new covenant].

Ac 15:16–17 ¹⁶ ‘After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of **David** [Davidic Covenant], which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; ¹⁷ So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the **Gentiles** who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things’ [i.e., conversion of the Gentiles that began with the Apostles’ ministry, in the new covenant].

Gal 3:7–10, 13–14, 16, 27–29 ⁷ Therefore know that *only* those who are of **faith** are sons of **Abraham**. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would **justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham** beforehand, *saying*, “In you **all the nations** shall be blessed.” ⁹ So then those who *are* of **faith** are blessed with **believing Abraham**. ¹⁰ For as many as are of the works of the law are under the **curse**; for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” . . . ¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree”), ¹⁴ that the blessing of **Abraham** might come upon the **Gentiles in Christ Jesus**, that we might receive the promise of the **Spirit** through **faith**. . . . ¹⁶ Now to **Abraham** and his **Seed** were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your **Seed**,” **who is Christ**. . . . ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized

into Christ have put on Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one **in Christ Jesus**.²⁹ And if you *are* Christ's, then you are **Abraham's seed**, and **heirs** according to the **promise** [Abrahamic Covenant and new covenant].

2 Cor 1:20 For **all the promises** of God **in Him** [Jesus Christ] *are* Yes, and **in Him** Amen, to the glory of God through us [all Old Testament promises are contained in the new covenant].

Heb 13:20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of **the everlasting covenant** . . .

Thus, God's various covenants (plural in Ro 9:4 and Eph 2:12) of promise (e.g., the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants) were components of "the everlasting covenant" (singular) of grace (Heb 13:20).

God's covenants are not merely successive (contra dispensationalism), they are intertwined. Only covenant theology does justice to this inter-relationship and continuity between God's covenants.

Jesus Christ is the key to understanding God's covenants

Jesus Christ is the key to properly understanding God's covenants. In his humanity, Jesus Christ is the Son (seed, offspring) of Adam (Lk 3:38), the Son of Abraham (Mt 1:1; Gal 3:16, 19), and the Son of David (Lk 1:31-33; Mt 1:1 with 28:18-20). It is extremely significant that the New Testament begins with the introduction: "The book of the genealogy [γένεσις] of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Mt 1:1). Matthew is alerting his readers to the fact that God's covenant promises to Abraham and to David are finding their fulfillment in their Son, Jesus Christ.⁴⁵¹ By linking Jesus to Abraham,

⁴⁵¹ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*. Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 512-537. Robert E. Fugate, *Some Continuities and Discontinuities between the Older Testament and the Newer Testament*, 9-13.

Matthew declares that God's covenant promise to bless all nations (Gn 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14) is now being fulfilled through Jesus Christ (Ac 3:25; Gal 3:8).⁴⁵² By linking Jesus the Messiah to David, Matthew informs his readers that through this Son of David God is restoring the Davidic kingship over true Israel.⁴⁵³

The covenant of creation (Gn 1:26-28) is being restored in the new creation in Christ (Rv 21:5ff; 22:1-3). The new creation began with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁵⁴ Creation is being partially restored as new-creation believers (2 Cor 5:17) steward God's earth and disciple the nations under Christ's lordship (Mt 28:18-20; Rv 11:15; Ps 8:4-8).

With regard to the post-lapsarian covenant, Jesus Christ is the Seed of the woman Who crushes Satan's head (Gn 3:15 NKJV). The promise to crush Satan's head applies supremely to Christ, who is the elect lineal descendant of Adam and Eve (Lk 3:38). Christ defeated Satan during His earthly ministry (Mt 12:28-29 // Mk 3:27; Lk 11:20-22; 10:17-20), on the cross (Jn 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:14-15; Heb 2:14-15) (which the basis for the new covenant), and by His triumphal resurrection and messianic reign from heaven (Mt 28:18; Ps 110:1-3; Ac 2:30-36; 1 Cor 15:23-28; Rv 1:18; 12:5-12; 20:1-3). Because of Christ's victory over Satan and believers' union with Christ, this

Idem., "Blessings of Abrahamic Covenant: Our Inheritance in Christ."

⁴⁵² Cf. Mt 2:1-2, 10-12; 8:11; 28:19.

⁴⁵³ "The significance of Jesus is deeply rooted in the history of Old Testament Israel, so deeply that the blessings promised to Old Testament Israel find their fulfillment only through him. He is Israel, the representative embodiment of true Israel and Israel's king. . . . Israel can never again be defined apart from Jesus Christ." (David E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel: One Covenant or Two?* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995], 34, 36). Holwerda adds, "The zeal of Yahweh is now at work in history establishing the rule of justice and righteousness of the promised Davidic kingdom (Is 9:6-7; Mt 4:15-16)" (49).

⁴⁵⁴ J.R. Levison, "Creation and New Creation," *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 189f.

prophesied new covenant victory over Satan is the heritage of all Christ's spiritual offspring⁴⁵⁵ (Ro 16:20; Dn 7:18, 22, 27; Eph 2:6; Rv 1:6; 2:26-7; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:5).

The promises and blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are incorporated into the new covenant⁴⁵⁶ through Jesus Christ,⁴⁵⁷ a lineal descendant of Abraham (Mt 1:1; Lk 3:34; Gal 3:16). These covenant blessings include justification by faith apart from works (Jer 32:39-41;⁴⁵⁸ Lk 1:54-55, 68-73; Ac 3:25-26; Gal 3:6-9, 13-29; Ro 4:3, 9-12, 16-18, 22; cf. Ro 15:8-9); Abraham is the father of all who believe—Jew and Gentile (Ro 4:16-17). "All of you who were baptized into Christ [the sign of the new covenant] . . . are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise" (Gal 3:27 with 29). Christians are in the Abrahamic Covenant!⁴⁵⁹ Indeed, the Abrahamic

⁴⁵⁵ Note Jesus' "children" in Heb 2:13; Mk 10:24; Jn 13:33; 21:5.

⁴⁵⁶ John the Baptizer's proselyte baptism was also related to the Abrahamic Covenant (Mt 3:9; Lk 3:8). Phillip G. Kayser, *Seven Biblical Principles that Call for Infant Baptism* (Omaha, NE: Biblical Blueprints, 2009), 4.

⁴⁵⁷ "All the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant were made to Christ (Gal 3:16; 2 Cor 1:20; Ro 15:8; 9:6) and thus to the elect whom Christ took upon Him (Heb 2:16; Gal 3:16, 26-29; Ro 9:6-8)" (Phillip G. Kayser, *Seven Biblical Principles that Call for Infant Baptism*, 6).

⁴⁵⁸ Under the New Covenant God's promise to Abraham of land is no longer limited to Canaan, but includes the entire cosmos (Ro 4:13; Eph 6:3 with Ex 20:12; Ps 2:7; Mt 5:5; 28:18-20; 1 Cor 4:21-23; cf. Heb 11:10, 16), culminating in a renewed heaven and earth (Is 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1). See O. Palmer Robertson, *Understanding the Land of the Bible* (Phillipsburg, PA: P&R, 1996), esp. 143f; cited by Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 513-515 n 19.

⁴⁵⁹ "The basic premise of the argument for infant baptism is that the New Testament economy is the unfolding and fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham and that the necessary implication is the unity and continuity of the church. . . . The gospel dispensation is the unfolding of the covenant made with Abraham" (John Murray, *Christian Baptism* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed,

Covenant—which promises that “all the nations/families of the earth shall be blessed” in Abraham’s descendant (Ac 3:25–26; quoting Gn 22:18 and 26:4; cf. 12:2–3; 18:18; 28:14), and that he shall be “the father of a multitude of nations”—are only fulfilled in Christ in the new covenant (Ro 4:16–18; quoting Gn 15:5c–6 and 17:5).⁴⁶⁰

Jesus Christ is the prophet like Moses (Dt 18:15, 18–19; Ac 3:22–23; 7:37) in that He had unmediated revelations from God, he is a covenant mediator and law giver, etc.⁴⁶¹

The messianic rule of the Lord Jesus Christ, the lineal Son of David (Mt 1:1, 6; Lk 3:31), is at the heart of the new covenant (Lk 1:67–70; Ac 2:30–36; Ezk 34:23–24; 36:26–28; 37:24–26; cf. Ac 15:16–17).

Everlasting covenants

Interestingly, God’s covenants with Noah (Gn 9:12, 16), Abraham and his descendants (Gn 13:15; 17:7, 13, 19; 1 Ch 16:17; Ps 105:9–11), Moses (Lv 24:8), and David (2 Sm 23:5) were each described as an “everlasting covenant” with “everlasting” covenant promises that will continue “forever” (Gn 17:8; 2 Sm 7:13, 16; 2 Ch 21:7; Ps 18:50; 89:3–4, 34–37; cp. Ps 132:11–12; Jer 33:17). **“God’s previous covenants may be regarded as “everlasting” only insofar as they find their realization in the new covenant.”**⁴⁶² The essence of each of these

1980], 45, 48). Cf. Robert L. Reymond, *Contending for the Faith*, 191f.

⁴⁶⁰ Robert L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 782.

⁴⁶¹ Derek Prince draws twenty-seven points of resemblance between Moses and Jesus (*Three Messages for Israel* [Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Derek Prince Publications, 1969], 25–40). David L. Cooper also provides extensive comparisons (*Messiah: His Redemptive Career* [Los Angeles, CA: Biblical Research Society, 1935], 14–40).

Compared to other Old Testament prophets, Moses was unique in his miracles (Dt 34:10–12), his direct access to God’s revelation (Nu 12:6–8; Dt 34:10–12), his giving of the law as a covenant mediator, his actions as deliverer, and his office as judge over the people. Thus, the prophecies contained in Dt 18:15, 18–19 do not refer to the Old Testament line of prophets.

⁴⁶² O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 277f (bold added).

covenants was carried forward into the successive covenants. Each successive covenant expanded the previous covenants so as to include additional elements.

Covenantal continuity may even be demonstrated linguistically. Old Testament scholar Walter Kaiser explains that the “new” covenant is

the “**renewed**” or “**restored**” covenant. . . . The “new” began with the “old” promise made to Abraham, Moses, and David; and its renewal perpetuated all those promises and more. . . . Nothing was deleted, abrogated, jettisoned, or replaced except that which was clearly so delimited from its first appearance. Thus Jesus by His death **renewed the covenant, but He did not institute an entirely “new” covenant.**⁴⁶³

Elsewhere Kaiser adds, “Both Hebrew *hadas* and Greek *kainos* frequently mean ‘to **renew**’ or ‘to **restore**,’ as in the ‘new commandment,’ (which is actually an old one [1 Jn 2:7]) the ‘new moon,’ the ‘new creature in Christ [2 Cor 5:17],’ the ‘new heart,’ and the ‘new heavens and new earth.’”⁴⁶⁴

New covenant culmination of previous covenants

The new covenant is the culmination and the realization of the prophetic promises God made to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David (2 Cor 1:20; Gal 3:16; cf. 3:27–29).

⁴⁶³ Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 233f, 268 (bold added).

⁴⁶⁴ Walter C. Kaiser, “The Old Promise and the New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31–34,” *JETS* 15:1 [Winter 1972] 17, bold added). See the extensive scholarly quotations in “Appendix A: The Law in the New Covenant in Jer 31:33 & Heb 8:10” and “Appendix B: Continuity in Hebrews 1:1,” both in Robert E. Fugate, *Some Continuities and Discontinuities between the Older Testament and the Newer Testament*.

Nevertheless, it is true that there is an eschatological newness to the new covenant, with the epochal incarnation of the eternal Son of God breaking into human history, inaugurating the Messianic kingdom in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. See pillar 8, “Eschatology.”

- Scripture clearly teaches that the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant are incorporated into the new covenant (Jer 32:39-41;⁴⁶⁵ Lk 1:54-55, 68-73; Ac 3:25-26; Gal 3:29; cf. Ro 15:8-9)—including: justification by grace alone through faith alone (Gal 3:7-9; Ro 4:3, 9-12, 16-17, 22); the forgiveness of sins (Ac 3:26); and the Holy Spirit (Gal 3:14). Abraham is the father of all who believe—Jew and Gentile (Ro 4:11, 16-17).
- The new covenant is also integrally related to the Mosaic Covenant (which was based on the Abrahamic Covenant⁴⁶⁶), since it stipulates that God will write His law as revealed to Moses⁴⁶⁷ on the minds and hearts of His people (Jer 31:31, 33; Heb 8:8-12; 10:16-17; cf. Ezk 36:26-28; 37:24-26).⁴⁶⁸ Thus, the new covenant is inseparable from the moral law and the ethical principles of the civil law taught in the Mosaic Covenant.
- At the heart of the new covenant is the messianic rule of the lineal (Mt 1:1, 6; Lk 3:31) Son of David (Lk 1:32-33, 67-71; Ac 2:30-36; Ezk 34:23-24; 36:26-28; 37:24-26; cf. Ac

⁴⁶⁵ Under the New Covenant God's promise to Abraham of land is no longer limited to Canaan, but includes the entire cosmos (Ro 4:13; Eph 6:3 with Ex 20:12; Ps 2:7; Mt 5:5; 28:18-20; 1 Cor 4:21-23; cf. Heb 11:10, 16), culminating in a renewed heaven and earth (Is 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1). See O. Palmer Robertson, *Understanding the Land of the Bible*, esp. 143f; cited by Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 513-515 n 19.

⁴⁶⁶ God sent the prophet-deliverer-covenant mediator Moses in order to keep His covenant with Abraham (Ex 2:24; 3:6, 15-16; 4:5; 6:3-8; 32:13; 33:1; Lv 26:42; Dt 1:8; 6:10; 9:5, 27; 29:13; 30:20; 34:4).

⁴⁶⁷ See the extensive scholarly quotations in "Appendix A: The Law in the New Covenant in Jer 31:33 & Heb 8:10" and "Appendix B: Continuity in Hebrews 1:1," both in Robert E. Fugate, *Some Continuities and Discontinuities between the Older Testament and the Newer Testament*.

⁴⁶⁸ The Mosaic Covenant is one of the covenants of promise (Eph 2:12). God's law is not against God's promise (Gal 3:21).

15:16–17), as had been prophetically promised in the Davidic Covenant.

- The post-lapsarian covenant, in which God decreed perpetual warfare between the elect seed of the woman and the reprobate seed of Satan (Gn 3:15), resulting in Satan being crushed, carries over into the new covenant (Ro 16:20; cf. Dn 7:18, 22, 27; Eph 2:6; Rv 1:6; 2:26–27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:5).
- Yet, God’s covenanting word to Noah prevents the immediate destruction of all the wicked (Gn 8:20–22; 2 Pt 3:5–7). The Noahic Covenant reaffirms the Creation Mandate (cp. Gn 1:26–28 with 9:1–2, 7). Furthermore, the Noahic prohibition against eating blood continues in the new covenant (Ac 15:20–21; Gn 9:4).
- Even the covenant of creation (Gn 1:26–28) is being restored in Christ, as believers are: God’s stewards ruling over His earth; discipling the nations (Mt 28:18–20; Ps 8:4–8); and filling the earth with His covenantal presence⁴⁶⁹ (Eph 1:23; 3:19; 4:10, 13). The creation ordinance of marriage-family continues in the new covenant until the final resurrection.

Covenant headship

There is another overarching line of Biblical evidence that teaches covenant theology: covenant headship. Jesus Christ is the “second Man” (1 Cor 15:47) and the “last Adam” (1 Cor 15:45), i.e., the second and the last Man/Adam to be the federal or covenant head of the human race. Paul’s contrast between Adam and Christ is the core of Paul’s theological arguments in 1 Corinthians 15:21–22, 45–49 and Romans 5:12–19.

Although the woman sinned first in the garden (Gn 3:6), God went first to the man (Gn 3:9), and clearly he holds the man primarily responsible for the sin of the human race (Ro 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:21–22). Notice particularly in Ro 5:12–21 the emphasis

⁴⁶⁹ J. Ryan Lister, *The Presence of God*.

on “*one* man’s trespass” (5:15), “*one* man’s sin” and “*one* trespass” (5:16), “*one* man’s trespass” and “*one* man” (5:17), “*one* trespass” (5:18), and “*one* man’s disobedience” (5:19). The woman is conspicuously absent from the discussion. Although she sinned first, God created man as the responsible leader in this relationship (cf. 1 Cor 11:7–9; 1 Tim 2:13–15), and God holds him morally culpable for the sin, by his “one” act of disobedience, that spreads to the whole human race (Ro 5:12).⁴⁷⁰

Thus, these Scriptures clearly teach covenantal headship within the covenant relationship. In so doing they reinforce covenantal continuity throughout Scripture.

Immanuel principle: God is with us

Another way of demonstrating the unity of God’s covenants is by considering that the heart of each of these covenants is the same, i.e., the Immanuel principle—“God is with us.” The Abrahamic Covenant (Gn 17:7), the Mosaic Covenant (Ex 6:6–7; 19:4–5; 29:45; Lv 11:45; 26:12 44–45; Dt 4:20; 29:13), the Davidic Covenant (2 Ki 11:17 // 2 Ch 23:16; cp. Ezk 34:24), and the new covenant (Jer 24:7; 31:33; 32:37–38; Zc 2:11; 8:8, 16; Mt 1:23; Heb 8:10; 2 Cor 6:16) all contain the same central promise as to how God will relate to his people—“I shall be your God and you shall be my people.” This theme is developed to show that, as a result of God making covenant with His people, God actually dwells in the midst of his people, particularly in the tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex 25:8; 29:42–45; Lv 26:9–13; cp. Ezk 37:26–28), the temple in Jerusalem (anticipated in Dt 12:5, 11, 14; 14:22; 16:2, 6–7, 11; etc.; cf. the heavenly temple, Rv 7:15; 15:5), in His incarnate Son (Jn 1:14; Col 2:9), in His church (Eph 2:21–22; 1 Cor 3:16–17), and, ultimately, in the heavenly Jerusalem (Rv 21:3).

⁴⁷⁰ Bruce A. Ware, “Could Our Savior Have Been a Woman? The Relevance of Jesus’ Gender for His Incarnational Mission,” in *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 8:1 (Spring 2003), 34; available at <http://cbmw.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/8-1.pdf>.

The Immanuel principle, i.e., the presence of God,⁴⁷¹ binds the whole Scripture together, and it is the heart of all God's covenants with man.

Inter-Trinitarian covenant of redemption

Up to this point we have been discussing the seven covenants God made with man and their essential unity and continuity, culminating in the new covenant. However, the first covenant was not the covenant of creation. The first covenant transcended time. It was made between the members of the Trinity, delineating their respective roles in redemption. This covenant⁴⁷² is usually called the **covenant of redemption**. This inter-Trinitarian covenant of redemption is the background to the Gospel of John's repeated emphasis of the fact that God the Father sent⁴⁷³ the Son into the world to redeem His people (Eph 1:4-5; Jn 10:29; 17:6), and that Jesus perfectly kept the Father's commands (Jn 14:31; 15:10; Phil 2:8; Heb 5:8), and He finished the work the Father gave Him to do (Jn 4:34; 5:19-20, 36; 6:38; 9:4; 10:37-38; 17:4; 19:30).⁴⁷⁴ Other passages refer to Jesus' reward for obeying the Father (Ps 2:8; Mt 28:18; Phil 2:7-11). The Father assigned or conferred by covenant (Lk 22:29 διατίθεμαι) the mediatorial or messianic kingdom to Christ. This inter-Trinitarian covenant of redemption is borne witness to "in heaven" by "the ark of the covenant of the Lord," which is "in His temple" (Rv 11:19 Majority Text).⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷¹ J. Ryan Lister, *The Presence of God*.

⁴⁷² Unlike God's covenants with man, the Trinitarian covenant was not a suzerainty treaty between a lord and his vassals. Rather, it was a covenant between equals.

⁴⁷³ Jn 3:17, 34; 4:34; 5:23-24, 30, 36-38; 6:29, 38-39, 44, 57; 7:16, 18, 28-29, 33; 8:16, 18, 28-29, 42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44-45, 49; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21.

⁴⁷⁴ Gerrit C. Berkouwer, *The Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 315f.

⁴⁷⁵ The heavenly ark of the covenant is the original; the ark of the covenant made according to the pattern God gave to Moses was a copy of the heavenly ark (Heb 8:5; 9:23-24; Ex 25:9, 40).

Blessing, seed, and land in all God's covenants

“Every covenant God makes—with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus—there are these three elements [that were found in the Creation Mandate, Gn 1:26–28]: a divine blessing, a seed, and a land. God blesses his people by giving them descendants to live in a land, subduing that land to bring glory to God.”⁴⁷⁶

God's covenants are part of the teleological-eschatological theme of the entire Bible: God gives **dominion** to His image-bearing vice-regents (His covenant people), who establish a **dynasty**, where God's manifest, relational **presence** may dwell among them, thereby extending God's kingdom and glorifying God.⁴⁷⁷

“Note in this Great Commission [Mt 28:19–20] (1) the *blessing* of Jesus' presence, (2) the spread of the gospel to all *lands*, (3) to be filled with the *seed* of baptized believers”⁴⁷⁸ (Ac 2:39).

In Ephesians 6:2–3, “Paul's quotation modifies the original Old Testament form of the promise by omitting the phrase, ‘that the Lord your God is giving you,’ a phrase referring to the land of Canaan (Dt 5:16). By omitting this specification, Paul declares that now **in Christ the promise applies to any land**. The promise has indeed been universalized, but it has been **universalized precisely with reference to land**. What was once a blessing promised to God's people in the particular land of Canaan, given by God as a gift, is now promised to God's people living **anywhere on the earth**, which was given by God as a gift. . . . A **universalized land** is not an irrelevance; it is, in fact, what the [OT] prophets anticipated.”⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, 250. Cf. *Ibid.*, *Systematic Theology*, 1034.

⁴⁷⁷ J. Ryan Lister, *The Presence of God*, chapter 3.

⁴⁷⁸ John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 81.

⁴⁷⁹ David E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel: One Covenant or Two?* 102; bold added. This was also Calvin's interpretation (*Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, eds. Torrance and Torrance, 213). Cf. Robert E. Fugate, “Critique of Blomberg, Neither Poverty nor Riches,” unpublished paper.

Under the new covenant, God's promise to Abraham of land is no longer limited to Canaan, but includes the entire cosmos (Ro 4:13⁴⁸⁰; Eph 6:3 with Ex 20:12; Ps 2:7-12; Mt 5:5; 28:18-20; 1 Cor 4:21-23; cf. Heb 11:10, 16), culminating in a renewed heaven and earth (Is 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1).⁴⁸¹

All God's covenants include entire households

The seven covenants that God made with man always included his household.

- The covenant of creation's Dominion Covenant/Cultural Mandate included offspring: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." These blessed covenantal descendants are to rule the earth as God's steward's (Gn 1:26-30; Ps 8:6-8). Adam's failure in his probation affected all his descendants (Ro 5:12, 14; 1 Cor 15:22).
- The post-lapsarian covenant included: (a) God-decreed, perpetual warfare (personal hostility, antithesis) between the elect seed of the woman and the seed of Satan (Gn 3:15); and (b) the first proclamation of the gospel and the inauguration of the covenant of grace with the seed of the woman.
- The Noahic covenant. The Noahic Covenant included Noah's sons and their wives (Gn 6:18; 7:1; 9:9) and "every living creature of all flesh" (Gn 9:9-17). The Noahic Covenant reaffirmed the Creation Mandate, which included children (cp. Gn 1:26-28 with 9:1-2, 7).
- The Abrahamic Covenant included Abraham's numerous descendants (Gn 12:1-3; 13:14-16; 15:18-21; 17:1-16, 19;

⁴⁸⁰ In Ro 4:13 κόσμος denotes either "planet earth as a place of **inhabitation**, the world" (BDAG, 561f, def. # 5a), or, "the sum total of everything here and now, the world, **the (orderly) universe**" (def. # 3). Cp. "the inhabited world" (TDNT, 3:888).

⁴⁸¹ O. Palmer Robertson, *Understanding the Land of the Bible*, esp. 143f; cited by Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 513-515 n 19.

22:16-18; cf. Is 41:8; 51:2; Jer 33:26; Mc 7:20),⁴⁸² with the covenantal sign of circumcision being given to all Abraham's male offspring (Gn 17:10-14, 23-27; Ac 7:8).⁴⁸³ This covenant was confirmed with Abraham's son Isaac (Gn 17:19; 26:3-4), his grandson Jacob (Gn 28:4, 13-15), and with the male children of Israel (Dt 29:9-14; Jos 5:2-9).

- The Mosaic Covenant included covenant children (Ex 24:3, 7-8; Dt 5:2; 29:10-16⁴⁸⁴; cf. Is 63:11-12; Dn 9:11, 13; Mc 6:4; Mal 4:4).
- The Davidic Covenant promised David a dynasty in which his sons would rule perpetually (2 Ch 21:7; Ps 89:3-4, 29, 36; 2 Sm 7:11-16; 22:51; 23:5; cf. Jer 30:9; 33:21-22; Ho 3:4-5; Is 55:3-4; 9:7).

⁴⁸² God's covenants with Isaac and Jacob may be viewed as renewals of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gn 17:19, 21; 26:3-4; 28:13-15; 35:12; Ex 2:24; Ps 105:8-10, 42-43; etc.) (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 27 n 1). God's covenant with Phinehas and his descendants (Nu 25:10-13) is an addendum to the priestly legislation of God's covenant with Moses/Israel (cf. "covenant with Levi," Mal 2:4-8; Ne 13:29; Jer 33:21-22). (Cf. *NIV Study Bible*, 23.)

⁴⁸³ "Males were circumcised because they collectively pointed to the male Seed who would redeem God's people [cf. Gal 3:16]. . . . Collectively, the males of Israel, God's son (Ex 4:22), pointed to Jesus, God's only begotten Son" (J.V. Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit* [Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010], 340).

Circumcision "was never done in the sanctuary or by a priest" (Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2 vols. [New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1961], 1:46). It was performed by the head of the house (I. Howard Marshall, *Luke*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978], 88).

⁴⁸⁴ "The covenant demand is here extended to those who were yet to be born. Future generations were one with that early Israel who took the oath at Sinai. There is a genealogical continuity to the covenant" (J.A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, NICOT [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1974], 281).

- The new covenant (Ac 2:39; 1 Cor 7:14).

In his Spirit-anointed sermon on the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter declared:

For the promise is to you and **to your children**, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call (Ac 2:39).

John Frame observes, “That [Ac 2:39] is Old Testament covenantal language. To a first-century Jew that language would indicate that, just as God included Abraham’s children in covenant with him, so God includes the children of believers in the new covenant.”⁴⁸⁵ (Cf. Peter’s reference to the Abrahamic Covenant in his evangelistic sermon recorded in Acts 3:25.)

The Apostle Paul also underscored the fact that, in the new covenant, God still deals with households:

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy (1 Cor 7:14).

In light of the Biblical fact that every covenant God has ever made with man has always included his household, we conclude that the phrase **“and their seed” is part of the definition of (God’s) covenant.**⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁵ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, 281. To properly interpret Scripture, one of the most crucial hermeneutical questions to ask is, What did the words mean to the people to whom they were addressed?

⁴⁸⁶ Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Baptism: Three Views*, ed. David F. Wright (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 102. Ferguson adds, “Covenant administration underlies God’s desire and purpose in redemption, namely to restore that which was lost in the Fall. This purpose focuses not merely on individual salvation, but human beings set in the context of the family. Sin disrupted the relation to God of man-in-family (Gn 3-4). Grace has the design of restoring all the dimensions of this relationship. The covenant administration of grace has therefore a specifically family orientation.” Cf. Robert S. Rayburn,

Since “all divine covenants prior to the day of Pentecost were made with believers and their seed . . . the community of the people of God always included both believers and their seed.”⁴⁸⁷

Examination of both household salvation and household judgments recorded in Scripture will provide even more evidence that God covenantally deals with households.

Household salvation and judgments

God’s promises of salvation include one’s household (Ac 2:38–39; 1 Pt 3:1–6).⁴⁸⁸

The New Testament gives many examples of household salvation: royal official (Jn 4:53); Zacchaeus (Lk 19:9); Cornelius (Ac 10:2, 47–48; 11:14); Lydia (Ac 16:14–15); Philippian jailer (Ac 16:30–34); Crispus (Ac 18:8); Aristobulus (Ro 16:10); Narcissus (Ro 16:11); Stephanas (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15); Onesiphorus (2 Tim 1:16; 4:19); [Noah (Heb 11:7)].

New Testament examples of household baptisms include: Cornelius (Ac 10:47–48 and 11:14); Lydia (Ac 16:14–15); Philippian jailer (Ac 16:30–34); Stephanas (1 Cor 1:16); and probably Crispus (Ac 18:8; 1 Cor 1:14).⁴⁸⁹

“The Presbyterian Doctrines of Covenant Children, Covenant Nurture and Covenant Succession,” <http://www.faithtacoma.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Covenant-Succession.pdf>.

⁴⁸⁷ Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Baptism: Three Views*, ed. David F. Wright, 104.

⁴⁸⁸ “God has not promised that every child of believing parents would be saved, but he has definitely promised to perpetuate his work of grace in the line of the children of believers considered as a group” (William Hendriksen, *The Covenant of Grace*, rev. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978], 28f).

⁴⁸⁹ The only New Testament examples of individual baptisms involve two unmarried men and one widower (with no children living in his household), i.e., Jesus, the Ethiopian eunuch, and Saul of Tarsus! Robert L. Reymond lists all actual baptisms recorded in the New Testament (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 926).

Of course, the Old Testament contains examples of household blessings and salvation: Noah (Gn 6:8, 18; 7:1; 9:9; Heb 11:7); Abraham (Gn 17:7-8); Phinehas (Nu 25:10-13); Rahab (Josh 2:18; 6:23-25); Obed-edom (2 Sm 6:11); etc.

The Old Testament also contains many examples of household judgments or curses: Adam and Eve; Ham's descendants (Gn 9:25-27); those having idols (Ex 20:5-6; cf. 34:7); Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Nu 16:31-33; Dt 11:6); Achan (Jos 7:24-26); Eli (1 Sm 2:31-36; 3:11-14); inhabitants of Sodom, Canaan, the Amalekites, etc.; Pashur (Jer 20:6); Shemaiah (Jer 29:32). Cf. Israel in A.D. 70 (Lk 19:44); and imprecatory Psalms (Pss 109:9-10, 12-13; 137:8-9; cf. 69:25; 21:10; Is 13:16).

(See the discussion of individualism below.)

In sum, our discussion of God's covenants has demonstrated their essential unity. "They all have the same principle: God's desire to be our God and for us to be his people. They all speak of seed, land, and redemption. They all include law and grace. They all point to Jesus."⁴⁹⁰

Hermeneutical errors of those rejecting covenant theology

There are two, nearly ubiquitous hermeneutical errors committed by those people who reject covenant theology (including Reformed Baptists).

1. Dualism: bifurcating the Abrahamic Covenant into spiritual⁴⁹¹ blessings for a spiritual people (i.e., the New Testament church)

Luke tells us nothing about the baptism of Simon the sorcerer (Ac 8:13).

⁴⁹⁰ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, 127.

⁴⁹¹ After surveying Paul's use of the word πνευματικός in his letters (*God's Empowering Presence*, 28-32), Gordon D. Fee concludes that πνευματικός never means "spiritual" (32). Fee explains that the problem with the English word "spiritual" is that it "is almost always understood over against an antonym of some kind, in a way that the

and material blessings for a biological-national people (i.e., the Jews and the nation-state of Israel). Dispensationalists and Christian Zionists are classic examples of groups fostering this error. These dualistic categories are rooted in pagan, Platonist, philosophical thought (spirit vs. matter dualism).⁴⁹² They are antithetical to Biblical thought. (The amillennialist view of Christ's kingdom as a purely "spiritual" kingdom is a related error.) It is crucial to observe that spiritual and material promises were given

word "Spirit" is not (667). The translation "spiritual" is misleading, since most contemporary uses of the English word "spiritual"—such as "religious," "nonmaterial" "(a meaning absolutely foreign to Paul," "mystical," or, even worse, "the interior life of the believer"—inevitably incorporate elements of Greek philosophical thought (32). "It is extremely doubtful whether Paul would have thought of the blessings associated with the Spirit [Eph 1:3] as being over against such 'material blessings'" (667). Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida define πνευματικός as "pertaining to being derived from or being about the Spirit" (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, §12.21).

Incredibly, some Baptist scholars, in attempting to avoid the logical implications of covenant theology, have argued for two Abrahamic Covenants (Gn 15 and 17). But this evasion flies in the face of all of Scripture. All Biblical references to the Abrahamic Covenant (i.e., God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) refer to it in the singular (e.g., Gn 17:9; Ex 2:24; 6:3-4; Lv 26:42; 2 Ki 13:23; 1 Ch 16:16; Ps 105:9; Ac 3:25; 7:8; etc.), never in the plural, i.e., "covenants." Thus, there was only one, unified Abrahamic Covenant. There are too many exegetical problems with creating two Abrahamic Covenants to cover here. See: Jeffrey J. Niehaus, "God's Covenant with Abraham," *JETS* 56/2 (2013), 249-271, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/56/56-2/JETS_56-2_249-271_Niehaus.pdf); David E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel: One Covenant or Two?* Richard P. Belcher Jr., *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology*, 224, 237f.

⁴⁹² O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 214f.

to Abraham as a unit; they are intermingled and cannot be separated. The promises in Genesis 12, 15, and 17 are the same.⁴⁹³

2. Divorcing the Abrahamic Covenant from

- the creation covenant in Eden (which included the Dominion Covenant/Cultural Mandate over the entire earth). The Abrahamic Covenant is a re-affirmation of the Dominion Covenant (Gn 1:26–28).⁴⁹⁴ And
- the new covenant, which teaches that Jesus Christ is the Seed of Abraham to whom God’s covenant promises were made (Gal 3). Consequently, those not holding to covenant theology wrongly identify God’s covenant people as unbelieving Jews outside Christ’s church, applying the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant (including the land of Israel) to the wrong people!

Why some Christians reject covenant theology

In light of the abundance of evidence cited above, why do many contemporary evangelicals reject covenant theology? In addition to the two hermeneutical errors just mentioned, here are the most common issues:

- **Individualism:** making the individual—rather than the covenantal family—the cellular unit of society (including the church), which is a Western perspective that is diametrically opposed to that of Scripture.⁴⁹⁵ Contemporary Western

⁴⁹³ Richard P. Belcher Jr., *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology*, 224, 237f.

⁴⁹⁴ David J.A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 29, 77–79. Gordon J. Wenham, *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch*, 41f, 157. The Dominion covenant (which includes the entire earth) was the land prototype (Robert E. Fugate, “Theological Framework for the Land of Israel,” 1; unpublished paper).

⁴⁹⁵ “The Scriptures are much more corporate minded than we are today, and the OT use of ‘household’ reflects that difference. God does not deal with each believer in a merely atomistic fashion. Once

culture, with its willful ignorance of God's Word, does not understand covenantal headship.

- Rejection of infant baptism (more accurately termed covenant family baptism in Reformed theology).

Abraham believed, then his whole household was considered to be in the covenant and the males were required to receive the covenant sign, circumcision [Gn 17]. God gave a charge of holiness not only to Abraham, but also to his whole household (Gn 18:19). He commanded various religious ceremonies to be observed by the household as a unit: the Passover (Ex 12:3-4; 2 Ch 35:6); the sin offering on the Day of Atonement (Lv 16:17); the sacrifice of the firstborn of the flocks (Dt 15:20); tithing (Dt 14:26; 12:7); and eating of the Levitical tithe (Nu 18:31)" (ISBE², 2:773; cf. TDOT, 2:114).

"The sociological unit in the Hellenistic world, as in the OT, was not the individual, the city or the state but the family or household. Early Christianity, including the NT itself, to a large degree addressed people not as separate individual entities but as connected to the household" (*Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* [DLNT], eds. R.P. Martin and P.H. Davids [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997],, 511).

"New inquiries have shown us what significance 'corporate personality' has had for the thinking of the Bible, and how great a part family solidarity played in the ancient world. **If we wish to understand biblical texts rightly, we must radically free ourselves from modern individualistic thinking**, and in particular keep before our eyes the fact that the family represented by the father of the household was in old times much more strongly experienced as a unity than today. People felt the solidarity, the mutual responsibility and the unity of the group. All important questions were decided by the father of the household and his decision was binding on all. . . . The children were not regarded by the primitive church as isolated units; the household was regarded as a unity in the sight of God" (Joachim Jeremias, *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries* [London: SCM, 1964], 22f [bold added]).

Cf. Robert E. Fugate, *Biblical Patriarchy: Male Headship in Family, Church, and State*, 43-45ff.

- Rejection of the Sabbath/Lord's Day. The seventh-day Sabbath was a creation ordinance (Gn 2:2-3); it is part of God's moral law (Ex 20:8-11; Dt 5:12-15); and it was a sign of God's covenant (Ex 31:13, 17; Ezk 20:12, 20).⁴⁹⁶ "The Lord's Day" (Rv 1:10) or first-day Sabbath (Greek text in Ac 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; etc.) was the day Jesus rose from the dead, inaugurating the new creation.
- Dispensationalism, which is an unbiblical⁴⁹⁷ hermeneutical system that was invented in the nineteenth century. Its influence has been primarily in the United States and in England (although its eschatology has been adopted by several denominations and been disseminated worldwide).
- Zionism, which misinterprets the Abrahamic Covenant and Israel.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁶ As a sign of God's covenant, the Sabbath points to "the [covenant] Lord [Yahweh] who sanctifies you/them" (Ex 31:13; Ezk 20:12). By synecdoche, the Sabbath is God's covenant (Ex 31:16; Is 56:6).

⁴⁹⁷ Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*. Greg L. Bahnsen and Kenneth L. Gentry, *House Divided: The Break-Up of Dispensational Theology*. Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism*. Joseph M. Canfield, *The Incredible Scofield and His Book*. Curtis Crenshaw and Grover Gunn, *Dispensationalism: Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow*. John Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*. David Lutzweiler, *The Praise of Folly: The Enigmatic Life and Theology of C.I. Scofield*. Keith A. Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?* Philip Mauro, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: An Examination of Modern Dispensationalism*. Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*.

⁴⁹⁸ Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Nutley, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1947), 31-36, 56-58. Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 649-772. Gary M. Burge, *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to "Holy Land" Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010). Colin Chapman, *Whose Promised Land?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002). Edmund P.

Practical consequences of rejecting covenant theology

Reformed Baptists call themselves “Reformed” because they hold to Reformed soteriology (i.e., the so-called five points of Calvinism); but, they do not hold to a full Reformed theology and Biblical worldview.

Clowney, “The New Israel,” in *A Guide to Biblical Prophecy*, eds. Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 207–220. R.T. France, “Old Testament Prophecy and the Future of Israel: A Study of the Teaching of Jesus,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 26:1 (1975), 53–78, http://www.tyndalehouse.com/TynBul/Library/00_TyndaleBulletin_ByDate.htm#TynBul_261_1975. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 81, etc. (France’s commentary contains superb treatments of the eschatological kingdom inaugurated at Christ’s heavenly enthronement and of the Olivet Discourse concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.) David E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel: One Covenant or Two?*, 85–112. Philip Johnston and Peter W.L. Walker, *The Land of Promise* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000). Knox Theological Seminary. “An Open Letter to Evangelicals and Other Interested Parties: The People of God, the Land of Israel, and the Impartiality of the Gospel,” <http://www.bible-researcher.com/openletter.html>. Charles D. Provan, *The Church Is Israel Now* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1987). Robert L. Reymond, “Who Really Owns the ‘Holy Land’?” (<http://againstdispensationalism.blogspot.com/2008/10/who-really-owns-holy-land.html>, posted Saturday, October 18, 2008). Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* 512–515, 1024–1030. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Israel of God: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2000). O. Palmer Robertson, *Understanding the Land of the Bible: A Biblical-Theological Guide* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1996), 138–140, 143f. Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: A Road-map to Armageddon?* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 2004). Peter W.L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996) (especially 116–119, 186–190, 211–213). Peter W.L. Walker, ed., *Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purposes of God*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994). Christopher J.H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 92–99, 187–193.

They reject covenant theology (for reasons cited above). Without the unifying hermeneutic of covenant theology, they hold to a hermeneutic of discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments. Consequently, in those cases in which a given Reformed Baptist leader does uphold God’s just law in our culture, his stance is arbitrary.⁴⁹⁹ As a result, it is impossible to predict what a given Reformed Baptist may believe regarding a given cultural issue. Consider the following troublesome examples:

- Renowned evangelical theologian Wayne Grudem teaches (contrary to Biblical law) that there should be no civil laws prohibiting homosexual acts.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁹ However, those modern covenant theologians who convert to the Lutheran two-kingdom theology (in sharp contrast to historic Reformed/Presbyterian theology) reject the application of God’s law to culture. Such hybrid theologians are almost always amillennialists who spiritualize God’s kingdom and reject its outworking within history.

⁵⁰⁰ Wayne Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 237f. This completely contradicts the civil portions of Biblical law (which Grudem considers to be irrelevant): Lv 18:22, 29; 20:13; Ro 1:26-27, 32; 1 Tim 1:9-10 (on the latter passage see Robert E. Fugate, *God’s Law: The Foundation of Moral Order*, 62-65); etc. Grudem even cites several of these verses to prove that legal marriages must be heterosexual (217). Biblically, that is unquestionably true; however, it is not the point of the verses he cites. The point of these verses is that homosexual acts are such an abomination to God that they deserve civil punishment, up to the maximum penalty of capital punishment. Grudem rejects criminalizing homosexual acts in contemporary America, contra Scripture.

Grudem omits Ro 1:26-27, 32 in this discussion. The New Testament phrase “worthy of death” (ἄξιοι θανάτου) (applied to homosexuality in Ro 1:32) was a common legal expression that denoted having committed a crime that warranted capital punishment in Roman jurisprudence (Lk 23:15; Ac 23:29; 25:11, 25; 26:31). Paul himself clearly uses the phrase with this meaning (Ac 25:11).

- Seminary Presidents John MacArthur and Albert Mohler, as well as Wayne Grudem, all publicly endorsed the Mormon candidate Mitt Romney for President in 2012. Clearly, in their eyes, the First Commandment is irrelevant in contemporary

Therefore, the phrase should be understood to denote capital punishment when Paul writes to the Romans regarding practicing homosexual acts (1:32). In fact, the Greek words ἄξιος (worthy) and θάνατος (death) occur together in only six New Testament verses (Lk 23:15; Ac 23:29; 25:11, 25; 26:31; Ro 1:32)—always with the juridical meaning of capital punishment. This agrees perfectly with the teaching of the other Scriptures (Lv 18:22, 29; 20:13; 1 Tim 1:9-10; cf. God's fiery judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah; etc.).

For a refutation of the view that homosexual acts should not be a civil crime see Greg L. Bahnsen, *Homosexuality: A Biblical View* (Phillipsburg, PA: P&R, 1978).

culture.⁵⁰¹ Their position is consistent with John Piper's misguided defense of religious pluralism.⁵⁰²

⁵⁰¹ “Driscoll, MacArthur, Trump: Who’s Really to Blame,” <https://beforeitsnews.com/opinion-conservative/2016/03/driscoll-macarthur-trump-whos-really-to-blame-3120500.html>. John F. MacArthur, Jr. is pastor of Grace Community Church and president of The Master’s Seminary in Los Angeles, California. Richard Albert Mohler, Jr. is president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. See Joel McDurmon, *Inglorious Kingdoms: Saving the Public Square from the Tyrannies of Bad Theology* (<http://store.americanvision.org/collections/theology/products/inglorious-kingdoms-saving-the-public-square-from-the-tyrannies-of-bad-theology>).

Caveat: In no way am I demeaning the godly Christian character of these men or belittling the value of their ministries. Wayne Grudem, in particular, has produced much excellent Christian teaching and has stood valiantly for truth in many areas.

However, it is helpful to contrast their non-covenantal views with the covenantal views of traditional Presbyterians and Puritans. Philip Schaff (whom we might term “anti-theonomic”) acknowledges that: “The Protestant divines and princes of the sixteenth century felt it to be their duty to God and to themselves to suppress and punish heresy as well as civil crimes. . . . It [the theonomic view] had a strong basis in the national endorsement of the Solemn League and Covenant, and triumphed in the Westminster Assembly. It may therefore be called *the Presbyterian theory of the seventeenth century*” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 7 vols. in 8 [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1895], vol. 6: Modern Christianity: The German Reformation, 51, 77 [italics added]).

⁵⁰² John Piper’s defense of pluralism, “Making Room for Atheism,” available at <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/making-room-for-atheism>, is filled with several egregious errors. Cf. Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*.

- John Piper teaches that Old Testament laws regarding self-defense are null and void in the new covenant.⁵⁰³ Indeed, Piper teaches a wholesale rejection of God’s law.⁵⁰⁴

These examples illustrate the fact that, without the unifying hermeneutic of covenant theology, much Biblical teaching becomes irrelevant to the “New Testament church” and to contemporary culture. The sad result is that, in following such misguided teaching, the church ceases to be light and salt in these areas, which leads to God’s covenantal judgments (Mt 5:13-19).

It is time for the church to return to the Westminster Standards’ example of adhering to covenant theology: WCF 7 (WLC 20, 30-35⁵⁰⁵ // WSC 12, 20); WCF, 14:2; WCF, 28:1 (WLC, Q. 166 // WSC, Q. 94); cp. WCF 1:7, 9.

5. Presuppositionalism

Presuppositionalism is a Biblical approach to worldview and apologetics.

God’s Word is truth

Presuppositionalism is grounded in the starting axiom that the Bible, being God’s very words, is truth (Jn 17:17), and, as such, it is the

⁵⁰³ Piper teaches pacifism and advocates gun control. This is a violation of Biblical teaching regarding self-defense, and it is suicidal. Joel McDurmon, “A Biblical Response to John Piper’s Denial of the Right to Bear Arms” (unfortunately expunged from the American Vision website); cf. Gary DeMar, “Jesus, Guns, and Self-Defense: What Does the Bible Say?,” <http://americanvision.org/12889/jesus-guns-and-self-defense-what-does-the-bible-say>.

⁵⁰⁴ “John Piper Answers: Does the Bible Say to Kill Homosexuals?” Charisma News, 2/17/2016, <https://www.charismanews.com/opinion/55212-john-piper-answers-does-the-bible-say-to-kill-homosexuals>.

⁵⁰⁵ For exposition see Joseph C. Morecraft, III, *Authentic Christianity: An Exposition of the Theology and Ethics of the Westminster Larger Catechism*, 5 vols. (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision Press, 2009-2010), 1:689ff.

benchmark by which we are to judge all truth claims (Is 8:20). As we learned in our study of the foundation of the Biblical worldview, man can only know the truth of anything by submitting to God's interpretation of reality that is revealed in His infallible Word, the Bible.

Since divine revelation from the tri-personal God is the criterion of truth, this means that neither empiricism⁵⁰⁶ (including scientific research and historical verification), nor rationalism,⁵⁰⁷ nor irrationalism⁵⁰⁸ is the criterion of truth.⁵⁰⁹

Whenever the Scripture is not viewed as truth, **the epistemological foundation of Christianity is destroyed**. There is then no *logical* necessity to adhere to any Christian doctrine (although professing Christians will arbitrarily hold to many traditional Christian doctrines—some pragmatically doing so to retain their position in a church or seminary). Perhaps this explains why there has been a massive departure from several Christian doctrines, such as the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture, distinct roles for males and females, substitutionary atonement, six-day creation, the worldwide Noahic Flood, the wrath of God, the doctrine of hell, etc.

⁵⁰⁶ Strict empiricism is the epistemological belief that all knowledge comes from sense-data perceived or experienced through the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste).

⁵⁰⁷ **Rationalism** (not to be confused with rationality) is the epistemological belief that human reason alone is the road to the acquisition and justification of knowledge.

⁵⁰⁸ **Irrationalism** or **mysticism** is the belief that human reason is inadequate to discover truth.

⁵⁰⁹ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Word to You*, 28-43.

Antithesis⁵¹⁰

From cover to cover the Bible teaches antithesis,⁵¹¹ i.e., the irreconcilable spiritual, ideological, and moral conflict between God’s kingdom and Satan’s kingdom. God Himself is the source of this antithesis.

And I will put enmity⁵¹² Between you [the serpent] and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; **He** shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise **His** heel (Gn 3:15 NKJV).⁵¹³

Let’s examine the various antithetical parties in this verse.

Serpent (Satan) (2 Cor 11:3, 14; Rv 12:9)	Woman (Eve)
Satan’s seed [collective noun], comprised of unregenerate people (Mt 13:38; Lk 3:7; Jn 8:34, 44; 1 Jn 3:8, 10; Ac 13:10)	Woman’s seed [collective noun], i.e., those descendants

⁵¹⁰ Much of this material first appeared in Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Word to You*, 10–12, and idem., *Psycho-Heresy: “Christianizing” Pagan Psychologies*, 28–31.

⁵¹¹ I am using the term “antithesis” in the sense used by Abraham Kuyper and Cornelius Van Til, i.e., to denote “the sharp opposition between the patterns of thinking that are faithful to God and those that are shaped by sinful rebellion.” I am not using it in the sense of Hegel’s dialectical logic (thesis, antithesis, synthesis). C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 11f.

This section does not discuss reasoning by antithesis. That will be discussed below under pillar 6, “Rationality and logic.”

⁵¹² The Hebrew term translated “enmity” (*‘eybah*) occurs five times in the Old Testament, always referring to person-to-person hostility (HECOT, # 368). The enmity was not yet present when God spoke this curse (Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3*, 112).

⁵¹³ The Hebrew word *zera* (seed) is a collective noun and may be either singular or plural. The two third person masculine pronouns, “He” and “His,” are singular. (The serpent was termed “he” in 3:1.)

and fallen angels/demons in Satan's kingdom ⁵¹⁴	who are at enmity with Satan's seed, ⁵¹⁵ i.e., the regenerate
	An individual champion, ⁵¹⁶ descended from and representing the woman's seed, shall conquer Satan

In this verse, God's curse upon Satan implies blessing for the elect seed of the woman.⁵¹⁷

The scope of this God-ordained antithesis between covenant keepers and covenant-breakers affects every area of life and thought, including epistemology, theology, and ethics. This antithesis continues for all eternity, with Satan, his demons, and his ethical children being thrown

⁵¹⁴ In an address near the end of his life, E.J. Young affirmed that the serpent's seed includes "evil men" and evil spirits, i.e., "all who would do the will of Stan in opposition to God" (Edward J. Young, *In the Beginning*, 106). The unbeliever is God's enemy. Man had to learn that Satan is his enemy, which requires the new birth (106). (In an earlier publication Young had restricted the serpent's seed to evil spirits [*Genesis 3*, 116].)

⁵¹⁵ Herbert C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 1:167, 169; cf. Edward J. Young, *In the Beginning*, 106. Cp. "Renewal of covenant with God was expressed by its negative corollary, alienation from Satan" (Meredith G. Kline, *Genesis: A New Commentary* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2016], 22). Kline suggests that Satan's offspring are reprobate men.

⁵¹⁶ "In the decisive battle, the two armies are represented by individual champions, Christ and Satan" (Meredith G. Kline, *Genesis: A New Commentary*, 22). "The opinion of the Church Fathers is all but unanimous in favor of the Messianic view" of the "Seed" (James E. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches about the Promised Messiah*, 38).

⁵¹⁷ Charles A. Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy*, 75.

into the lake of fire (Mt 25:41; Rv 20:12-14). Thus, Genesis 3:15 is not only a foundation stone, it is a paradigm.⁵¹⁸

The following table gives a sample survey of Biblical antithesis.

God	Satan
woman's seed (i.e., Christ) (Gn 3:15 NKJV)	Satan's "seed" (i.e., his ethical children) (Mt 13:38; Lk 3:7; Jn 8:34, 44; 1 Jn 3:8, 10; Ac 13:10)
Abel	Cain (Gn 4; 1 Jn 3:12)
Sethites	Cainites (Gn 6)
Noah	Nimrod (Gn 10:8ff); the rest of the world
Abraham	Chaldeans
Isaac	Ishmael
Jacob	Esau
Moses	Pharaoh & his magicians
Israelites	Canaanites
Elijah	Ahab, Jezebel, Baalites
remnant (believing Israel) (Ro 9:27; 11:5)	unbelieving Israel (Ro 9:6-33; 11:17-24)
Christ	Herod (Mt 2:16; Ac 4:25-27); Pharisees
Christians (cf. light, wheat, sheep) (Mt 13; 25:32-40)	non-Christians (cf. darkness, tares, goats, Jewish & Roman persecutors) (Mt 13:24-30; 25:32, 41-46)

⁵¹⁸ Alec Motyer, *Look to the Rock: An Old Testament Background to Our Understanding of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1996), 156; cf. 33f. Cf. Edward J. Young, *In the Beginning*, 106.

kingdom of God	kingdom of Satan
truth, righteousness, holiness	lies (Jn 8:44), sin
heaven	hell

Antithesis is taught in many Scriptural commands and warnings

“Be holy” (1 Pt 1:15-16).

but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct,¹⁶ because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy” (1 Pt 1:15-16; cf. Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26).

The root meaning of the pervasive Biblical term “holiness” is “separation,” i.e., ethical separation from sin⁵¹⁹ and separation to God and His redemptive purposes.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁹ “Sin is lawlessness” (1 Jn 3:4). Thus, we may define sin: **“Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature”** (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 490. The Westminster Shorter Catechism succinctly defines sin: “Sin is any lack of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God” (1 Jn 3:4) (Question 14). It also notes that every person sins in “thought, word, and deed” (Question 82). “Sin is essentially rebellion against the claims of absolute lordship and rule which the Creator makes on his creation” (G. Goldsworthy, “Kingdom of God,” *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, Goldsworthy, 618).

⁵²⁰ *qodesh* (holiness): BDB, 871, # 6944; *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (TWOT), eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, 2 vols. (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1980), 2:787f, # 1990a; NIDOTTE, 3:875-887 # 7727; William L. Holladay, ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament Based Upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner*, 314; HECOT, # 7731 (470 times; cf. index, p. 1878). *qados* (holy): BDB, 872 # 6918; TWOT, 2:788, # 1990b;

“Do not love the world” (1 Jn 2:15-17; Ja 4:4).

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever (1 Jn 2:15-17).

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (Ja 4:4).

Christ’s warnings that the world will hate His disciples (Jn 15:18-20; 17:14; Lk 6:26) because it hated Him (Jn 7:7; 15:18, 24-25; cf. 3:19).

If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, “A servant is not greater than his master.” If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also (Jn 15:18-20).

Pervasive warnings against idolatry (1 Jn 5:21; 1 Ki 18:21) and against Satan’s deceptive counterfeits (e.g., false prophets, false messiah’s, false apostles, false teachers, false gospel, lying spirits, false unity, etc.), along with the repeated exhortations to judge with godly discernment (Mt 7:15-27; 1 Cor 14:29; 1 Th 5:19-22; 1 Jn 4:1-6; cf. Lk 12:57; Jn 7:24; 1 Cor 2:15; Phil 1:9-11; Heb 5:14).

Satanic counterfeits include ecumenicity that compromises Christian truth (i.e., counterfeit Christian unity). Anyone promoting Christian unity, while setting aside apostolic doctrine (as recorded in Scripture)

Holladay, 312; HECOT, #7705 (115 times). Occurrences in the New Testament include: adjective holy (ἅγιος, 233 times); verb make holy/sanctify (ἁγιάζω, 28 times); noun holiness/sanctification (ἁγιασμός, 10 times); adjective holy (ὅσιος, 8 times) for a total of 279 New Testament occurrences and 864 total occurrences.

is to be opposed (Ac 15:1-2, 23-24; 1 Cor 14:36-38; 2 Cor 13:2-3; Gal 1:8-9; 1 Th 4:8; 2 Th 3:6, 14; Tit 2:15; 1 Jn 2:18; 2 Jn 9-11; Rv 22:18-19). Thus, it is immoral for Bible-believing churches and parachurch ministries to include as leaders (or sponsors, endorsers, etc.) those leaders or churches that reject the central doctrines of the Christian faith, such as:

- the full verbal inspiration, inerrancy, and sufficiency of the completed Scripture; God's Word is absolute, universal, invariant, propositional truth (being the epistemological foundation for all our knowledge, and the standard by which all other truth claims must be judged);
- the essential nature of God;⁵²¹
- the Trinity;⁵²²
- the historicity of Biblical miracles and God's revelation;
- the sinfulness of all persons, rendering them incapable of saving themselves;
- the full deity and full humanity of Jesus Christ (which requires the virginal conception);
- the judicial, substitutionary atonement provided by Jesus Christ alone; (all other religions are idolatrous, false religions);

⁵²¹ Westminster Shorter Catechism Q 4: "What is God? God is a Spirit (Jn 4:24), infinite (Job 11:7-9), eternal (Ps 90:2), and unchangeable (Ja 1:17), in his: being (Ex 3:14), wisdom (Ps 147:5), power (Rv 4:8), holiness (Rv 15:4), justice, goodness, and truth (Ex 34:6-7)." The three disregarded attributes/perfections of God are jealousy, hatred, and wrath (Robert E. Fugate, *Jealousy, Hatred, and Wrath: The Disregarded Attributes of God*).

⁵²² Definition of the Trinity: God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.

- justification by grace alone through faith in Christ alone (not faith + works; not inclusivism⁵²³);
- the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- the future, bodily, second coming of Jesus Christ, followed by the general bodily resurrection of all the dead, and the final judgment (resulting in eternal conscious existence in either heaven or hell);
- the Bible is the only source of absolute, universal, invariant, objective ethics by which we must live.

Ecumenicalism that denies any of these truths destroys the uniqueness of Christ and Christianity.

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” and the categorical statement that righteousness cannot fellowship with darkness and Christ will not fellowship with idols (2 Cor 6:14 - 7:1).

Divergent eternal destinies of heaven or hell (with its unending, conscious torment).

God’s wisdom vs. man’s wisdom

Biblical antithesis is also demonstrated by the fact that the wisdom of this world/age is diametrically opposed to the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:19-21; 2:6, 13-14; 3:19-20; cf. Ro 8:5-7; 12:2; 2 Cor 10:5; wisdom and folly in Proverbs):

1 Cor 1:19-21ff For it is written: I will **destroy the wisdom of the wise**, And **bring to nothing the understanding** of the prudent. 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not **God made foolish the wisdom of this world?** 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it

⁵²³ See Robert L. Reymond, “The ‘Very Pernicious and Detestable’ Doctrine of Inclusivism,” *The Trinity Review* # 219 & 220 (May-June 2003), <http://trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=107>; reprinted in Reymond, *Contending for the Faith*, 367-388. Cf. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 1088-1093.

pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

1 Cor 2:6, 13-14 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet **not the wisdom of this age**, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 13 These things we also speak, **not in words which man's wisdom teaches** but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Cor 3:19-20 For **the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God**. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; 20 and again, "The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are **futile**."

Ro 1:21-22, 32 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became **futile in their thoughts**, and their foolish hearts were **darkened**. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools . . . 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

In sum, the world's wisdom is foolish (1 Cor 1:20; 3:19; Ro 1:21-22), futile/useless (1 Cor 3:20), and demonic (Ja 3:15). Why are Christian counselors and pastors so enamored by the world's "wisdom?"

Thoughts of Christians

Christian thinking is not "positive thinking,"⁵²⁴ or "possibility thinking," or "fourth-dimension thinking," or "mind-over-matter," or "name it and claim it." It does not involve visualization techniques. These Satanic deceptions focus on man, promote man's self-centeredness, and deify man. In some cases they use demonic power.

⁵²⁴ Irving Hexham, "Positive Thinking," EDT₂, 935-936. William Watson, "Positive/Possibility Thinking," *A Concise Dictionary of Cults and Religions* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1991), 183; based on Henry Krabbendam, "Scripture-Twisting," in *The Agony of Deceit*, ed. Michael Horton (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1990), 70-71.

If these are not Biblical thinking, then how does the Bible describe Christian thinking?

Ps 1:1-2 Blessed is the man Who **walks not in the counsel of the ungodly**, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

Ro 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh **set their minds on the things of the flesh**, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. (Cf. Appendix A.)

2 Cor 10:5 *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ*.

Col 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have **first place [preeminence] in everything** (cf. Ps 110:1-2ff).

Ro 12:2 And **do not be conformed to this world**, but be **transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Eph 4:23 and be **renewed** in the spirit of your **mind**.

Mt 22:37 Jesus said to him, “You shall **love the LORD your God with all your heart**, with all your soul, and with all your **mind**” (quoting Dt 6:5).

Phil 4:8 whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

God is intolerant

Christianity is inherently exclusive and intolerant of all other religions and cults—because God Himself is exclusive and intolerant (Ex 20:3).

- God is “Jealous” (Ex 34:14). He condemns all other gods as false/lies, nonexistent, and worthless/vanity (1 Ki 18:21, 24; Pss 31:6; 96:5; 135:15-18; 115:4-8; Is 41:22-26, 29; 42:17; 43:9; Jer 2:28; 10:5, 10; 18:15; Dn 5:23b; Hab 2:19; Ac 14:15; 19:26; 1 Cor 8:5-7; 10:19-20; 16:22; Gal 4:8; 1 Jn 5:21; Ex 20:3) and forbids people from worshiping them (Ex 20:3). Demons are the power behind those religions (Dt 32:17; Ps 106:28; 1 Cor 10:20ff; Rv 9:20).
- God has designed an exclusive plan of salvation that comes only through His Son, Jesus Christ (Jn 14:6; Ac 4:12; Col 2:2-3).
- Jesus Christ causes division (Mt 10:34; Lk 12:51; Jn 7:12, 43; 9:16; 10:19).

In sum, the above principles mean that Biblical love and unity can never be divorced from truth. There can be no unity, no peace, and no demilitarized zone between God and Satan, or between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. God Himself has decreed this perpetual antithesis (Gn 3:15; Mt 25:41).

God’s eternal plan and antithesis

To conclude our discussion of antithesis, consider that God, in the infinite and inscrutable wisdom of His eternal plan, foreordained evil. Apparently, God so desired that His elect people would know and love Him—in all His attributes, including his “moral” attributes of holiness, righteousness-justice, goodness, jealousy, hatred, and wrath—that He predestined evil. God manifests His attributes in the midst of evil (Ro 3:7; cf. 1:17-18; 2:5; 11:36). In other words, for man to adequately know God requires antithesis! Antithesis is central to the plan of God! Biblical antithesis also “prophesies” the everlasting, conscious torment in hell of Satan, his angels, and all unbelievers. Is it any surprise that Satan opposes Biblical antithesis?

Myth of epistemological, religious and ethical neutrality⁵²⁵

It is often asserted that people should be purely objective or neutral in their thinking, such as in the study of science, history, journalism, apologetics, etc. However, we will attempt to demonstrate that the idea of epistemological (intellectual), religious, and ethical neutrality is philosophically and theologically absurd.

Philosophical impossibility of neutrality

In our discussion of worldviews in chapter 1, we demonstrated how a person's religious commitments will determine his interpretation of "facts." If we keep in mind that both Western humanism and Eastern New Age thought are religious commitments, then we recognize that no one is intellectually and religiously neutral.

Christian philosopher and apologist Cornelius Van Til was fond of pointing out that there is no such thing as a brute fact. Facts are always intertwined and interpreted through the grid of a worldview. For example, the simple sentence, "I see a ladybug on a rose," is filled with complex presuppositions. This sentence presupposes: the meaning of certain English words; one's personal identity; the reliability of sense perception (including: the normalcy of one's eyes; the normalcy of one's brain stem; and theories of light refraction); categories of bugs and flowers; the reality of the external world and spatial relations; one's linguistic competence; one's entomological and botanical competence; shared grammar and semantics; the laws of logic; etc. Thus, even a simple statement regarding a simple observational "fact" presupposes a worldview.⁵²⁶

Neither can accepted historical or scientific "facts"⁵²⁷ be intellectually or religiously neutral. Cornelius Van Til illustrated, "To interpret a

⁵²⁵ Much of this material first appeared in Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Word to You*, 13-27; idem., *Psycho-Heresy: "Christianizing" Pagan Psychologies*, 32-35.

⁵²⁶ Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready*, 216-218.

⁵²⁷ Christian philosopher Gordon H. Clark defined a fact with this proposition: "A fact is an arithmetic mean with a variable error of zero," i.e., absolute certainty (*The Philosophy of Gordon H. Clark*,

fact of history involves a philosophy of history. But a philosophy of history is at the same time a philosophy of reality as a whole.”⁵²⁸

John Frame adds, “A position of neutrality would either be a state of mind without any presuppositions at all (impossible, because everyone must enter the discussion with a criterion of truth), or a set of presuppositions acceptable either to God or Satan (impossible, because no one can serve two masters).”⁵²⁹ But no one comes to a discussion having no presuppositions, no view of truth, no view of right and wrong, no worldview. Intellectual, theological, and ethical neutrality is a philosophical impossibility.

Theological impossibility of neutrality

The notion of intellectual, theological, and ethical neutrality has insuperable theological difficulties as well.

God is the source of all knowledge (not just “spiritual” knowledge)

In Your [God’s] light we see light (Ps 36:9).

The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge, *But* fools despise wisdom and instruction (Pr 1:7).

The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding (Pr 9:10). (Contrast Ro 3:18.)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments* (Ps 111:10).

For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright (Pr 2:6–7).

ed. Ronald H. Nash [Philadelphia: PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1968], 470). For Clark, there are no facts outside of the Bible.

⁵²⁸ Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 2.

⁵²⁹ John M. Frame, “Presuppositional Apologetics,” in *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, 218 n 14.

in whom [Christ] are hidden **all** the treasures of wisdom and **knowledge**. I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument (Col 2:3-4).

Truth is in Jesus (Eph 4:21)

Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God . . . Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God (1 Cor 1:24, 30).

That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world (Jn 1:9).

Jesus said to him, “I am . . . **the truth** (Jn 14:6).

Your [God’s] **word is truth** (Jn 17:17).

God’s “anointing teaches you about all things” (1 Jn 2:27).

Two of God’s attributes are omniscience (all-knowing) and truth.

Non-Christians cannot be neutral

Since this book presupposes the Christian worldview, we must learn what the Bible teaches regarding the reasoning, knowledge, and will of natural man. The Bible describes the reasoning and knowledge of unbelievers in these terms:

Unbelievers’ minds are depraved:

- can’t know God (1 Cor 1:21; 2:14)
- futile/useless (Ro 1:21; 1 Cor 3:20; Eph 4:17)
- depraved (Ro 1:28; Gn 6:5; Jer 17:9)
- foolish (Ro 1:21-22; 3:19; 1 Cor 1:19-20)
- ignorant, without understanding (Ro 1:31; 3:11; Eph 4:18)
- opposed to/enemy of God, His wisdom & His law (1 Cor 1:18-29; 3:18-20; Ro 8:7; Eph 2:3; Phil

3:18-19; Col 1:21; cf. Ja 4:4)

- blinded by Satan (2 Cor 4:4)
- false knowledge (1 Tim 6:20)
- defiled (Tit 1:15)
- enslaved by spirits (Gal 4:8-9, 3)
- empty deception (Col 2:8)
- suppresses the truth (Ro 1:18)

Unbelievers are “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim 3:7). The heart/mind of natural man cannot submit to God’s law (Ro 8:7), and it is more deceitful than anything else and desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). What seems right to the natural man leads to death (Pr 16:25).

Unbelievers’ wills are depraved, so they:

- suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Ro 1:18);
- exchange the truth of God for the lie (Ro 1:25; cf. 2 Th 2:10-12);
- repudiate their knowledge of God (Ro 1:18, 21-22, 28, 32; 3:10-11ff);
- are devoid of the fear of God (Ro 3:18);
- make idols (Ro 1:23, 25; Ac 14:11-13, 15; 17:16, 23, 29; etc.);
- reject God’s moral law (Ro 1:18ff; Ps 2:1-3; Lk 19:14) while pursuing autonomy (i.e., self-law: “I live by my own rules”);
- become their own gods, determining good and evil for themselves (cf. Gn 3:5);
- are slaves to sin (Ro 6:17); and

- love darkness and hate the light, because their deeds are evil (Jn 3:19-20).

“There is none who seeks after God (Ro 3:11).” Unbelievers know God exists (Ro 1:18–21, 25–26, 28, 32; 2:14–16), but they suppress the truth. Thus, the real nature of unbelief is not a neutral or unbiased attempt to account for experience, but a rebellious running away from the God we all know.

Because of this ethical rebellion, the non-Christian worldview is completely antithetical to the Christian worldview. The non-Christian is committed above all to independence from the sovereign God. His ultimate authority is autonomous man. Therefore, the unbeliever will interpret whatever facts or evidence the Christian adduces on any subject in the light of his own autonomous, humanistic presuppositions.

Every unbeliever is both rationalistic and irrationalistic at the same time—irrationalistic by denying the only possible source of order and meaning in the universe, rationalistic in setting himself or herself in the place of God as the ultimate determiner of truth and falsity.⁵³⁰

Neither rationalism nor irrationalism can be confined; each demands total sovereignty over human thought.⁵³¹

How do you think God will judge the people that say to him, “O God, we neither deny nor assert thy existence; and O God, we neither obey nor disobey thy commands; we are strictly neutral.” Unbelievers pretending religious or ethical neutrality are ignoring God; and “this is not neutrality. It is the worst form of antagonism, for it judges God to be unimportant and irrelevant in human affairs. This is atheism.”⁵³²

⁵³⁰ Ibid., 212.

⁵³¹ Ibid., 213.

⁵³² Gordon Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education* (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1988), 73.

Unbelievers are not neutral. Let us consider whether Christians should attempt to be neutral.

Christians must not be neutral

Many Christian apologists teach that, when using apologetics, Christians should attempt to be intellectually and religiously neutral. However, the Bible does not teach that “Without faith it is impossible to please God”—except when doing apologetics (Heb 11:6), or, “Whatever is not from faith is sin”—except in apologetics (Ro 14:23)! Faith in the infinite, personal God of the Bible is the basis for understanding anything at all.⁵³³ The same principle applies to developing a doctrine of bibliology or doing textual criticism.

Christianity is a total world- and life- view. In the Christian worldview the ultimate authority is the triune God, revealed in Christ, through the Scriptures. Thus, revelation (general and special) is the basis for all knowledge (Ps 36:9)—and general revelation must be interpreted through the light of special revelation.⁵³⁴ The beginning (presupposition) of man’s knowledge is his reverent submission to God and His Word (Pr 1:7; 9:10; Ps 111:10; contrast Ro 3:18). God’s written Word repeatedly affirms that all knowledge is found in Jesus Christ (Col 2:3-4; 1 Cor 1:24, 30; Jn 1:9) who is Truth (Jn 14:6) and whose Word is truth (cf. Jn 17:17). God has given us his written Word to be the sole standard for truth, faith, and life. “The essence of the idea of Scripture is that it alone is the criterion of truth.”⁵³⁵

⁵³³ God’s rationality is the rational basis for human faith, which is the rational basis for human reasoning.

⁵³⁴ “Since the entrance of sin into the world, man can gather true knowledge about God from His general revelation only if he studies it in the light of Scripture, in which the elements of God’s original self-revelation, which were obscured and perverted by the blight of sin, are republished, corrected, and interpreted. . . . Some are inclined to speak of God’s general revelation as a second source [of revelation]; but this is hardly correct in view of the fact that nature can come into consideration here only as interpreted in the light of Scripture” (Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 60, 96).

⁵³⁵ Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, 43.

Furthermore, “Whatever the Bible speaks to, it speaks with authority, and *it speaks to everything*.”⁵³⁶ By its divine and inerrant light all the alleged “facts” of the created universe must be interpreted.

The Scriptures reject every form of a sacred/secular dualism (which has more in common with Greek philosophy than it does with Christianity). There are no “secular” areas of life. This fact may be demonstrated by considering the doctrines of creation, providence, Fall and redemption, Christ’s lordship and His kingdom, the Holy Spirit and his gifts, eschatology, etc.

Creation

God created all things and they were “very good” (Gn 1:31). Even after the Fall, the earth and everything in it still belongs to God—not to the devil (Ex 8:22; 9:29; 19:5; Dt 10:14; Pss 24:1; 50:10–12; 1 Cor 10:26). (Contrast the devil’s lie in Mt 4:8–9 with the teaching of Jesus Christ in Jn 8:44.) All creation reflects something of God’s nature and glory (Pss 19:1–6; 97:6; Ro 1:20; 2:14–15; 1 Cor 11:7).

The impossibility of religious and ethical neutrality may also be seen by considering the purpose for the created order. God’s Word tells us that all things were not only created by God, but for him (Col 1:16). All things derive their meaning from God’s plan, for all things “are from him and through him and to him” (Ro 11:36). All creation is to glorify God.

Providence

God exercises His sovereign and providential rule over all things. The entire cosmos is held together, moment by moment, “by the word of His power” (Heb 1:3; cf. Col 1:17). God providentially “works *all things*” after the counsel of His will (Eph 1:11). Furthermore, God graciously gives His children *all things* to enjoy freely (Ro 8:32; 1 Cor 3:21–22; Mt 7:11; Ja 1:17; 1 Tim 4:3–5; 6:17; Tit 1:15; Dt 28:47), and causes *all things* to work together for their good (Ro 8:28). Indeed, God gives to all life and breath and *all things* (Ac 17:25). Furthermore,

⁵³⁶ Cornelius Van Til, cited by W. Gary Crampton, *The Bible God’s Word* (Lynchburg, VA: Journey Publications, 1989), 47. See Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, 8; cf. idem., *Christian Apologetics*, 2.

He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation (Ac 17:26).

Thus, everything is to bring God glory, and everything a Christian does is holy (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17, 23; 1 Pt 1:15). There is no sacred/secular dichotomy. All of life is controlled by God's providence.

Fall, Christ's Incarnation, and redemption

The Fall subjected all of creation to corruption and futility (Gn 3:17-18; Ro 8:19-23). Autonomous man, following in the rebellious footsteps of his forefather Adam, builds an apostate culture (Gn 4:16-24 Cain's descendants included craftsmen and musicians; 6:1-7 pre-Flood; 11:1-9 Tower of Babel in Shinar; 19 Sodom and Gomorrah; Canaanites⁵³⁷ [descendants of Ham]; Dn 7 four bestial empires; Rv 13, 17-18 satanic Judaism and the bestial Roman Empire).

However, God spoke His ultimate word to mankind by sending His Son (Heb 1:1) to live as a man in human culture. Jesus Christ is the "second Man" (1 Cor 15:47) and the "last Adam" (1 Cor 15:45), i.e., the second and the last Man/Adam to be the federal/covenant head of the human race. Christ came into the world to fulfill the cultural mandate that Adam disobeyed.

The redemption provided by Jesus Christ is as comprehensive as the Fall. In the words of songwriter Isaac Watts, Jesus "came to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found." It was the Father's plan, through Jesus, "to reconcile to himself *all things*,⁵³⁸ whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross" (Col 1:20; cf. Eph 1:9-10). Thus, God's redemptive purpose encompasses every area of human life and knowledge, as

⁵³⁷ For characteristics of Canaanite culture and lifestyle see the verses cited in Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government*, 101; cf. John N. Oswalt, *The Bible Among the Myths* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009], 51, 55-57.

⁵³⁸ "All things" refers to the scope of Christ's cosmic dominion. It does not support the heretical doctrine of ultimate reconciliation.

well as the entire cosmos (2 Pt 3:10–13; Rv 21–22). Obviously, there is no spiritual vs. material dualism—God’s salvation includes both. (The doctrines of Christ’s Incarnation, the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer, and the resurrection of the body also guarantee this.) Cornelius Van Til concludes:

The Christian who is constructively active in the field of culture . . . knows Christ has borne the wrath of God that rests upon the world and has set him free once again to undertake the cultural task that was given him at the beginning of history. He knows that Christ, as the anointed of God, fulfilled his cultural task and that he thereby enabled his own to follow him in this respect, albeit with great imperfection.⁵³⁹

Jesus Christ is Lord

When we consider the Christian life, we are immediately confronted with Christ’s lordship. One vital aspect of relating to Christ as Lord is that the Christian is commanded to bring *all* his *thinking* into submission to Christ’s lordship (Col 1:18; 2 Cor 10:5; Ro 8:5; Mt 22:37; Pr 1:7; 9:10). Christ is not merely Lord of the believer’s “spiritual” thinking. *Every thought* is to be made prisoner of Christ (2 Cor 10:5). The Lord Jesus Christ taught that “He who is not for me is against me” (Mt 12:30; Lk 11:23). The Christian must be for Jesus in his thinking and reasoning as well as in all other aspects of his life. Everything a Christian thinks and does is to be holy before God (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17, 23; 1 Pt 1:15; Zc 14:20). Christians must “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mk 12:30; quoting Dt 6:5).

However, Jesus Christ is Lord over much more than the thoughts of Christians. Indeed, He is Lord over all things. He has vanquished and bound Satan and all his demonic hordes (Mt 12:28–29; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14–15; 1 Jn 3:8; Rv 1:18), and He is plundering Satan’s kingdom (Lk 11:20–22; Is 53:12; Eph 4:8). Since His resurrection He

⁵³⁹ Cornelius Van Til, *Essays on Christian Education* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1979), 4.

possesses *all authority* both in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18; Eph 1:20–22; Jn 3:35; Ac 10:36 “*Lord of all*”), and He will “subject *all things* to Himself” (Phil 3:21). Christ now manifests His triumph through His church (cf. Ac 1:1–2ff; 2 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:6; 3:10), through which He will “fill *all things*” (Eph 4:10). Jesus Christ is to have the preeminence in *all things* (Col 1:18; Ps 110:1–2ff). “All things” must include human culture.

Christ’s kingdom is present and growing⁵⁴⁰

The resurrected Lord Jesus Christ commissioned His church to:

- be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Mt 5:13–14);
- pray for God’s kingdom to come in its full manifestation, that the Father’s “will be done on earth (just) as it is in heaven” (Mt 6:10//Lk 11:2);
- proclaim the gospel of Christ’s kingdom (Mt 10:1, 7f // Lk 9:1f // Mk 6:7; Mt 24:14; Ac 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31; cf. 2:30–36; 17:6–7);
- disciple all nations, training them to submit to Christ’s sovereign rule in all things (Mt 28:18–20//Mk 16:15–20; cf. Ac 17:6; Heb 11:32).

Matthew 28:18–20 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “*All* authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. “Go therefore and make disciples of *all* the nations,⁵⁴¹ baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe [practice] *all* that I

⁵⁴⁰ Robert E. Fugate, *What Is the Relationship between Christianity and Culture?—Five Historical Paradigms and Their Consequences* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2016), 25–28.

⁵⁴¹ Every nation includes various domains or spheres: religion; civil governments and law; family and social welfare; education; economics and business (including science and technology); media; the arts and sports. Cf. Douglas Layton, *Our Father’s Kingdom* (Nashville, TN: World Impact, 2000), 42.

commanded you; and lo, I am with you *always*, even to the end of the age.”⁵⁴²

“The object of the divine rule is the redemption of people and their deliverance from the powers of evil. 1 Corinthians 15:23–28 is definitive. **Christ’s reign means the destruction of all hostile powers**, the last of which is death. The kingdom of God is the reign of God in Christ **destroying all that is hostile to the divine rule**” (Rv 11:15; Mt 4:8 // Lk 4:5; Mt 12:26; Lk 11:18; 2 Cor 4:4).⁵⁴³

“The scope of his [Christ’s] eschatological rule, the extent of his realm, is nothing less than the entire creation; all things are subject to him (Mt 28:18; 1 Cor 15:27; Heb 2:8). . . . Christ is ‘head over everything for the church’ (Eph 1:22).”⁵⁴⁴

As God empowers and directs His church, by the Holy Spirit, to fulfill His purposes throughout the earth, His kingdom grows and multiplies throughout the earth (Ps 110:1–3; Dn 2:31–35, 44–45; 7:3, 13–14; Mt 13:31–32//Mk 4:30–32; Mt 13:33; Ac 2:34–36; 1 Cor 15:25; cf. Ac 3:21). This involves God’s kingdom defeating Satan’s kingdom (Lk 10:9–19). It involves God’s kingdom conquering all its enemies, either crushing them (Pss 2:9–12; 110:5–6; Dn 2:34–36, 44–45; Mt 21:43–44; Lk 19:43–45; Rv 19:11ff) or converting them (Ac 9). Such enemies include cultural obstacles that are ruled by demonic principalities (Eph 6:12).

The Holy Spirit and His gifts

God sends His Holy Spirit to dwell in the bodies of believers (Jn 14:16–17; Ro 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19), and empowers them with both miraculous and everyday gifts, e.g., service, giving, showing mercy, helps, and administrations (Ro 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28).

⁵⁴² Kenneth L. Gentry, *The Greatness of the Great Commission* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

⁵⁴³ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven,” EDT₂, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 658 (bold added).

⁵⁴⁴ Richard B. Gaffin, “Kingdom of God,” *New Dictionary of Theology*, eds., Sinclair B. Ferguson, David E. Wright, and J.I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 369 (bold added).

By God's grace and anointing all of our labors can be profitable (1 Cor 15:58).⁵⁴⁵

Eschatology

God is "making all things new"⁵⁴⁶ (Rv 21:5), including new heavens and a new earth (Is 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pt 3:10-13). The firstfruits of the new creation began with the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ⁵⁴⁷ and

⁵⁴⁵ "We must indeed be working for a better world now, that our efforts in this life toward bringing the kingdom of Christ to fuller manifestation are of eternal significance. Since even those who do not love Christ are under his control, we may firmly believe that products of science and culture produced by unbelievers may yet be found on the new earth. . . . Our attempt to further a distinctively Christian culture will have value not only for this world but even for the world to come" (Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979], 39f).

⁵⁴⁶ "In the OT 'new' is a word especially associated with the age to come" (Steve Motyer, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 825). In the NT "καινός carries over the basic eschatological orientation of the OT prophets who spoke of the age to come, the new age of messianic fulfillment" (ISBE₂, 3:526). For examples of the term "new" being used in a very important eschatological sense in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament see: R.H. Mounce, "New, Newness," ISBE₂, 3:526f; F.F. Bruce, "New," IDB, 3:542f; TDNT, 3:449f καινός; NIDNTTE, 2:581ff. In such cases the term "new" depicts "the epitome of the wholly different and miraculous thing which is brought by the time of salvation . . . a leading teleological term in apocalyptic promise" (TDNT, 3:449).

⁵⁴⁷ "The [bodily] resurrection of Christ marked the beginning of the End, the turning of the ages" (Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996], 51). For the implications, see Fee, 59. J.R. Levison, "Creation and New Creation," *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 189f. Philip H. Towner, "New Creation," *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 562f. Steve Motyer, "New Creation, New Creature," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 825f (= EDT₃, 586f).

the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Believers are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15).

At the final judgment every person and every angel will be judged for their: every thought and motive (Ro 2:16; 1 Cor 4:5; Ec 12:14); every spoken word (Mt 12:36–37; cf. Lk 19:22; 12:1–3); and every deed (Ro 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; Rv 20:12–13; 22:12; Ec 12:14; Pr 24:12; 1 Cor 3:12–15). Obviously, this includes all their cultural endeavors and activities.

Summary

Whether we consider the doctrines of creation, providence, Fall and redemption, Christ's lordship and His kingdom, the Holy Spirit and His gifts, or the eschatological consummation of all things, Christianity knows no sacred/secular or spiritual/material dualism. (The Logos taking on a physical body, the Holy Spirit dwelling in the bodies of believers, and the resurrection of believers' bodies are further evidences of this.) The infinite personal God and His all-inclusive purposes encompass everything in the cosmos. Thus, neutrality toward the infinite, sovereign God, who knows everything and who orders and controls all things by His infinite power, is an absurd concept. "Because God is the Lord and Creator of all things, there is no sphere of life and thought outside his jurisdiction, government, and law. To hold that there is means to deny God and to affirm polytheism."⁵⁴⁸

Christian philosophy precludes neutrality

We stated above that metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics are the three branches of philosophy, and they are also three essential components of any philosophical worldview. Since Christianity is a worldview, let us sketch a brief outline of the Christian answers to each of these branches of philosophy.

⁵⁴⁸ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Chalcedon Report* # 224 "The Myth of Neutrality" (March 1984); reprinted in *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 1113.

Metaphysics

God

There is only one God, the self-existent, infinite, personal, triune God revealed in the Bible. All other gods are imposters (1 Ki 18:21, 24; Pss 31:6; 96:5; 135:15–18; 115:4–8; Is 41:22–26, 29; 42:17; 43:9; Jer 2:28; 10:5, 10; 18:15; Dn 5:23b; Hab 2:19; Ac 14:15; 19:26; 1 Cor 8:5–7; 10:19–20; 16:22; Gal 4:8; 1 Jn 5:21; Ex 20:3). There is no salvation apart from the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn 14:6; Ac 4:12; 2 Tim 2:10).

Universe

God created the space-time universe out of nothing. He providentially controls everything that happens, according to His sovereign, eternal, all-encompassing plan (Heb 1:3; Col 1:17; Eph 1:11).

Man

God created man—comprised of an immaterial soul and a body—in His own image. Man is God's dependent creature; he is not divine or autonomous.

Epistemology

Truth is one of the attributes of God. Something is true because God thinks it to be true. God's thoughts are perfectly self-consistent (coherent). Because God is truth, His Word is truth (Jn 17:17). As truth revealed from God, God's Word is our criterion or standard of truth. Truth is absolute (i.e., the same for all people in all places for all time); truth is not relative. Man, God's finite creature, is to be a truth-receiver, not a truth-maker.

Ethics

God is the only ultimate Lawgiver and Judge (Ja 4:12). He alone determines and defines good and evil, justice and injustice. Man, God's finite creature, is to be an ethic-receiver, i.e., to reflect ethically God's moral character as God's image-bearer. The moral law of God defines right and wrong. Thus, ethics are absolute (i.e., the same for all people in all places for all time) and objective, not relative (i.e.,

different for different individuals, cultures, historical periods) and subjective.

Conclusion

In considering the Christian answers to each of the branches of philosophy, it is apparent that, in the Christian worldview, there can be no metaphysical neutrality, no epistemological neutrality, and no ethical neutrality!

Neutrality and Satanic temptation

The striving after metaphysical, epistemological and ethical neutrality and autonomy is at the heart of Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gn 3:1-5, 13-14; 2 Cor 11:3):

- The basis for knowledge (epistemology): What is true—God's Word or man's scientific research (Gn 2:17; 3:4)?⁵⁴⁹
- The basis for moral standards (ethics): What is right—God's Word or man's (Gn 2:17; 3:5-6)?

⁵⁴⁹ In making her verdict, Eve used empirical data (Gn 3:6) to test the truth-claims of God's Word. Adam may even have conducted the first scientific experiment to test the truthfulness of God's Word: He waited till Eve ate the forbidden fruit and observed that she did not immediately die, as God had predicted. With God's hypothesis thereby "disproven," Adam concluded that Satan's hypothesis was most probably correct, so he should eat as well. Adam and Eve sinned, in part, because they did not make God's revealed Word their ultimate authority and the judge over all empirical data. (Contrast Abraham, "the father of all who believe," who believed God's Word, even when all the empirical evidence available to him pointed the other way, Ro 4:18-22, 11; cf. Heb 11.)

One could also view the temptation from the perspective of Eastern/mystical thought: "Eve falls for the lie that in order to be free, she must make her own, independent choices, and create her own world. Eve chooses to believe the pagan/diabolical lie that if she relies on herself, if she goes within, she can be divine" (Peter Jones, *Gospel Truth, Pagan Lies*, 62f).

- The metaphysical question: Who am I—God’s finite, dependent creature or an autonomous god determining truth and morality for myself (Gn 3:5)?

Professor Robert Reymond summarizes the issues involved in this temptation:

It [Adam’s transgression] was at its core the creature’s deliberate rejection of God’s authority and an act of willful rebellion against the Creator. It was man claiming the stance of autonomy and freedom from God. It was man believing he had the right to determine for himself what he would be *metaphysically* (“You will be like God”), what he would know *epistemologically* (“like God, knowing good and evil”), and how he would behave *ethically* (“she took and ate . . . her husband ate”). It was man heeding Satan’s call to worship the creature rather than the Creator. Authority was the issue at stake, and man decided against God and in his own favor.⁵⁵⁰

Implications for Christians attempting intellectual neutrality

Theologian John Frame writes,

If we abandoned our biblical presuppositions, claiming a position of ‘neutrality,’ then at that point we would be telling a lie to the inquirer. There is no such thing as neutrality, and the very idea of neutrality is at the heart of Satan’s deception of those who are lost. To claim neutrality is to claim that I am the one who ultimately decides what is true or false, that I am on the intellectual throne. Such neutralist pretensions must be rebuked, not indulged. They are a form of pride, of which God commands the sinner to repent.⁵⁵¹ and

⁵⁵⁰ Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 446.

⁵⁵¹ John M. Frame, “Presuppositional Apologetics,” *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, 218. Frame adds, “A position of neutrality would either be a state of mind without any presuppositions

God is the source of all meaning and rationality. Our arguments should lead to such a God. So we should not mislead unbelievers into assuming that they can understand any fact adequately without confessing its relation to God. We should make plain that even our methods of knowledge, our standards of truth and falsity, our views of logic, and our scientific methods must be reconciled first of all with God's revelation.⁵⁵²

Intellectual neutrality would require the Christian to deliberately set aside the Christian worldview by which he interprets all facts in the created universe. It would require him to set aside Christ's comprehensive lordship. For a Christian to do this is an impossibility. Biblically, intellectual neutrality:

- suppresses the truth (Ro 1:21, 25);
- destroys the epistemological basis for knowledge (Col 2:3-8);
- is impossible and immoral, since no one can serve two masters (Mt 6:24; 12:30); and
- obscures the antithesis between godly and ungodly thinking, thereby erasing the Christian distinctiveness.⁵⁵³

Clearly, there is no epistemological, theological, or ethical neutrality. There is no demilitarized zone between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

The pretense of being neutral is actually veiled agnosticism or unbelief. It truncates Jesus' comprehensive lordship. For the Christian to attempt to set aside his convictions and become

at all (impossible, because everyone must enter the discussion with a criterion of truth), or a set of presuppositions acceptable either to God or Satan (impossible, because no one can serve two masters)" (n 14).

⁵⁵² John M. Frame, "Presuppositional Apologetics," *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, 220.

⁵⁵³ Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready*, 51.

intellectually neutral is not only impossible, it is rebellion against God and a denial of the Christian faith.

Apologist Cornelius Van Til proclaimed, “There is not a square inch of ground in heaven or on earth or under the earth in which there is peace between Christ and Satan. . . . It is of the nature of the conflict between Christ and Satan to be all-comprehensive.”⁵⁵⁴ And, “Not a square inch of ground belongs to him [Satan] and not a square inch of ground will be his at the end of the war.”⁵⁵⁵

Apologist J. Gresham Machen, wrote:

The Christian cannot be satisfied so long as any human activity is either opposed to Christianity or out of all connection with Christianity. Christianity must pervade not merely all nations, but also all of human thought. The Christian, therefore, cannot be indifferent to a branch of earnest human endeavor. It must all be brought into some relation to the gospel. It must be studied either in order to be demonstrated as false, or else in order to be made useful in advancing the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom must be advanced not merely extensively, but also intensively. The Church must seek to conquer not merely every man for Christ, but also the whole of man. . . . False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its root.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁴ Cornelius Van Til, *Essays on Christian Education*, 27.

⁵⁵⁵ Cornelius Van Til, *The God of Hope: Essays and Addresses*, chap. 3 “Our Present Task.”

⁵⁵⁶ J. Gresham Machen, “Christianity and Culture,” in Machen, *What is Christianity?* ed. Ned B. Stonehouse (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1951), 161f, in Machen, *Education, Christianity, and the*

In conclusion, neither the Christian nor the non-Christian can be intellectually, religiously or ethically neutral. The idea that people should be purely objective or neutral in their thinking is philosophically and theologically absurd. It is a myth fostered by autonomous non-Christians, which they never practice, but that they seek to impose upon gullible Christians. There is no such thing as intellectual or religious neutrality. Such purported neutrality is a myth, an illusion, a hoax perpetuated by professors, scientists, historians, journalists, judges, and some Christian scholars lusting after intellectual respectability from the world! Unbelievers are not intellectually, religiously or ethically neutral—and Christians should not try to be.

That is why the brilliant Christian philosopher Gordon Clark writes, “The most deceiving and the most deceived author is the one who thinks he is simply describing what is there. The *there* itself cannot be selected without presuppositions.”⁵⁵⁷

6. Rationality and logic⁵⁵⁸

In chapter 1 we distinguished between rationalism⁵⁵⁹ (which is a system of philosophical thought) and rationality (i.e., **thinking in a logical, self-consistent, non-contradictory manner**). In this pillar of the Biblical worldview, we are discussing rationality.

In our above discussion we learned that the fifth pillar of the Biblical worldview is antithesis. In examining the pervasive teaching in Scripture on antithesis, we come to the realization that Biblical reasoning involves reasoning logically using antithesis.

State, ed. John W. Robbins (Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1987), 50f, and in Machen, *Selected Shorter Writings*, ed. D.G. Hart (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004), 403f.

⁵⁵⁷ Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason and Revelation*, 14.

⁵⁵⁸ Robert E. Fugate, *A Theology of Rationality and Logic*.

⁵⁵⁹ Rationalism is the epistemological belief that human reason alone is the road to the acquisition and justification of knowledge.

Logic is the way God thinks

God Himself is logically-consistent in His thinking and in His words. Indeed, logic is an attribute of God, as professors Gary Crampton and John Frame explain:

Logic is an attribute of God Himself. He is the God of Truth (Ps 31:5). Christ is the Truth (wisdom, logic, and reason) incarnate (Jn 1:1; 14:6;⁵⁶⁰ 1 Cor 1:24, 30; Col 2:3). The Holy Spirit is ‘the Spirit of Truth’ (Jn 16:13 [cf. 1 Jn 5:6]). God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor 14:33); His Word to us is ‘not yes and no’ (2 Cor 1:18). Thus He does not speak to us in illogical, paradoxical statements. Because logic is the way God thinks, the laws of logic are eternal principles. And because man is the image of God, these laws are part of man. There is, then, a point of contact between God’s logic and man’s logic, between God’s knowledge and man’s knowledge. Both God and man think $1 + 1 = 2$; both agree that A is A.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁶⁰ “Like other words, truth can be used figuratively, by metonymy, in which the effect is substituted for the cause. Thus when Christ says, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,’ the word truth is just as figurative as the word life. As Christ is the cause of life, so is he the cause of truth. That water freezes and that a sinner may be justified by faith are true because Christ creatively said, Let it be so” (Gordon H. Clark, “Truth,” *Baker’s Dictionary of Theology*, 533). Jesus’ statement, “I am . . . the truth” (Jn 14:6), “must be taken to mean, I am the source of truth; I am the wisdom and Logos of God; truths are established by my authority” (Gordon H. Clark, “The Bible As Truth,” in *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 37). Clark’s essay, “The Bible as Truth,” was originally published in *Bibliotheca Sacra* (April 1957); it was reprinted in: *The Trinity Review* (December 2008) (available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=258>); *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 24–38; and *For the King: The Trinity Review, 1999–2008*, eds. John W. Robbins and Thomas W. Juodaitis, 543–548.

⁵⁶¹ W. Gary Crampton, “Review of *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* by Greg L. Bahnsen,” *The Trinity Review* (July 2000),

God himself is logical. . . . His Word is truth (Jn 17:17), and truth means nothing if it is not opposed to falsehood. Therefore, His Word is non-contradictory. Furthermore, God does not break His promises (2 Cor 1:20); He does not deny himself (2 Tim 2:13); He does not lie (Heb 6:18; Tit 1:2). . . . Does God, then, observe the law of noncontradiction? Not in the sense that this law is somehow higher than God himself. Rather, God is himself non-contradictory and is therefore himself the criterion of logical consistency and implication. Logic is an attribute of God, as are justice, mercy, wisdom, knowledge. As such, God is a model for us. We, as His image, are to imitate His truth, His promise-keeping. Thus, we too are to be non-contradictory.⁵⁶²

available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=128>; reprinted in *For the King: The Trinity Review, 1999–2008*, eds. John W. Robbins and Thomas W. Juodaitis, 92–97. The Bible does not contain unresolvable logical paradoxes. See: Crampton, “Does the Bible Contain Paradox?” *The Trinity Review* (November/December 1990), available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=76>, reprinted in *Against the Churches*, ed. John W. Robbins (Unicoi, TN: The Trinity Foundation, 2002), 81–83; Robert L. Reymond, *Preach the Word!* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Rutherford House, 1988), 27–34; idem., *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 103–110. For the contrary, pro logical paradox position, see Vernon C. Grounds, “The Postulate of Paradox,” *JETS*, 7:1 (winter 1964), 3–20.

⁵⁶² John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 253. “Laws of logic are a human reflection of the mind of God and of God’s thinking regarding the conceptual and/or evidential-proof relations between truths (or sets of truth.). Logical laws are elaboration upon the fact that God does not contradict Himself (His word is not yes and no, 2 Cor 1:18) and that it is impossible for Him to lie (Heb 6:18)” (Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready*, ed. Robert R. Booth, 149 n 10). However, we must not make too sharp of a distinction between human laws of logic and God’s logic, since it is the divine Logos enlightening every man (Jn 1:9) (Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 3:216). Henry adds, “Whoever calls for a higher logic

God's rationality is reflected in the intelligently-designed cosmos He created out of nothing.⁵⁶³ God's rationality is also demonstrated in His rational, logical speech.

God's Word (special revelation) is propositional and logical

Since God is truth⁵⁶⁴ and He thinks rationally, logically, and self-consistently, His revealed Word must be truthful,⁵⁶⁵ rational, logical, and self-consistent. Another way of stating this is to say that God's revelation is propositional.⁵⁶⁶ Every Scripture is logically coherent with the rest of Scripture. Being rational, God's revealed Word does not violate the chief law of logic, the **law of noncontradiction** (i.e., nothing can be both A and not-A at the same time and in the same respect; or, no proposition can be both true and false at the same time and in the same respect).⁵⁶⁷

It is this law [i.e., the law of noncontradiction] that maintains the distinction between truth and falsity. If this distinction cannot be maintained, then as the ancient Sophists showed, all opinions are true and all opinions are false. Any proposition is as credible as

must preserve the existing laws of logic to escape pleading the cause of illogical nonsense" (229).

⁵⁶³ Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 3:214f; cf. 2:11f.

⁵⁶⁴ Robert E. Fugate, *A Biblical Philosophy of Truth with Contemporary Applications*, 9-12.

⁵⁶⁵ Robert E. Fugate, *A Biblical Philosophy of Truth with Contemporary Applications*, 15-25. Idem., *The Bible: God's Words to You*, 315-322.

⁵⁶⁶ The Bible is comprised primarily of propositions. A proposition is a verbal statement that is either true or false. In reasoning logically, propositions are used to argue to a conclusion.

⁵⁶⁷ This law can be called either the law of non-contradiction or the law of contradiction.

any other. . . . To deny reason, in the sense of the laws of logic, is to empty conversation or argument of all meaning.⁵⁶⁸

Apart from logic, no word could have any settled meaning.⁵⁶⁹ The noun “God” could have the same meaning as the noun “Satan”; “heaven” could mean “hell”; “believer” could mean “unbeliever”; “Christian” could mean “Muslim” or “Buddhist.” “True” could mean “false.” “The fact that a word must mean one thing and not its contradictory is the evidence of the law of contradiction in all rational language.”⁵⁷⁰ Thus, every verse in the Bible—indeed, every word in the Biblical text—exhibits rationality and logic.⁵⁷¹ Gary Crampton elaborates:

Logic is embedded in Scripture. The very first verse of the Bible, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” necessitates the validity of the most fundamental law of logic: the **law of contradiction** (A is not non-A). Genesis 1:1 teaches that God is the Creator of all things. It also declares that He created

⁵⁶⁸ Gordon H. Clark, “Special Revelation as Rational,” *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F.H. Henry, 36; reprinted in Gordon H. Clark, *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 77.

⁵⁶⁹ “Apart from logic a noun would mean what it does not mean; and if a word means everything, it means nothing. In order to mean something, a word must also not mean something. There is no meaning without the law of contradiction” (Gordon H. Clark, *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 183f); cf. idem., *In Defense of Theology*, 99.

⁵⁷⁰ Gordon H. Clark, “The Axiom of Revelation,” in Clark, *An Introduction to Christian Philosophy*, 71. Idem., “God and Logic,” *The Trinity Review* (Nov–Dec 1980), 5; available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=16>; reprinted in *Against the World: The Trinity Review, 1978–1988*, ed. John W. Robbins, 56.

⁵⁷¹ Consequently, “Men are required to believe and to obey not only what is ‘expressly set down in Scripture,’ but also what ‘by good and necessary consequences may be deduced from Scripture’” (Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 6:226, commenting on WCF 1:6).

“in the beginning.” It does not teach, therefore, that God is not the Creator of all things, nor does it maintain that God created all things 100 or 1000 years after the beginning. This verse assumes that the words “God,” “created,” “beginning,” and so forth, all have definite meanings. It also assumes that they do not mean certain things. For speech to be intelligible, words must have univocal meanings. What makes the words meaningful, and revelation and communication possible is that each word conforms to the law of contradiction.⁵⁷²

Because God’s Word is entirely truthful, rational, logical, self-consistent, and non-contradictory, it is inerrant.

In considering the nature of truth, Christians must acknowledge that “It is his [God’s] decree that makes one proposition true and another false. . . . A proposition is true because God thinks it so.”⁵⁷³

Man, the image of God, is rational

Man, being the image of God, reflects—on a creaturely level—something of God’s rationality. This is true of all mankind (i.e., the creation-image; Job 32:8; Jn 1:9) and of believers in whom God’s image is being restored (i.e., the redemption-image; Col 3:10; Eph 4:24).⁵⁷⁴ Animals are not the image of God. Consequently, Scripture

⁵⁷² W. Gary Crampton, “Review of *Presuppositional Apologetics: Stated and Defended*, by Greg L. Bahnsen,” *The Trinity Review* # 298 (Jan–Feb 2011), 5 (bold added); available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=274>.

⁵⁷³ Gordon H. Clark, “The Axiom of Revelation,” in Clark, *An Introduction to Christian Philosophy*, 66. Gordon H. Clark, “God and Logic,” *The Trinity Review* (Nov–Dec 1980), 2; available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=16>; reprinted in *Against the World: The Trinity Review, 1978–1988*, ed. John W. Robbins, 52. Robert E. Fugate, *A Biblical Philosophy of Truth with Contemporary Applications*.

⁵⁷⁴ “Righteousness and holiness that comes from truth” (Eph 4:24 NET; cf. NASB).

describes animals as “brute [ἄλογος—unreasoning⁵⁷⁵] beasts” (2 Pt 2:12; Jude 10), which “have no understanding” (Ps 32:9).

Being God’s image, man possesses knowledge and logic. From birth man possess innate knowledge from God. This general revelation⁵⁷⁶ is rational and communicates propositional truth (Ro 1:18-21, 28, 32; 2:14-15).⁵⁷⁷ Through special revelation⁵⁷⁸ from God (i.e., God’s Word), man can know truth. For these reasons, man can reason abstractly (e.g., analyzing philosophical concepts, ethical problems, etc.) and develop new technology on the basis of scientific study.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁵ ἄλογος is used of animals to denote “without reason” in the sense of lacking reasoning capacity (BDAG, 48).

⁵⁷⁶ The term “general revelation” denotes God’s revelation of Himself to all persons, at all times, in all places, through creation, through His providential governing of history, and through man’s mind and conscience (Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 828).

⁵⁷⁷ Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority* 3:460. John M. Frame, “Unregenerate Knowledge of God,” *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*, eds. W.C. Campbell-Jack and Gavin McGrath (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 732-735; reprinted in John M. Frame, *History of Western Philosophy and Theology*, 610-616; available at <http://frame-poythress.org/unregenerate-knowledge-of-god>. Cf. our above discussion, “Biblical worldview critique of empiricism.”

⁵⁷⁸ The term “special revelation” denotes God’s disclosure of Himself and His will to particular persons, conveyed by miraculous acts and words, enabling those persons to enter into a redemptive relationship with Him (Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 832). “The Bible conceives of revelation as primarily and fundamentally verbal communication—God’s *tora* (‘teaching, instruction, law’), or *dabarim* (‘words’), in the OT, and his *logos* or *rhema*, ‘word, utterance,’ in the NT. The thought of God as revealed in his actions is secondary, and depends for its validity on the presupposition of verbal revelation. . . .” (J.I. Packer, “Revelation,” NBD₃, 1015).

⁵⁷⁹ Since man is a finite being, he cannot know truth exhaustively (Dt 29:29; 1 Cor 13:9, 12; Ro 11:33-34). But, through revelation from God, man can know truth.

Language is another aspect of man's rationality. Human language is complex and abstract, being expressed through thought, speech, and writing. Human language is possible because God created man as a rational being, having the ability to speak. Thus, human language is a gift from God. Language is used by God to converse with man. It is used by man to worship and to converse with God, and to converse with his fellow men. Human language is adequate to accomplish those purposes that God intended to accomplish through it.⁵⁸⁰

In demonstrating the necessity of human reason for the reception of divine revelation, Charles Hodge states:

Christians in repudiating Rationalism in all its forms, do not reject the service of reason. . . . Reason is necessarily presupposed in every revelation. Revelation is the communication of truth to the mind. But the communication of truth supposes the capacity to receive it. Revelations cannot be made to brutes or to idiots. Truths, to be received as objects of faith, must be intellectually apprehended. A proposition to which we attach no meaning, however important the truth it may contain, cannot be an object of faith. . . . It is impossible that one truth should contradict another.⁵⁸¹

Elsewhere, we have demonstrated the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ used logic (e.g., Mt 22:29-32//Mk 12:24-27//Lk 20:34-38).⁵⁸² Here, we will simply observe that the evangelistic method of the Apostle Paul included reasoning logically and persuasively with unbelievers from the Scriptures (*διαλέγομαι* in Ac 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8-9; 24:25; cf. 9:22). Paul's letters are filled with the conjunctions "for," "therefore," "for this cause," or other connectives introducing logical conclusions. This is important, for, as John Frame notes, "Whenever a biblical writer presents grounds for what he says, not only his conclusion but also his logic is normative for us. . . . If we deny the

⁵⁸⁰ We will discuss a theology of language under the heading "Seven Applications of the Biblical Worldview" below.

⁵⁸¹ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:49, 51.

⁵⁸² Robert E. Fugate, *A Theology of Rationality and Logic*, 12.

implications of Scripture, we are denying Scripture.”⁵⁸³ Those logical principles taught in Scripture reveal a portion of God’s infallible logic.⁵⁸⁴ Thus, the Westminster Confession is quite correct in its endorsement of logic when it refers to those things that “by good and necessary consequences may be deduced from Scripture” (WCF 1:6).

Reasoning and ethics

The reasoning of believers must be subject to God’s revealed Word and Jesus’ Lordship (2 Cor 10:4–5). This is an ethical imperative. Thus, there is a relationship between reasoning and ethics.⁵⁸⁵

Logic is required for us to properly respond to God’s Word. God commands believers to apply His Word and Christ’s lordship to our lives, our families, our church, the state, and to the entire culture. In doing so, God commands us to reason and reason well. Thus, **reasoning is part of our obedience to God.** “The biblical concepts of understanding, obeying, and loving presuppose the necessity of logic. . . . To the extent that we disobey the applications of Scripture, we disobey Scripture itself.”⁵⁸⁶ Consequently, “To abandon logic is to abandon our responsibility before God.”⁵⁸⁷ Furthermore, our violations of the law of noncontradiction are sinful.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸³ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 253.

⁵⁸⁴ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 255.

⁵⁸⁵ “The question of knowledge is an ethical question” (Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 19). “Knowledge is knowledge plus love” (Van Til; cited in Douglas J. Douma, *The Presbyterian Philosopher: The Authorized Biography of Gordon H. Clark*, 35f).

⁵⁸⁶ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 252.

⁵⁸⁷ John M. Frame, “Rationality and Scripture,” in *Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition*, eds. Hendrik Hart, Johan Van Der Hoeven, and Nicholas Wolterstorff, 304f, 310.

⁵⁸⁸ Gordon H. Clark, “God and Logic,” *The Trinity Review* (Nov-Dec 1980), 6; available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=16>; reprinted in *Against the World: The Trinity Review, 1978-1988*, ed. John W. Robbins, 55.

Thus, reasoning is inseparable from ethics. In fact, reasoning is dependent on ethical values. The law of noncontradiction teaches that a person *ought* not to believe contradictory propositions. Such ethics are not religiously neutral; they are capital borrowed from the Biblical worldview. “Logic presupposes a rational God, a rational world, a rational human mind. . . . Use of logic also presupposes that we have some criterion for truth and falsity.”⁵⁸⁹ Using logic requires premises or presuppositions. These premises are derived from the Biblical worldview.

“Attacking logic means attacking morality. If logic is disdained, then the distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, just and unjust, merciful and ruthless also disappear. . . . The rejection of logic has led—and must lead—to the abandonment of morality.”⁵⁹⁰

God’s logic vs. man’s logic?

It is often asserted that God’s logic is completely different than man’s logic. For example, theologians asserting that human knowledge is merely an analogy of God’s knowledge (i.e., analogical knowledge) (e.g., Thomas Aquinas, Cornelius Van Til, John Frame) teach that human logic is merely analogous to God’s logic.⁵⁹¹ However, this raises various problems.

1. The basis for any analogy is non-analogical, that is, univocal (i.e., having one meaning⁵⁹²). (An analogy is a comparison between two

⁵⁸⁹ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 248, 257.

⁵⁹⁰ John W. Robbins, “Why Study Logic,” in Gordon H. Clark, *Logic* (Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1985), viii–ix; also printed in *The Trinity Review* (July–August 1985); available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=39>; reprinted in *Against the World: The Trinity Review, 1978–1988*, ed. John W. Robbins, 187–189.

⁵⁹¹ For an overview of analogical knowledge and the epistemologies of Cornelius Van Til versus Gordon Clark, see Robert E. Fugate, *A Theology of Rationality and Logic*, 31–36, 55–67.

⁵⁹² “Univocal means to have one meaning” (Gordon H. Clark, *Logic*, 11). The opposite of univocal is equivocation.

things that are partly alike—having at least one point of similarity/identity/commonality—and partly unlike.)

“Ordinary analogies are legitimate and useful, but they are so only because there is a univocal point of coincident meaning in the two parts. . . . Without a univocal element an alleged analogy is pure equivocation, and analogical knowledge is complete ignorance. . . . If God has the truth and if man has only an analogy [this ‘analogy’ containing no univocal element], it follows that he does not have the truth. An analogy of the truth is not the truth. . . . If the human mind were limited to analogical truths, it could never know the univocal truth that it was limited to analogies.”⁵⁹³

2. The divine Logos enlightens every man (Jn 1:9).⁵⁹⁴
3. Whoever calls for a totally-distinct, higher, divine logic must justify the validity of man’s laws of logic and demonstrate how they relate to God’s logic, in order to escape illogical nonsense.⁵⁹⁵

“If there is absolutely no point of contact between the divine logic and so-called human logic, then what passes as human reasoning can never be valid. And, of course, if this were so, then the putative [commonly accepted] reasoning of those who insist that there is a distinction between the divine and human logic cannot be valid!”⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹³ Gordon H. Clark, “The Bible As Truth,” in *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 33f. Cf. Robert L. Reymond, *Preach the Word!* 19f; idem., *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 96–102.

For a philosophical discussion of the problems with argument from analogy see Horace W.B. Joseph, *An Introduction to Logic*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1916), 532–542.

⁵⁹⁴ Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 3:216.

⁵⁹⁵ “Whoever calls for a higher logic must preserve the existing laws of logic to escape pleading the cause of illogical nonsense” (Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 3:229).

⁵⁹⁶ Ronald H. Nash, “Gordon H. Clark,” in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 187. This argument applies to

4. “If the law of contradiction is irrelevant in the sphere of transcendent ontology, then ‘God and the not-God, the divine and the demonic, cannot be assuredly differentiated.”⁵⁹⁷

“A supralogical God would be unknowable and unintelligible. . . . We cannot say how a supralogical God would act or how He would communicate anything to us by way of revelation. A supralogical God is a God about whom nothing can be said or known. . . . If [a supralogical] God can do self-contradictory acts, then there is no inconsistency in His *promising* eternal life to all who trust in Christ but actually condemning to everlasting damnation all who trust Christ. Such duplicity (inconsistency) would be entirely in character for a God not bound by the law of noncontradiction since, in a world where the law does not apply, there is no difference between eternal life and eternal damnation.”⁵⁹⁸

Conclusion

Logic is the way God thinks. God’s Word is propositional and logical. Man, the image of God, was created rational.

“Logic is fixed, universal, necessary, and irreplaceable. Irrationality contradicts the Biblical teaching from beginning to end. . . . God is a rational being, the architecture of whose mind is logic.”⁵⁹⁹ “Either the *logic* of revelation is *our* logic, or there is no revelation.”⁶⁰⁰

those theologians who assert that human logic is merely analogous to God’s logic. See the discussion of analogical knowledge in Robert E. Fugate, *A Theology of Rationality and Truth*, 27–36.

⁵⁹⁷ Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 2:60.

⁵⁹⁸ Ronald H. Nash, *The Concept of God*, 40f.

⁵⁹⁹ Gordon H. Clark, “God and Logic,” *The Trinity Review* (Nov-Dec 1980), 7; available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=16>; reprinted in *Against the World: The Trinity Review, 1978–1988*, ed. John W. Robbins, 56.

⁶⁰⁰ Herman Hoeksema, *The Clark-Van Til Controversy* (Hobbs, NM: The Trinity Foundation, 1995), 8.

In this apostate time of postmodernism, relativism, subjectivism, neo-orthodoxy (with its logical paradoxes⁶⁰¹), and irrational/mystical religions, rationality and logic are nonnegotiable pillars of the Biblical worldview.⁶⁰²

7. The sufficiency of Scripture (*sola Scriptura*)⁶⁰³

The seventh pillar of the Biblical worldview is one of the properties of Scripture: the sufficiency of Scripture. The *locus classicus* Scripture passage teaching the sufficiency of Scripture is 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work**” (2 Tim 3:16-17 ESV & NKJV conflated).

Since the God-breathed Scriptures thoroughly equip the man of God for **every** good work, we say that they are sufficient.

The Latin phrase *sola Scriptura* (i.e., by Scripture alone) was the watchword of the Protestant Reformation. *Sola Scriptura* or the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture means that **Scripture alone is the absolute authority and rule for faith and life** (contrary to

⁶⁰¹ W. Gary Crampton, “Does the Bible Contain Paradox?” *The Trinity Review* (November/December 1990), available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=76>, reprinted in *Against the Churches*, ed. John W. Robbins, 81-83. Robert L. Reymond, *Preach the Word!* 27-34. Idem., *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 103-110.

⁶⁰² For examples of bad theology promoting irrationality see Robert E. Fugate, *A Theology of Rationality and Logic*, 41-46 and idem., *Modernism and Postmodernism: Their History, Beliefs, Cultural Influence—and How to Refute Them*.

⁶⁰³ Some of this material was first published in Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Word to You*, 341-352.

Romanism's Scripture + the infallible magisterium [i.e., the Roman Catholic Church's teaching office] + church tradition).⁶⁰⁴

We can define the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture as meaning that “**Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly.**”⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰⁴ “Precisely because the Reformers’ theological formulations were shaped by the controversies of their age, it is clear that the ‘faith and life’ formula was meant to be an **all-embracing rubric**, not a limiting one. They claimed that the deposit of truth lies in the Bible, not in the church or in the magisterium of the church. Their concern, in other words, was to spell out the locus of authority in order to rebut their Roman Catholic opponents, **not to restrict the range of the Bible’s authority to religious life and thought, away from history and the natural world.** The modern disjunction would have seemed strange to them” (D.A. Carson, “Recent Developments in the Doctrine of Scripture,” in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, eds. D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986], 5 [bold added]).

Sample Reformational confessions teaching *sola Scriptura* include: the French Confession (Calvin, 1559), article 5 (SCC, 3:362; *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation*, ed. James T. Dennison, 2:142); Belgic Confession (Reformed, 1561), article 7 (SCC, 3:387–389; Dennison, 2:427f); Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England (Anglican/Episcopal, 1562), article 6 (SCC, 3:489; cf. articles 20–21, SCC 3:500f); Second Helvetic Confession (Reformed, 1566), chapter 2 (SCC, 3:833f; Dennison, 2:812f; Lutheran Formula of Concord (1577) (SCC, 3:93f, 96; Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord* [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1959], 464f, Epitome, paragraphs 1–2, 7); Westminster Confession (Presbyterian, 1647), 1:6. Cf. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, 2:92 (3:21:3). SCC is available at <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds3.html>.

⁶⁰⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 127 (bold added). Grudem is correct in applying the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture to the Old Testament age (as well as to the New). Timothy

Scripture alone gives the essential **axioms** that are needed in each area of life (e.g., science, history, education, civil government, economics, counseling, sexuality, etc.). To the degree that we start with God's infallible Word and learn the foundational axioms it teaches for every area of life, we can make sense out of every area of life. People who don't start with God's revealed Word (which alone is truth) cannot make sense out of any area of life.⁶⁰⁶ Almost all Christians are

had known the sacred Scriptures from infancy (βρέφος, 2 Tim 3:15). No New Testament Scripture had been written when Timothy was an infant. (The earliest New Testament book would be dated about A.D. 47–48) Thus, the key passage teaching the sufficiency of Scripture (i.e., 2 Tim 3:15–17) must be applicable to the Old Testament Scriptures. Furthermore, when Paul was teaching the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture to Timothy in 2 Tim 3:16–17 (perhaps as early as A.D. 58) half of the books of the New Testament canon were not yet written (i.e., Mt, Mk, Lk, Jude, 2 Pt, Ac, 2, 3, 1 Jn, 1 Pt, Jn, Heb, Rv; cf. James A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1976])! Yet, Paul expects Timothy to apply this doctrine of sufficiency. (Of course, Timothy may not have possessed copies of some other books that had already been written.) Clearly the application of the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture cannot be limited to the time after the completion of the writing of the New Testament.

Cessationist Sinclair Ferguson also holds that the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture applied during Old Testament times: “God’s revelation has always been sufficient for each stage of redemptive revelation” (Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996], 231). Similarly, John M. Frame writes, “2 Timothy 3:16–17 ascribes sufficiency to the OT. . . . At any point of redemptive history, the revelation given at that time is sufficient” (*The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 225f).

Readers should note that Grudem has written his definition of the sufficiency of Scripture so as not to preclude the charismatic gift of prophecy for today—as long as contemporary prophecy is not equated with the infallible “word of the Lord,” and thereby equal to Scripture in authority.

⁶⁰⁶ “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Cor 3:19a). Compare the phrase “under the sun” in Ecclesiastes, which denotes,

syncretistic in their thinking. They have some areas of their thinking that they developed by starting from Scripture, but other fields of study or aspects of cultural thinking were not derived from Scripture. This produces logical and ethical contradictions in their thinking and lifestyle.

If the Scriptures are sufficient for teaching people to please and obey God perfectly, then they must be regarded as being sufficient—not only for individual persons—but also **sufficient for the God-ordained, covenantal institutions, i.e., the family, the church, and the state.**

Furthermore, (a) since God is the Creator and Providential Ruler over all, and (b) since Jesus Christ’s lordship is comprehensive (Mt 28:18; Ac 10:36; Col 1:18; Pss 2:6–12; 110:1–3), then His Word must be authoritative in every area of life, thought, and culture (e.g., child raising, education, business, economics, law, medicine, politics, science, counseling, the arts, entertainment, etc.). Thus, the believer must apply the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture to all areas of life and culture.

Thus, the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture has far-reaching applications—much farther reaching than almost all evangelicals realize. Many Reformed and Presbyterian leaders who most trumpet the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture are not only unwilling to apply it to almost any area of life besides theology and maybe ethics, but they go so far as to oppose believers who attempt to do so!

The question we must face, however, is, Does Scripture actually teach the doctrine of *sola Scriptura*?

Biblical proof of the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture:

1. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that

“apart from God and His revelation.” Solomon then demonstrates that without God’s revelation “all is vanity” (i.e., meaninglessness, worthlessness, vanity, emptiness, futility, absurdity, frustration, nonsense) and “chasing after the wind.”

the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped** for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17 ESV & NKJV conflated).

2. Every time the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles argued from Scripture as the final court of appeal (e.g., “it is/stands written,” i.e., God says⁶⁰⁷), they were teaching that there is no legitimate rival source of authority to which appeal could be made—such as: binding religious traditions; infallible church interpretations of Scripture; infallible church leaders (e.g., a pope); etc.
3. Jesus frequently rebuked religious leaders and people in general for their ignorance of the Scriptures (Jn 3:10; Mt 12:3, 5, 7//Mk 2:25//Lk 6:3; Mt 19:4; 21:16; Mt 21:42//Mk 12:10; Mt 22:29, 31//Mk 12:24, 26), but He never rebuked anyone for their ignorance of religious traditions. Neither did He ever rebuke anyone for disbelieving or for disobeying religious traditions.⁶⁰⁸
4. The Lord Jesus and the Apostles contradicted and deliberately disobeyed many of the authoritative Jewish traditions of their day. In fact, Christ made a point of dogmatically confronting several rabbinic traditions (Mt 22:16), saying, “You have heard that it was said . . . but I say to you” (Mt 5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43).⁶⁰⁹ The Lord Jesus also contradicted authoritative rabbinic oral traditions regarding: divorce (Mt 19:3-9); devoting gifts to God instead of honoring parents (Mt 15:1-20//Mk 7:1-23); non-binding oaths (Mt 23:16-22); ceremonial defilement and kosher foods (Mt 15:1-20//Mk 7:1-23); and healing on the Sabbath (Mk 3:1-6//Lk 6:6-11; Lk 13:10-17; 14:1-6). Cf. Gal 1:14; Col 2:8.

⁶⁰⁷ Robert E. Fugate, “It Is Written verses.” For the significance of the perfect tense, “it stands written,” see idem., *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 123f.

⁶⁰⁸ For a fuller discussion of religious tradition (including Apostolic tradition versus ecclesiastical tradition) see Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 121, 124, 329-337, 456-464, 325f.

⁶⁰⁹ These oral teachings of Christ were inscripturated by His Apostles.

5. The Law (Dt 4:2; 12:32), the Prophets (Pr 30:5-6) and the new covenant (Rv 22:18-19) all contain strict warnings against adding to them or taking away from them:

Dt 4:2 “Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.”

Dt 12:32 “See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.”

Dt 27:26 “Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out.”

Pr 30:5-6 “Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.”

Rv 22:18-19 “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

Thus, the ending of the Bible is like God’s copyright warning! (Cf. Jn 8:31-32; Ro 16:17; Gal 1:6-9; 1 Tim 6:3-4; 2 Tim 1:13).

6. Many additional verses demonstrate that God’s Word alone—apart from religious traditions and infallible church interpretations—is sufficient to accomplish God’s purposes: Pss 19:7-8; 119; Is 8:20; Lk 16:29-31; Jn 5:45-47; 12:47-48; 20:31; Ac 17:11; 26:22-23; 1 Cor 4:6; Gal 6:16.

Seven applications of the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture

1. “The sufficiency of Scripture should encourage us whenever we are trying to discover what God would have us to think (regarding a particular doctrinal issue) or to do (in a particular situation). . . . Everything God wants to tell us about that question is to be found in Scripture.

2. We are to add nothing to Scripture, and . . . we are to consider no other writings of equal value to Scripture.
3. God does not require us to believe anything about himself or his redemptive work that is not found in Scripture.
4. No modern revelations from God are to be placed on a level equal to Scripture in authority. . . . *God does not require us to believe anything about himself or his work in the world that is contained in these revelations but not in Scripture. . . . God does not require us to obey any moral directives that come to us through such means but are not confirmed by Scripture. The Bible contains everything we need God to tell us for trusting and obeying him perfectly.*
5. Nothing is sin that is not forbidden by Scripture (either explicitly or by implication).
6. Nothing is required of us by God which is not commanded in Scripture (either explicitly or by implication). . . . *The focus of our search for God's will ought to be on Scripture, rather than on seeking guidance through prayer for changed circumstances or altered feelings or direct guidance from the Holy Spirit apart from Scripture. It also means that if someone claims to have a message from God telling us what we ought to do, we need never assume that it is sin to disobey such a message unless it can be confirmed by the application of Scripture itself to our situation.*
7. In our doctrinal and ethical teaching we should emphasize what Scripture emphasizes and be content with what God has told us in Scripture” (Dt 29:29).⁶¹⁰

In sum, the Scriptures, illumined by the Holy Spirit, are sufficient in themselves to accomplish the purposes for which God designed them, i.e., to lead people to God's gracious salvation and to teach them how to live to please God in all areas of their lives.

⁶¹⁰ These seven points are taken from Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 130-135 (italics added).

Qualifications: what the sufficiency of Scripture does not mean

1. That Scripture functions salvifically apart from the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration and illumination (Mt 11:25-26; Lk 10:21-22; Mt 13:11-15; Jn 7:17). (The unregenerate Pharisees had memorized the Torah, but Jesus repeatedly pointed out that they did not correctly understand it or obey it.) The Reformers and the Puritans always emphasized the Word plus the Holy Spirit.
2. That Scripture gives exhaustive knowledge (Dt 29:29; Job 11:7; 36:26; Ps 139:6; 1 Cor 13:9, 12; Ro 11:33-34). But, the sufficiency of Scripture does mean that everything essential for faith and life is clearly revealed somewhere in Scripture. "The secret *things belong* to the LORD our God, but those *things which are revealed belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we may do all the words of this law*" (Dt 29:29).
3. That Scripture gives exhaustive guidance, answering specific, personalized questions like: To what vocation has God called me? Whom does God want me to marry? Where does God want me to live? Which church does God want me to attend? Which Scripture passage does God want me to share or teach now? Which people does God want me to focus my outreach on at this time? What are the root sins, hurts, or needs in someone's life? Does a particular situation require spiritual warfare or patiently enduring hardship (which can involve the gift of discernment of spirits)? What are the enemy's battle plans? Thus, believers always need to be led by the Holy Spirit (Ro 8:14; cf. Gal 5:18). They also need to receive illumination⁶¹¹ from the Holy Spirit in their understanding and application of Scripture. Furthermore, there is no inherent and necessary conflict between the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture (rightly formulated) and rightly-exercised gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12-14; etc.). In their attempts

⁶¹¹ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, chapter 9.

to protect and promote the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture, some have misstated or misapplied it.⁶¹²

Thus, the Scriptures are not sufficient in themselves to accomplish purposes that God did not design them to accomplish. However, the Scriptures are sufficient to teach these three truths.

Pervasive evangelical violations of the sufficiency of Scripture in American churches

1. Not applying Biblical jurisdictions to the three covenantal institutions: family, church, and state (e.g., education and welfare are not part of the Biblical jurisdiction of civil government).⁶¹³
2. Rejecting the Biblical model of education for children. The Biblical model of education for covenant children includes:
 - parent-led teaching in a family context (Gn 18:19; Dt 4:9; 6:1-9, 20-25; 11:19-22; Ps 78:3-6; Pr 1:8-9; 2:1-2; 3:1, 21; 4:1-11, 20-21; 5:1; 6:20-22; 13:1; 15:5, 32; 19:27; 22:6; 23:22; 31:1; Eph 6:1-4);
 - Biblical curriculum/content;
 - Biblical goals: (1) The ultimate goal is to glorify God (1 Cor 10:31; Ro 11:36; 1 Pt 4:10-11; Rv 4:11) and to enjoy

⁶¹² Some theologians erroneously define the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture in such a way as to preclude certain gifts of the Spirit. But, this would mean that the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture could not have been applied in the early church—even though Paul wrote 2 Timothy 3:16-17 to them! This is an impossible view. See the above footnote to the definition of the sufficiency of Scripture.

Wayne Grudem notes that some anti-charismatics are modifying the traditional theological definition of the sufficiency of Scripture so as to preclude all forms of subjective guidance (“Should Christians Expect Miracles Today?” *The Kingdom and the Power*, ed. Gary S. Greig and Kevin N. Springer [Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993], 81-83; cf. 437-442).

⁶¹³ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 19-26.

Him forever (Ps 73:25–28); (2) The immediate goal is to train and equip one’s children to fulfill their God-given callings, utilizing their gifts for the strengthening of the family and Christ’s church (1 Cor 12:7; 14:3–5, 12, 17, 26; Eph 4:12–16; 1 Pt 4:10–11), thereby promoting the Dominion Covenant/Cultural Mandate (Gn 1:26–28) through the messianic/mediatorial rule of King Jesus over all the earth, in every sphere of life and culture (Mt 28:18–20; Pss 2; 110; Ac 2:29–36; 10:36; 17:6–7; Col 1:18–20; 2 Cor 10:3–5; Eph 1:20–23; 1 Cor 15:23–28; Rv 1:5; 11:15; 19:16);

- Biblical standard: God’s infallible, epistemically-necessary, and sufficient Word (see property of Scripture #1 above);
- Biblical method: relational discipleship/apprenticeship for all areas of life, which includes character formation in holiness⁶¹⁴ (Lk 6:39–41; Mk 3:14; Gn 18:19; Dt 4:9; 6:1–9, 20–25; 11:19–22; 31:12–13; 32:7, 46; Pr 1:8; 2:1–2; 3:1; 4:1–4, 7, 20; 6:20; 22:6; 31:1; Eph 4:6; and the entire book of Proverbs)—contra the Greek model of education, which merely involves parroting abstract, speculative, disjointed “facts”;
- Biblical motivations: love for God and for one’s neighbor (Mt 22:36–40; 1 Cor 13; Jn 14:15, 21, 31; 15:10–12, 17; 1 Jn 4:21; 5:3–4; 2 Cor 5:13); and the fear of the Lord (Dt 4:9–10; 6:2ff, 13, 24; 10:12; 31:12–13; cf. Dt 8:6; 10:12–

⁶¹⁴ Biblical education “is education in holiness. . . . Holiness means difference. And their [ancient Jews’] whole educational system was directed to that end” (William Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World* [London: Collins, 1959], 14, 47). The root meaning of the pervasive Biblical term “holiness” is “separation,” i.e., ethical separation from sin and separation to God and His redemptive purposes.

13, 20; 13:4; Ps 19:9; Pr 1:7, 29; 2:5; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27;
14:26-27; 15:16, 23; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; Is 11:1-3).⁶¹⁵

3. Rejecting Biblical “nouthetic”⁶¹⁶ counseling for psychological counseling.⁶¹⁷
4. Rejecting Biblical law for natural law theory⁶¹⁸ in the civil sphere (e.g., two-kingdom theology⁶¹⁹).
5. Rejecting the historicity of the early chapters of the book of Genesis and interpreting them in light of autonomous science (often including the religious myth or science fiction of Darwinian evolution).
6. Rejecting Biblical economics (including private ownership of property and free enterprise) for socialism (often called “social justice”).
7. Rejecting Biblical patriarchy for feminism.⁶²⁰
8. Numerous church programs that have no basis in Scripture, such as: man-centered, entertainment-oriented, seeker-friendly worship services; age-segregated Sunday schools and children’s church; church growth strategies based on secular business, sociological, and psychological models; pastoral selection

⁶¹⁵ Robert E. Fugate, *God’s Mandate for Biblical Education* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2014).

⁶¹⁶ Jay Adams coined the term “nouthetic counseling” from the Greek word νουθετέω, which means “admonish, warn, instruct” (Ro 15:14; etc.).

⁶¹⁷ Robert E. Fugate, *Psycho-Heresy: “Christianizing” Pagan Psychologies*.

⁶¹⁸ Robert E. Fugate, *A Brief History and Critique of Natural Law Theory: Is Natural Law Sufficient to Govern Society?*

⁶¹⁹ John M. Frame, *The Escondido Theology: A Reformed Response to Two Kingdom Theology*. Robert E. Fugate, “Luther’s Two Kingdoms,” unpublished paper.

⁶²⁰ Robert E. Fugate, *Biblical Patriarchy: Male Headship in Family, Church, and State*.

committees that hire a pastor whom they don't know, based on his seminary degree; etc.⁶²¹

9. Most church leaders, including Reformed leaders, do not believe that the Ten Commandments should be applied to culture; instead, they promote religious pluralism and political pluralism in their nation.⁶²² However, religious pluralism is based on epistemological pluralism (i.e., there is no absolute truth),⁶²³ and it inevitably promotes polytheism, thereby aiding the kingdom of Satan, rather than the kingdom of God!

For example, Seminary Presidents John MacArthur and Albert Mohler, as well as theologian Wayne Grudem, all publically endorsed the Mormon candidate Mitt Romney for President in 2012. Clearly, in their eyes, the First Commandment is irrelevant in the realm of culture.⁶²⁴ Their position is consistent with John

⁶²¹ John M. Frame lists three common Protestant traditions that add to Scripture: the fundamentalist prohibition of all alcohol; strict subscriptionism to denominational confessions that cannot be corrected by Scripture; and worship styles and instrumentation based on aesthetic and historical criteria rather than Scripture (*Systematic Theology*, 628f).

⁶²² “**Pluralism** is nothing more than a transitional phase a society goes through as it shifts its moral foundations from one world view to another” (John E. Stoos, “Political Correctness and the Doctrine of Hell,” *Chalcedon Report* 376 [Nov 1996]: 19).

⁶²³ **Epistemological pluralism** is the belief that there is no single meaning or truth; meaning varies as the consequences vary for the individual, and truth is the expedient way of thinking; no one view is true, or, all views are equally true; there is no ultimate principle.

⁶²⁴ Driscoll, MacArthur, Trump: Who's Really to Blame,” <https://beforeitsnews.com/opinion-conservative/2016/03/driscoll-macarthur-trump-whos-really-to-blame-3120500.html>. John F. MacArthur, Jr. is pastor of Grace Community Church and president of The Master's Seminary in Los Angeles, California. Richard Albert Mohler, Jr. is president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. See Joel McDurmon, *Inglorious Kingdoms: Saving the Public Square from the Tyrannies of Bad Theology*

Piper's defense of religious pluralism.⁶²⁵ In my view, this is abominable theology, and it is the reason why the church has lost its saltiness (Mt 5:13). Christians who are pluralists are defenseless against consistent Muslims, communists, and others who have an eschatology of world dominion. Religious and political pluralism are a total rejection of the Presbyterianism of the 16th and 17th centuries, which believed that the civil magistrate is obligated by God to prohibit the public worship of false gods and blasphemy against the one true God⁶²⁶ within his civil jurisdiction, as Presbyterian church historian Philip Schaff reluctantly explains:

The Protestant divines and princes of the sixteenth century felt it to be their duty to God and to themselves to suppress and punish heresy as well as civil crimes. . . . It [theonomic view] had a strong basis in the national endorsement of the Solemn League and Covenant, and triumphed in the

(<http://store.americanvision.org/collections/theology/products/inglorious-kingdoms-saving-the-public-square-from-the-tyrannies-of-bad-theology>).

Caveat: In no way am I demeaning the godly Christian character of these men or belittling the value of their ministries. Wayne Grudem, in particular, has produced much excellent Christian teaching and has stood valiantly for truth in many areas.

⁶²⁵ For example, John Piper's defense of pluralism, "Making Room for Atheism," available at <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/making-room-for-atheism>, is filled with several egregious errors. Piper also teaches pacifism and advocates gun control. This is a violation of Biblical teaching regarding self-defense, and it is suicidal (Joel McDurmon, "A Biblical Response to John Piper's Denial of the Right to Bear Arms" [unfortunately expunged from the American Vision website]; cf. Gary DeMar, "Jesus, Guns, and Self-Defense: What Does the Bible Say?," <http://americanvision.org/12889/jesus-guns-and-self-defense-what-does-the-bible-say>).

⁶²⁶ This blasphemy against the one true God includes the false religions of Judaism and Islam, which do not worship the tri-personal God of the Bible.

Westminster Assembly. It may therefore be called *the Presbyterian theory of the seventeenth century*.⁶²⁷

The above nine examples of compromise demonstrate that much of what contemporary American churches do has little or no basis in Scripture. Yet, some of these churches formally affirm the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture (even Reformed and Presbyterian churches)! But their practices contradict their professed theology. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is now interpreted so narrowly as to become almost meaningless. For the sake of Christ's kingdom and for the well-being of your country, do not follow their example!

WCF 1:6.

8. Victorious eschatology within history

Eschatology is the branch of systematic theology that studies the last things.⁶²⁸ Biblically, eschatology dominates and permeates the entire message of the Bible.⁶²⁹ Eschatology is too broad a subject to cover in

⁶²⁷ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 6:51, 77 (emphasis added). Cf. Robert E. Fugate, "Theonomy in Church History," unpublished paper.

"There can be no tolerance in a law system for another religion. Toleration is a device used to introduce a new law-system as a prelude to a new intolerance. . . . Every law system must maintain its existence by hostility to every other law-system and to alien religious foundations, or else it commits suicide" (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, 5f).

⁶²⁸ The Greek word ἔσχατος (*eschatos*) means last. Unfortunately, the treatment of eschatology in systematic theology books tends to be rather superficial and not always based on sound exegesis. Furthermore, eschatology was not one of the theological subjects that was very well developed prior to about the twentieth century, as is evidenced by its miniscule role in the various creeds and confessions and the lack of recognizing the already-not yet structure that balances inaugurated/realized eschatology and not-yet-realized eschatology.

⁶²⁹ Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 3. "The true heart of both Old Testament and New Testament is, therefore, the

a worldview book, so we will merely consider some key eschatological concepts that particularly affect one's worldview and the application of the Biblical worldview to culture. Let's begin by considering the key eschatological themes in the Old Testament.

Old Testament eschatology

7 key eschatological themes in the Old Testament

The Old Testament believer was eschatologically oriented. In faith (Heb 11) he looked forward to seven key promises that were prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures:

1. Savior, Messiah:
 - Satan-conquering seed of the woman (Gn 3:15);
 - Prophet like Moses (Dt 18:15, 18-19);
 - Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4);
 - Davidic king (2 Sm 7:11-16; 22:51; 23:5; 2 Ch 21:7; Ps 89:3-4, 29, 36; Is 9:6-7; 55:3-4; Jer 30:9; 33:17, 21-22; Ezk 34:23-24; 36:26-28; 37:24-26; Ho 3:4-5; Mt 22:42);
 - Immanuel (i.e., God with us) (Is 7:14; note virginal conception);
 - Servant of the Lord (Is 52:13-53:12; 42:1-4; 49:5-7);
 - Son of Man (Dn 7:13-14).
2. Kingdom of God that conquers the kingdoms of this world (Dn 2:31-35, 44-45; 7:3, 13-14; Is 2:2-4).
3. New covenant (Jer 31:31-34).
4. Regathering of a believing remnant of Israel.⁶³⁰

eschatological perspective" (Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, 100).

⁶³⁰ Gregory K. Beale, "Eschatology," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, eds. R.P. Martin and P.H. Davids,

5. Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Jl 2:28-29; Is 32:15; 44:3; 63:11-12; Ezk 11:19; 36:26-29; 37:14; 39:25-29; Zc 12:10; cf. Nu 11:29).

6. Day of the Lord.

- The “day of the Lord [Yehowah]” denotes a prophesied, (usually) imminent day in which Yehowah powerfully brings judgment and wrath on the wicked, but restoration, blessing, and salvation on covenant keepers.⁶³¹
- The Old Testament applies the term “the day of Yehowah” (and related terms) to three types of events:

331. The promise of Israel’s restoration “is not extended to Israel *as such* but only to a regenerated people. . . . They [prophetic promises] foresee a restoration, but *only* of a people which has been purified and made righteous. . . . It will not be Israel as such that enters into the eschatological Kingdom of God but *only* a believing, purified remnant. This remnant concept points up the basic ethical character of the Old Testament hope and is of great importance for the New Testament concept of the church and Israel” (George E. Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974], 71-74, emphasis in original; originally published as *Jesus and the Kingdom* [NY, NY: Harper & Row, 1964], 67-70).

⁶³¹ “The day of the Lord” denotes “the time of the decisive visitation of Yahweh, when he intervenes to punish the wicked, deliver and exalt the faithful remnant who worship him, and establish his own rule” (Greg A. King, “Day of the Lord,” *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David N. Freedman, 324). “The Day of the Lord (*yom Yahweh*) is the era in which the Lord judges, purifies a remnant for himself, avenges his name, vindicates his people, renews his creation, brings in the full deliverance, and establishes his rule on earth” (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990], 214). Cf. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*, eds. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 132-143.

1. Yehowah's judgment against foreign nations that were enemies of Israel;
2. Yehowah's judgment against covenant-breaking, apostate Israel, Judah, or the Jewish people in general; and
3. Future deliverance or blessing for Israel, Judah, other nations, and all creation.⁶³²

For example, the term "day of the Lord [Yehowah]" is applied to the time of the outpouring of God's judicial wrath upon:

Jerusalem when invaded by the Assyrian King Sennacherib in 713 B.C. (Is 22:1-14);

the allied armies of Assyria and the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho when they were decisively defeated by Babylon at the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. (Jer 46:2-20; Ezk 30:3-4);

Judah (Is 2:12, 17; cf. Am 5:18; Zp 1:14-15);

Jerusalem when it was destroyed by the Babylonians in 588 B.C. (Ezk 13:1-9; 34:12; La 1-2);

Edom (Is 34:8-9; 63:4; Ob 15-16);

the Philistines (Jer 47:4);

Babylon when destroyed by the Medes in 539 B.C. (Is 13:1, 6-9, 13, 17-22).

7. New heavens and new earth (Is 65:17; 66:22).⁶³³

Two sequential ages

The Old Testament eschatological structure is comprised of two sequential ages: this age and the age to come. The eschatological age to come would be ushered in by the Messiah. A diagram of the two ages is quite simple:

⁶³² Richard H. Hiers, "Day of the Lord," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ABD), ed. David N. Freedman, 6 vols. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 2:82f.

⁶³³ Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 3-12. Of course, there are many more prophecies about Christ contained in the Old Testament.

Messiah comes

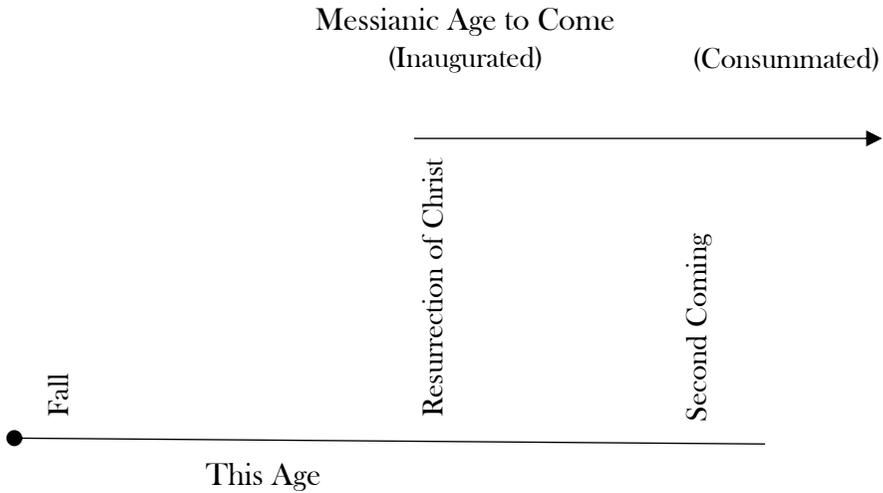
This age

The age to come

New Testament eschatology

The New Testament has the same two ages: this age and the age to come.⁶³⁴ However, the New Testament teaches that, with the coming of Jesus the Messiah, there has been a significant and widespread fulfillment of Old Testament eschatological prophecies. It also teaches that what the Old Testament depicted as one movement (i.e., the messianic age to come) involves two stages, with the **two successive ages partially overlapping chronologically**:

⁶³⁴ Mt 12:32//Mk 3:29; Mt 13:19,22, 39-43, 49; Mk 4:19; Lk 16:8; Mk 10:30 // Lk 18:30; Lk 20:34-35 (cp. // Mt 22:30 //Mk 12:25); Mt 24:3; Mt 28:20; cf. Ro 12:2; 1 Cor 1:20; 2:6, 8; 3:18; 2 Cor 4:4; Gal 1:4; Eph 1:21; 1 Tim 6:17; 2 Tim 4:10; Tit 2:12; Heb 6:5.



“This age” is the old age of fallen humanity, running from the Fall of Adam to the final judgment after Christ returns. “The age to come” is the new age, beginning with the [first] coming of Jesus Christ and running into eternity future.⁶³⁵

The historical divide effected by the messianic “age to come” (beginning with the earthly ministry Jesus Christ) corresponds to the two distinct periods of history mentioned by Jesus: the old era of “the Law and the Prophets” (culminating with John the Baptizer)⁶³⁶ and the new period of the messianic kingdom (Lk 16:16; Mt 11:12-13).

⁶³⁵ John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 88-91, 366.

⁶³⁶ The meaning of “Seal up vision and prophet” (Dn 9:24) is that Jesus Christ authenticated and terminated the temporary, anticipatory succession of Old Testament prophets that reached its climax in John the Baptizer (Mt 11:13; Lk 16:16). The promised eschatological Prophet had come (Dt 18:15, 18-19)!

Daniel’s phrase, “seal up vision and prophet,” refers to the completion of the Old Testament age: “The media of Old Testament revelation. The period of preparation and type, characterized by the visions which the prophets received and proclaimed, will be sealed up, because its purpose has been completed. It will no longer be needed, since the Messianic age has come” (Edward J. Young, *The*

Messianic Prophecies of Daniel [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954], 59).

“The particular description herein chosen very clearly refers to the OT period. Vision was a technical name for revelation given to the OT prophets (cf. Is 1:1; Am 1:1; etc.) The prophet was the one through whom this vision was revealed to the people. The two words, vision and prophet, therefore, serve to designate **the prophetic revelation of the OT period. This revelation was of a temporary, preparatory, typical nature. It pointed forward to the coming of Him who was the great Prophet (Dt 18:15).** When Christ came, there was no need of further prophetic revelation in the OT sense” (Edward J. Young, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Geneva [1949; reprint: Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1978], 200; bold added).

“The last phase of the pre-eschatological age is winding down and that the end is at hand” (W. Sibley Towner, *Daniel*, Interpretation [Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1984], 141). This view comports well with Christ’s statement, “All the [OT] prophets and the Law prophesied until John” (Mt 11:13; Lk 16:16) (a fact noted by Calvin in his comments on Dn 9:24 [p. 202] and by Edward B. Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet* [1885; reprint: Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1978], 195).

J. Barton Payne concurs: “The ‘sealing of vision’ most probably refers to **Christ’s termination of that anticipatory, prophetic mode of revelation which reaches its climax in John the Baptist (Mt 11:13)**” (*The Theology of the Older Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1962], 276f). Elsewhere Payne asserts, “**When Scripture applies the verb ‘seal’ to communications it conveys the sense of accrediting them** (Jn 3:33; cf. 6:27 [1 Ki 21:8; Est 3:12; 8:8, 10; Ne 9:38–10:1; Jer 32:10f, 44])” (J. Barton Payne, “The Goal of Daniel’s Seventy Weeks,” *JETS* 21:2 [June, 1978] 108).

Tertullian (writing in his pre-Montanist days) held this view, teaching that all of the Old Testament prophets prophesied concerning the Christ who was to come and to suffer; after he came, Christ Himself became the seal of all the Old Testament prophets, fulfilling their prophecies. Thus, there is no longer prophecy to declare that the Messiah is yet to come (*An Answer to the Jews* 9 [Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., rev. by A. Cleveland Coxe, *Ante-Nicene*

The law and the prophets *were* until John.⁶³⁷ Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it (Lk 16:16; cf. Mt 11:12-13).

“What specifically characterizes New Testament eschatology is an underlying **tension between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’—between what the believer already enjoys and what he does not yet possess.**”⁶³⁸

Fathers (ANF), 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980-1983), 3:160]).

“‘The sealing of prophecy’ is limited by the express statement of purpose in Daniel 9: the full accomplishing of redemption from sin through blood atonement. And Christ does effect this: ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and *all* things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished’ (Lk 18:31; cp. 24:44; Ac 3:18)” (Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *Perilous Times: A Study in eschatological Evil* [Texarkana, AR: Covenant Media Press, 1999], 21; italics in original; nearly identical wording is found in Gentry, *Daniel’s Seventy Weeks* [Conestee, SC: n.p., 1991], 15f; cf. idem., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology* [Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992], 316f).

The Apostle Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, recognized the Holy Spirit’s coming at Pentecost as fulfilling Joel’s prediction of the eschatological renewal of prophecy in the Messianic age (Ac 2:16-21).

Incidentally, David Chilton understands the two witnesses (Rv 11:3-12) to represent all the prophetic witnesses of the old covenant, from Moses culminating with John the Baptizer (*The Days of Vengeance* [Ft. Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987], 276-278).

⁶³⁷ John the Baptizer was the “Elijah” prophesied by Malachi (Mal 4:5; Mt 11:14; 17:10-13). Since he was preparing the way for the Messiah, no Old Testament prophet was greater than he (Mt 11:9-11; Lk 7:26-28). As the forerunner of Christ, John bridged the two eras. “But, he who is least in the kingdom of heaven/God is greater than he [John the Baptizer]” (Mt 11:11; Lk 7:28).

⁶³⁸ Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 14 (bold added).

Jesus Christ is the key to eschatology

Jesus the Messiah is the eschatological fulfillment of Old Testament prophetic expectation and the key to New Testament eschatology.

The first coming of Christ marks the central point of history—the point at which God fulfilled the prophetic Old Testament Scriptures and gave the final revelation of Himself (Heb 1:1–2;⁶³⁹ Mt 21:37 NKJV // Mk 12:6) by sending His Son into the world as Redeemer—events in the history of redemption that can never be repeated.

This eschatological nature of the first coming of Christ is revealed in the New Testament by the terms it uses to describe the time of His coming: “the fullness of the time” (Gal 4:4); “these last days” (Heb 1:2); “the last days” (Ac 2:17); “the end/consummation of the ages”

⁶³⁹ In Hebrews 1:1–2, “The aorist tense, used both of God’s speaking by the prophets (*lalesas*) and also of his speaking by Christ (*elalesen*), indicates that God has finished speaking in both cases” (Philip E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids, MI: 1977], 37, note 6). Calvin comments, “And when he speaks of ‘the last times,’ he intimates that there is no longer any reason to expect any new revelation; for it was not a word in part that Christ brought, but the final conclusion. . . . If God then has spoken now for the last time, it is right to advance thus far; so also when you come to Christ, you ought not to go farther” (*Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, trans. John Owen [repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984], 33). “His [God’s] word was not completely uttered until Christ came; but when Christ came, the word spoken in Him was indeed God’s final word. . . . The story of divine revelation is a story up to Christ, but there is no progression beyond Him” (F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT, rev. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990], 46). “In this, as in the statements of the O.T., of Jesus and Paul, the new dispensation appears as final, and this applies likewise to the revelation introducing it. It is not one new disclosure to be followed by others, but the consummate disclosure beyond which nothing is expected. After speech in “a Son” (qualitatively so called) no higher speech were possible” (Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948], 324ff).

(Heb 9:26); “the ends of the ages” (1 Cor 10:11); and “these last times” (1 Pt 1:20).⁶¹⁰

In light of the eschatological nature of the first coming of Christ, it is no surprise that Christ began His public ministry by announcing, “The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mk 1:15). “The synoptics’ ‘the time is fulfilled’ and Paul’s ‘in the fulness of time’ (Gal 4:4) suggest a **definitive change** of situation in respect to God’s historical presence and rule.”⁶¹¹

⁶¹⁰ In much popular Christian literature (“pop” eschatology) the phrase “the last days” refers to the time immediately preceding the second coming of Christ. This usage is not Biblical. “The last days” (as well as similar phrases used in the verses cited above) began in the first century with the first coming of Christ and continue until the second coming of Christ at the end of history. Thus, “the last days” refers to the Messianic age, which is also the age of the Spirit. This is confirmed by Gregory K. Beale’s research in which he astutely observes that “Acts 2:17 alludes to the ‘latter days’ of Isa. 2:2 (both read ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, an expression occurring nowhere else in the LXX or the NT).” He elaborates, “Peter substitutes the phrase ‘in the latter days’ (ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις) in place of Joel’s ‘after these things’ (μετὰ ταῦτα). The substitution comes from Isaiah 2:2 (**the only place in the LXX where this precise phrase occurs**). . . . Thus, Peter appears to interpret the Spirit’s coming in fulfillment of Joel to be also the beginning fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy of the end-time mountain temple, under the influence of which the nations would come” (*A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011], 104, 603 (bold added); cf. 582f). Isaiah 2:2-4 describes the Messianic kingdom; Beale’s observation comports perfectly with the Messianic kingdom coming with power at Pentecost (Ac 2), and with the term “last days” frequently denoting the Messianic kingdom age, which is also the age of the Spirit.

⁶¹¹ Carl F.H. Henry, “Reflections on the Kingdom of God,” *JETS* 35:1 (March 1992), 42 (bold added).

Toward the end of His earthly ministry Jesus prophesied, “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (// “see the kingdom of God after it has come/present⁶⁴² with power,” Mk 8:38-9:1; Lk 9:26-27; cf. Dn 7:13-14; 2 Pt 1:16).⁶⁴³

A whole complex of events comprised this final revelation of God in Christ:

- the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the God-man (by means of the virginal conception);

⁶⁴² In Mk 9:1 “The perfect tense of ἐληλυθυῖαν indicates that they are not to see the ‘coming’ of the kingdom of God, but rather to witness the fact that it *has* come” (R.T. France, *Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002], 344): “see the kingdom of God after it has come with power” (Mk 9:1 ESV, NASB); “see the kingdom of God present with power” (NKJV).

⁶⁴³ The transfiguration (which is the next event recorded in each of the Synoptic Gospels after Christ makes this statement; cp. Ex 24:16) was a prophetic preview of Jesus’ enthronement and what was still to be achieved in earthly reality (R.T. France, *Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC, 345). The words “in power” (Mk 9:1) mean that the transfiguration was not “*the* fulfillment. It was a proleptic vision of a reality which was still to be worked out in human experience” (R.T. France, *Divine Government: God’s Kingship in the Gospel of Mark* [Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College Publishing, 2003], 73). “The enthronement of the Son of Man [Dn 7:13-14] is the coming of the kingdom of God with power” (France, *Divine Government*, 83). Thus, the immediate fulfillment is when the eleven disciples (excluding Judas who was dead) saw the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, after he had been given “all authority” (Mt 28:18) (R.T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 640f). The Father’s words at Jesus’ Transfiguration, “This is my beloved Son” (Mt 17:5 // Mk 9:7 // Lk 9:35; 2 Pt 1:17), prefigures the enthronement and heavenly reign of Psalm 2:7 (“You are my Son”).

- the life and ministry of Jesus the Messiah (in which He revealed the Father, perfectly obeyed the Father, perfectly kept the Mosaic Law, and fulfilled the prophetic Scriptures);
- Jesus Christ’s substitutionary, atoning death;
- Jesus Christ’s bodily resurrection from the dead;
- the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ commissioned His Apostles to be His authorized personal representatives and the vehicle of His revelation;
- Jesus Christ’s ascension to the Father;
- the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, sent the Holy Spirit (with all His accompanying charismatic gifts); and
- Jesus Christ’s Apostles spoke and wrote the Word of God.

Together these events formed a single complex event—God’s eschatological in-breaking into history in the Person of His unique Son. Through this unrepeatable eschatological event, God produced several radical accomplishments:

- gave the ultimate and final revelation of Himself (including the New Testament Scriptures);
- established His messianic kingdom;
- once for all atoned for the sins of His people (Ro 6:10; Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:10);
- concluded the old covenant⁶⁴⁴ and inaugurated the new covenant;⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴⁴ The old covenant ended when Christ inaugurated the new covenant in A.D. 30, contra hyperpreterist theology (Robert E. Fugate, “End of Old Covenant, Beginning of New,” unpublished paper).

⁶⁴⁵ The New Testament refers to the Old Testament as the “old” covenant (2 Cor 3:14) and the “first” covenant (Heb 8:7, 13; 9:1, 15,

- ushered in “the age to come” and the first fruits of the new creation;
- decisively defeated all His enemies; and
- poured out the eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit, prophetically empowering the entire church.

Of course, the consummation of this redemption will be fully realized at the second coming of Jesus Christ.⁶⁴⁶ But, the unique, once-for-all accomplishments of Jesus’ earthly ministry are why the role of Christ’s foundational Apostles and the giving of the New Testament Scriptures can never be repeated.⁶⁴⁷

6 key eschatological themes in the New Testament

There are six key eschatological themes in the New Testament. We will briefly mention four of them, and examine the other two in more depth.

1. Messiah-ruled kingdom of God (see below).
2. New covenant (Jer 31:31; Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8, 10, 13; 9:15; 10:16, 29; 12:24).
3. Holy Spirit (see below).
4. New age (see the two age schema above).
5. New creation

18). It refers to the New Testament as the “new” covenant (Jer 31:31; Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24), the “better” covenant (Heb 7:22; 8:6), and the “second” covenant (Heb 8:7).

⁶⁴⁶ This section is taken from Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 432–434.

⁶⁴⁷ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, chapter 11. The unique role of Christ’s Apostles is treated on pages 437–452.

“He who is sitting on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making [present tense] all things new” (Rv 21:5, author’s translation). There are three aspects to this new creation:

- The individual regenerated believer is a new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10);
- The believing church of Jesus Christ is a new creation (Gal 6:15–16; Eph 2:10, 14–16; Is 65:17–19; 66:22–23); and
- The cosmos will be recreated after the second coming of Jesus Christ (Is 65:17; 2 Pt 3:12–13; Rv 21:1; cf. Ro 8:18–25) and believers will receive their resurrection bodies.⁶⁴⁸

Similarly, the term *παλιγγενεσία* in Matthew 19:28 denotes “the renewing of the world in the time of the Messiah.”⁶⁴⁹ Acts 3:21 speaks of “the restoration of all things.”

6. Reconstituted “Israel.”⁶⁵⁰

I.M. Dugiud (in the *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*) offers one of the best succinct descriptions of reconstituted Israel:

⁶⁴⁸ J.R. Levison, “Creation and New Creation,” *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 189f. Philip H. Towner, “New Creation,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 562f. Steve Motyer, “New Creation, New Creature,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*₂, 825f (= EDT₃, 586f). Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 19–22, 121, 153f, 157, 227, etc.

⁶⁴⁹ BDAG, 752. Cf. “an era involving the renewal of the world (with special reference to the time of the Messiah)—‘new age, Messianic age’ (L-N, # 67.147); “the Messianic ‘rebirth’ of the world” (James H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* [MM] [1930; reprint: Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985], 476); TDNT, 1:686–689.

⁶⁵⁰ The topic of Israel is too extensive to cover in a worldview book. I hope to devote an entire book to this subject. The quote provided is a good short summary of the subject of Israel. I have also included a brief bibliography on Israel in Appendix C: A Bibliography of Israel under the New Covenant.

From the moment of his birth, he [Jesus Christ] began to reenact Israel's history, going down to Egypt with his parents so that he too could be the son whom God called out of Egypt (Mt 2:15, quoting Ho 11:1). As Israel passed through the Red Sea, Jesus passed through the waters of baptism (Mt 3) before being led out into the wilderness (Mt 4). There Jesus faced the same temptations that had exposed Israel's rebellious heart (Ezk 20), yet he resisted each one perfectly. As Jesus began his public ministry, he read aloud Isaiah 61:1-2 and declared that the Scripture had been fulfilled in their presence (Lk 4:18-19): he himself was the Isaianic servant upon whom God's Spirit rested. On the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus met the archetypal prophets, Moses and Elijah, to discuss his exodus (*hē exodos autou*), which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem (Lk 9:31). As the new Israel, Jesus perfectly fulfilled the demands of the law: indeed he is the goal (*telos*) for which the law exists (Ro 10:4). The new covenant that Jeremiah anticipated has now been established in his blood (Lk 22:20). Jesus himself is the chosen holy one of God, who fulfills God's original purpose for humanity and submits perfectly to his heavenly father, thereby personally embodying the new Israel for which the prophets looked.

Since Jesus Christ himself is the new Israel, it follows that all those who are united to him by faith are incorporated into this new community of believers, the Israel of God (Gal 6:16). He is the vine, the classic image for Israel in the prophets (e.g., Is 5), and his followers are incorporated into the new Israel as they become his branches. Because Christ is the living cornerstone of God's house, all those who trust in him and are joined to him thereby become living stones in that house (1 Pt 2:4-5) and can be described in terminology that the Old Testament exclusively used of Israel: believers are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy" (1 Pt

2:9-10, alluding to Ex 19:6; Is 9:2; 43:20-21; Ho 2:23). In the new covenant that has been established through Christ the promises of a new heart with the law written upon it that were first addressed to “house of Israel” and “the house of Judah” now become the inheritance of the church (Heb 8).

Thus, being part of this new covenant Israel is not a matter of physical dissent from Abraham, but rather of sharing Abraham’s repentance and faith (Lk 3:8). As a result, this new people of God includes Jews and Gentiles together on an equal footing (Gal 3:28), as both are grafted into the new olive tree, Christ/Israel (Ro 11:17-24). That does not mean that God has forgotten his promises to those physically descended from Abraham. By no means (Ro 11:1). But not everyone descended physically from Israel is part of the new Israel that Christ embodies (Ro 9:6). Indeed, this Israel of God has now expanded to encompass the ends of the earth, as Isaiah anticipated. Before Jesus’ ascension into heaven, he answered the disciples’ question of whether he was going to restore the kingdom to Israel at this time by sending them out as his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria (the former northern kingdom of Israel) and to the ends of the earth (Ac 1:6-8). This is how the restoration of the single kingdom of Israel under a new David, promised in the Old Testament prophets, is accomplished under the new covenant. It comes as the gospel is preached to members of the former northern and southern kingdoms, together with the Gentiles, who are then incorporated into the new people of God, united as one through faith in Christ (Is 2:2-4; 19:25; 49:6; Zc 14:16-20).⁶⁵¹

Messiah-ruled kingdom of God

Having introduced the six key eschatological themes in the New Testament, we will now examine the first theme, i.e., the Messiah-ruled kingdom of God, in more depth. A proper understanding of

⁶⁵¹ I.M. Dugiud, “Israel,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*, eds. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, 395f.

the messianic kingdom of God is essential to building a Biblical worldview that can transform culture.

Terminology and usage

The term βασιλεία (kingdom) denotes: (1) **the authority to rule as a king** (Lk 19:12, 15; Rv 17:17–18); and (2) **the realm or territory over which the reign is exercised** (Mt 4:8 // Lk 4:5; Rv 16:10).⁶⁵² The Hebrew words for kingdom have similar meanings.

Thus, “the kingdom of God” means the kingly rule/reign of God. George Ladd offers a succinct definition: **“God’s kingdom is His rule, by which He overcomes His enemies and brings to His people the benefits of His reign.”**⁶⁵³ “In the New Testament the kingdom of God is the divine authority and rule given by the Father to the Son (Lk 22:29). Christ will exercise this rule until he has subdued all that is hostile to God” (1 Cor 15:24–28; Rv 11:15).⁶⁵⁴

The two New Testament idioms, “the kingdom of God” and “the kingdom of heaven” (the latter occurs only in Matthew’s Gospel), are synonymous.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵² BDAG, 169; L-N, 479f, #'s 37.64f and 1.82. Examples (cited by BDAG) in which βασιλεία denotes the territory ruled by a king include: Mt 4:8 // Lk 4:5; Mt 12:25–26 // Mk 3:24; Mk 6:23; Mt 24:7.

⁶⁵³ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of God,” in ISBE₂, 3:24.

⁶⁵⁴ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven,” in EDT₂, 657.

⁶⁵⁵ “Practically all modern critical scholarship recognizes that the difference between the two phrases is one of language only. . . . The two terms are interchangeable, and the difference between them is one of linguistic idiom and not of meaning” (George E. Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952], 122–124, 130). Cf. EDT₂, 657; NDT, 367; NDBT, 615; EDBT, 451; IDB, 3:17. Classic dispensationalism (i.e., John Nelson Darby, Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, the 1909 and 1917 editions of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, Lewis Sperry Chafer) was quite mistaken in distinguishing between “the kingdom of God” and “the kingdom of heaven.” Revised dispensationalists (i.e., Charles C. Ryrie, John F. Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost, and the 1967 *New*

The Synoptic Gospels contain 76 different kingdom sayings, or 103 total kingdom sayings including duplicates in parallel passages.⁶⁵⁶

The kingdom of God in the Old Testament

1. As Creator, Yehowah is the sovereign king over all the earth (2 Ki 19:15; Pss 22:28; 29:10; 47:2, 7; 93; 96:10; 97:1ff; 99:1-4; 145:11ff; Is 6:5; Jer 10:7, 10ff; 46:18; Mal 1:14).⁶⁵⁷
2. Yehowah is also the redeemer-king over His covenant nation, Israel. Yehowah is the redemptive king (suzerain) over His elect, covenant nation, Israel (the “King of Israel”), and He is in their midst (Ex 15:18; Nu 23:21; Dt 33:5; Is 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; Jer 8:19; Mi 2:12-13; 4:6ff; Zp 3:15).⁶⁵⁸ Thus, God’s rule is realized in Israel’s history, albeit, only partially and imperfectly.
3. Yehowah will become king.

Even though God is presently king of His covenant people, “In the OT the kingdom of God is largely a matter of [eschatological] hope. . . . God’s rule will be established only as a result of a divine visitation.”⁶⁵⁹ The God revealed in the OT is ‘the God who

Scofield Reference Bible) lessen the distinction, but still maintain it. Progressive dispensationalists have abandoned this untenable distinction (cf. *The MacArthur Study Bible* on Mt 6:33 and 3:2).

⁶⁵⁶ C.C. Caragounis, “Kingdom of God/Heaven,” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (DJG), eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 425. Cf. Robert H. Stein, “Kingdom of God,” EDBT, 451.

⁶⁵⁷ George E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 42. TDNT, 1:568f. Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (TLNT), 3 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 1:263. Craig A. Evans, “Exorcisms and the Kingdom: Inaugurating the Kingdom of God and Defeating the Kingdom of Satan,” in *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus*, eds. Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 152-157.

⁶⁵⁸ George E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom*, 42. TDNT, 1:568f.

⁶⁵⁹ The Prophets often describe God’s visitation in the language of the divine theophany on Mount Sinai (Ex 19-20).

comes”⁶⁶⁰ (cf. “the **day of the Lord**”). Thus, some Old Testament passages refer to a day in the future when Yahweh will become king (e.g., Is 24:23; Zc 14:9ff; cf. Is 33:22; 52:7; Ob 21; Zp 3:15), i.e., He will come and more fully manifest His kingship in the world of men and nations.⁶⁶¹

Even though the kingdom of God is suprahistorical, i.e., it comes from outside of history—from God (cf. Jn 18:36)—it is always an earthly kingdom (Am 9:13–15; Is 51:6; 34:4; 65:17; 66:22).⁶⁶² Biblical redemption always includes the whole man (including his physical body), the whole earth, and the entire created order or cosmos (Col 1:20; cf. Eph 1:9–10; 2 Pt 3:10–13; Rv 21–22) (contra Greek dualism and Gnosticism).

The nation Israel is seen as a pattern of the kingdom of God. The Old Testament prophets describe the overall pattern of renewal as a recapitulation of the past history of redemption: a new Exodus; a new covenant; a new entry into the land; a new Jerusalem with its new temple; and a new Davidic king to rule in a perfect, glorious, and eternal kingdom.⁶⁶³ Interestingly, the prophetic promises to restore Israel “never [include] the nation as a whole, however, but a faithful redeemed **remnant**”⁶⁶⁴ that is the

⁶⁶⁰ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of God,” in ISBE₂, 3:25; citing John Bright, *The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church* (New York, NY: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953). Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom*, 43–48. George R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 3–62.

⁶⁶¹ George E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom*, 42.

⁶⁶² George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of God,” ISBE₂, 3:25. Idem., *Jesus and the Kingdom*, 55–60. “The prophetic expectation cannot be described as ‘historical’ or ‘this-worldly’ in the sense that it looks for the kingdom of God to be the product of historical forces. The source of God’s kingdom is suprahistorical [Jn 18:36]; God Himself must visit His people” (ISBE₂, 3:25).

⁶⁶³ Graeme Goldsworthy, “Kingdom of God,” NDBT, 619.

⁶⁶⁴ The English word “remnant” occurs 63 times in the Old Testament prophets (in NKJV). It occurs another 9 times in three other late books of the Old Testament (i.e., 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Ezra).

true people of God (Am 9:8; Is 4:2-4; 10:20-22; 37:20-32; Mi 2:12; 5:7 [; cp. Ro 9:24-27; 11:5; 2:28-29]).”⁶⁶⁵

The theme of the book of Daniel is the triumphant kingdom of God subduing all the kingdoms of this world (e.g., Dn 2:34-35, 44; 7:13-14, 26-27). The kingdom of God is brought in by the mediation of the heavenly Son of Man (Dn 7:13-14), a divine-human figure who restores dominion to the people of God who will reign on the earth (Dn 7:18, 22, 27). It emphasizes the coming universal rule of God.

The kingdom of God in the New Testament

After the first period of history, “the Law and the Prophets” (which culminated with the prophet, John the Baptizer), comes the second period of history, the messianic kingdom, which began with the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ (Lk 16:16; Mt 11:12-13).

It is instructive to trace in the New Testament the three Old Testament categories depicting the kingdom of God, particularly noting their continuities and discontinuities.

With regard to the first category, the New Testament still teaches God’s sovereign, providential government over all the earth, but this is not described in terms of the kingdom of God.

The second Old Testament kingdom category, i.e., Yahweh, the redeemer-king over his elect, covenant nation Israel, does not continue throughout the New Testament. Instead, God took the kingdom from the nation Israel (Mt 21:43; 8:11-12; Book of Revelation; cf. Ro 11:17-21) and gave it to Christ’s church, which is comprised of the elect Jews and Gentiles of all nations (Gal 3:8, 28-29; 6:15-16; Eph 2:13-19; Col 3:11; Rv 5:9-10; cf. Mt 8:11-12; 13:38; 28:18-20; Mk 11:17; 16:15-16; Lk 10:33; Jn 12:32; Ac 10).⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁵ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of God,” in *ISBE*, 3:25.

⁶⁶⁶ The universal scope of Christ’s church is seen in: his atonement for the sins of the world (Jn 3:16; 1 Tim 2:4; 1 Jn 2:2); the preaching of the gospel to all nations (Mt 28:18-19; Ac 1:8; 2:8-11; 10:15, 34-35); and union with Christ and unity in Christ’s church (2 Cor 5:17; Gal

Thus, the New Testament describes the church as God's "holy nation" (1 Pt 2:9; cf. vv. 4-10) and "the Israel of God" (Gal 6:15-16).⁶⁶⁷

The third Old Testament kingdom category, Yahweh will become king (which is the eschatological aspect of the kingdom), takes precedence in the New Testament. The reason for this eschatological shift is that, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophetic promises, God came to earth, in the Person of His Son, Jesus the Messiah. Now the kingdom is preached (Lk 16:16). (Review the above discussion under the heading "Jesus Christ is the key to eschatology.")

This new phase of the kingdom of God involves God ruling mediately through the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (who is the king of the kingdom). In theology the New Testament phase of the

3:8, 28-29; 6:15-16; Eph 2:13-19; Col 3:11; Rv 5:9-10; cf. Mt 8:11-12; Mk 11:17; Lk 10:33; Ac 10).

⁶⁶⁷ Understanding Paul's phrase "the Israel of God" as the new-covenant people of God is the majority view of commentators. This is the only interpretation that coheres with the argument of the entire letter to the Galatians (especially chapters 3-4) (see commentators: D.J. Moo, BECNT, 400-403; T.R. Schreiner, ZECNT, 381-383, 386; R.N. Longenecker, WBC, 297f; J.L. Martyn, AB, 574-577; and Ἰσραὴλ in standard lexicons: BDAG, def. 3; L-N, # 93.182; Joseph H. Thayer and C.L.W. Grimm, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament* [Thayer] [1889; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Associated Publishers & Authors, n.d.], 307; etc.). This view goes back to the early church (e.g., Chrysostom [NPNF1, 13:47; *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, ed. Thomas C. Oden, vol. 8 "Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians," ed. Mark J. Edwards (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 8:103], Theodoret), and it includes the Reformers (*Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, eds. Timothy George and Scott M. Manetsch, vol. 10 "Galatians, Ephesians," ed. Gerald L. Bray [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011], 10:225-227; Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, 6 vols. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991], 6:551). For further documentation see Robert E. Fugate, "Galatians 6:16 'the Israel of God,'" unpublished paper.

kingdom is often called either the messianic kingdom (i.e., the rule of the Messiah) or the mediatorial kingdom. After the future second coming of Jesus Christ, the messianic/mediatorial kingdom will consummate in God's eternal kingdom (1 Cor 15:24-28).

In passing, it is important to note that "traditional theology [prior to the twentieth century] did not grasp the eschatological presence of the kingdom announced by Jesus."⁶⁶⁸

Before the resurrection of Jesus Christ

The kingdom of God was the central theme in the preaching and teaching of Jesus Christ (as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels). Interestingly, the Gospels record Jesus as referring to the kingdom over 100 times, while using the word "church" only twice (Mt 16:18 and 18:17). Here are a few examples of the dominate emphasis on the kingdom in the Synoptic Gospels:

- Jesus, the Son of David (Mt 1:1, 20; Lk 1:30-33), was born to be king (Mt 2:2, 6; cf. Mt 27:11 // Mk 15:2 // Lk 23:3; Is 9:6-7; Jn 1:49; Mt 21:5 // Lk 19:38 // Jn 12:13 citing Zc 9:9; Rv 12:5; Jn 18:37).
- Jesus' ministry was introduced to Israel by John the Baptizer (the greatest of the Old Testament prophets), whose message was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:2).
- Jesus began His public ministry by preaching, "The time is fulfilled" (Mk 1:15), "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 4:17 // Mk 1:14; cf. Lk 4:16-21, citing Is 61:1-2, which describes blessings in the messianic kingdom).

⁶⁶⁸ Richard B. Gaffin, "Kingdom of God," NDT, 369. Gaffin notes that Geerhardus Vos (1862-1949) seems to be the first to grasp the eschatological nature of the kingdom (Vos, *The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom and the Church* [1903; reprint: Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1951]). Gaffin cites the depiction of the kingdom in the Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A 102 as an example of traditional theology not grasping the eschatological presence of the kingdom announced by Jesus.

- The gospel that Christ preached was the gospel of the kingdom (Mt 4:17, 23; 9:35; 24:14; Mk 1:14-15; Lk 4:43; 8:1; 9:11; 16:16).
- Christ taught that His miracles and driving out demons demonstrated the presence of the kingdom (Mt 12:28-29 // Mk 3:27; Lk 11:20-22).⁶⁶⁹ Jesus used this empirical evidence to reassure John the Baptizer of Jesus' messiahship and the inauguration of the prophesied messianic age (Lk 7:18-23 // Mt 11:2-6, based on Is 35:5-6; 61:1-2; 25:8; 26:19; 29:18-19; 32:3-4; 42:7).⁶⁷⁰
- The Lord Jesus commissioned the twelve Apostles (Mt 10:1, 7-8 // Lk 9:1-2 // Mk 6:7) and the seventy (Lk 10:9, 11, 17-20; cf. 9:60) to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to heal the sick and to drive out demons.

⁶⁶⁹ Having authority over demons was unknown in the Old Testament. Consequently, Christ's contemporaries marveled at His authority and power over demons (Mk 1:27; Lk 4:36; 11:14; Mt 9:33; etc.).

⁶⁷⁰ Isaiah prophesies the bodily resurrection from the dead of God's people (Is 26:19; cf. 25:8), although it is not specifically connected with the Messiah. However, all divine healings and bodily resurrections from the dead in history are prophecies of the eschatological re-creation of all things at the end of history (Abraham Kuyper, *Principles of Sacred Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954], 500f, 414f; O. Hofius, "Miracle," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (NIDNTT), ed. Colin Brown, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1967-1978), 2:631; Gregory K. Beale, "Eschatology," DLNT, 333). Thus, Jesus Christ (who is "the resurrection and the life," Jn 11:25) raising three people from the dead prophesied the eschatological bodily resurrection of all believers. Indeed, the resurrected Jesus Christ is the "firstfruits" (1 Cor 15:20, 23) and "firstborn" (Col 1:18; Rv 1:5) from the dead. Lepers are not specifically mentioned in Isaiah. Thus, in healing lepers Jesus exceeded the prophetic hope.

- Christ taught that this gospel of the kingdom must be preached to all nations throughout the world (Mt 24:14; cf. 28:18-20).⁶⁷¹
- Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount expounded the ethics of the kingdom (Mt 5-7; note 5:3, 10, 19-20; 6:10, 13, 33; 7:21).
- Christ taught His disciples to pray for the coming of God's kingdom, i.e., for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt 6:10; Lk 11:2).
- Many of Christ's parables taught the mystery of the kingdom (Mt 13 // Mk 4 // Lk 8).

We offer three succinct quotes describing the kingdom that Jesus inaugurated during His earthly ministry. Westminster Seminary professor Richard B. Gaffin writes: "What Jesus announces is the realization of Israel's hope, the fulfillment of the covenant promises made to the fathers; the new and final order at the end of history has arrived at last with Jesus."⁶⁷²

George Ladd, who wrote considerably on the kingdom of God, elaborates:

The new element that provides the distinctive center of Jesus' teaching is that in His own person and mission a real fulfillment of the OT hope has taken place in history before the consummation of the age. . . . The present fulfillment of the OT hope short of its consummation can be understood in light of the basic meaning of the kingdom of God as the divine reign or rule. In the mission of Jesus, God has entered into history in His kingly power to defeat the powers of evil and to bring to people a

⁶⁷¹ God's "kingdom coming on earth is the fundamental content of the *gospel* (Mt 3:2; 4:17, 23; 5:3ff; 9:35; 10:7; 12:28; 24:14; Ac 1:3; 8:12; 20:25; 28:23, 31)" (John Frame, *The Escondido Theology*, 256; bold added).

⁶⁷² Richard B. Gaffin, "Kingdom of God," NDT, 368.

foretaste of the blessings of the eschatological kingdom while they still live in the old age (Mk 1:15; Lk 4:21, citing Is 61:1-2 and 35:5-6; Lk 10:23-24 // Mt 13:16-17; Mt 12:28-29 // Lk 11:20; Lk 10:9, 17; 17:20).⁶⁷³

Similarly, the *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* adds that Jesus announced,

in fulfillment of the Old Testament promises the reign of God has already arrived. In Jesus' coming Satan has been defeated (Lk 10:18; 11:20-22), the outcasts of Israel are being gathered as predicted (Mk 2:15-16; Lk 14:15-24), the Old Testament promises are fulfilled (Lk 10:23-24), the resurrection of the dead has begun (1 Cor 15:20), a new covenant has been inaugurated (1 Cor 11:25), the promised Spirit has come as the prophets foretold (Mk 1:8). Indeed the kingdom is already now realized in history.⁶⁷⁴ [This summary includes effects both before and after Christ's resurrection.]

After the resurrection of Christ

- Possessing all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18; cf. Rv 1:5), the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ commissioned the church to preach the gospel with supernatural attestation (Mk 16:15-20 Majority Text⁶⁷⁵) and to disciple all nations (Mt 28:19-20).
- For 40 days after His resurrection the Lord Jesus taught His disciples "the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Ac 1:3). The key truth is that the kingdom spreads through the Spirit-empowered witness to Christ in all the world (Ac 1:6-8).

⁶⁷³ George E. Ladd, "Kingdom of God," ISBE₂, 3:27.

⁶⁷⁴ Robert H. Stein, "Kingdom of God," EDBT, 453.

⁶⁷⁵ For a discussion of the unbiblical presuppositions underlying much of the contemporary practice of textual criticism (which omits these verses in Mark) and a defense of the Majority/Byzantine Text see Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You*, chapter 14.

- Enthroned at the Father’s right hand, the Lord Jesus Christ is presently king of kings (Rv 1:5; 17:14; 19:16; cf. 11:15, 17), and He will reign until all enemies are put under His feet (Pss 2:6–12; 110:1–3; Dn 7:13–14; Mt 28:18–20; Ac 2:33–36; 1 Cor 15:23–28; Eph 1:20–23; 2:6; 4:8).

“The kingdom of God is both the reign and the realm of God for, although in the present age the locus of the kingdom in the world is diffuse, it is defined by the presence of Jesus at the right hand of the Father.”⁶⁷⁶

In the book of Acts the kingdom is presented as the central message of the risen Christ (Ac 1:3) and then of the Apostles (Ac 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31; cf. 17:6–7; 1 Cor 4:20).

The theme of the kingdom is continued in the Epistles and in the Book of Revelation (Ro 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 15:24; Col 1:13; 4:11; Heb 1:8; Rv 1:5–6, 9; 5:10; 11:15, 17; 12:10; etc.⁶⁷⁷).

“In Paul, as in Acts, **messiahship and lordship are interchangeable categories**. When Paul said that Jesus died and rose that He might be the Lord (κυριεύω) of the dead and the living (Ro 14:9), he was saying nothing different from his assertion that He must reign as king (βασιλεύω) until He has subdued all His enemies (1 Cor 15:25).”⁶⁷⁸ When the New Testament writers call Jesus “Lord”⁶⁷⁹ approximately 475 times, they are proclaiming Him to be the ruling king.

⁶⁷⁶ Graeme Goldsworthy, “Kingdom of God,” NDBT, 620.

⁶⁷⁷ The unrighteous cannot enter God’s kingdom (1 Cor 6:9–10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5). Saints will enter/receive the consummated kingdom at Christ’s second coming (1 Th 2:12; 2 Th 1:5; 2 Tim 4:1, 18; Heb 12:28; Ja 2:5; 2 Pt 1:11).

⁶⁷⁸ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of God,” in ISBE₂, 3:29 (bold added).

⁶⁷⁹ “In the New Testament the central message is ‘Jesus Christ is Lord’ (Ro 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3; Phil 2:11)” (John Frame, *The Escondido Theology*, 257; bold added).

“The NT writers utilized the universal conception of the kingdom of God as a productive means to link the OT and NT, to explain the ministry of Jesus the Messiah, and to define the mission of the church as an instrument in the service of the kingdom of God.”⁶⁸⁰

How and when Christ’s messianic/mediatorial kingdom comes

B.B. Warfield reminds us that “We must distinguish between the mediatorial kingship which Jesus exercises by appointment of His Father, and the eternal kingship which is His by virtue of His nature, and which is one with God’s own.”⁶⁸¹ Jesus Christ’s mediatorial kingship began to be evidenced during His earthly ministry and was formally established after His resurrection-ascension.

The kingdom was present in Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry

The kingdom came representatively in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus the Messiah declared to a group of Pharisees that the kingdom was in their midst (Lk 17:20-21).⁶⁸²

- Jesus was born king (Mt 2:2, 6; cf. Mt 27:11 // Mk 15:2 // Lk 23:3; Is 9:6-7; Jn 1:49; Mt 21:5 // Lk 19:38 // Jn 12:13 citing Zc 9:9; Rv 12:5; Jn 18:37; cp. Lk 3:22 with Ps 2:7); Son of David (Mt 1:1, 20; Lk 1:30-33).

⁶⁸⁰ NIDOTTE, 2:963.

⁶⁸¹ Benjamin B. Warfield, “Prophecies of St. Paul,” in *Biblical Doctrines*, in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 2:625.

⁶⁸² Luke 17:21 must be translated, “the kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (ESV; similarly NASB, NET, NIV; NRSV “among you”). The NKJV translation “within you” is misleading; the kingdom was not within the Pharisees, whom Jesus was addressing (v. 20). Cf. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, BECNT, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 2:1414-1419.

- During His earthly ministry Jesus bound Satan⁶⁸³ and spoiled his kingdom (Mt 12:28-29 // Mk 3:27; Lk 11:20-22; 10:17-19; cf. 1 Jn 3:8).

⁶⁸³ “The exorcisms themselves are regarded as a victorious combat with the devil and his kingdom. Whenever a demon is cast out from a body it signifies that Satan has been defeated and spoiled of his goods. In each act of exorcism Jesus saw a defeat of Satan [Lk 10:17-18]” (George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974], 67; cf. R.T. France, *Mark*, NIGTC, 174).

- Jesus' passion (Col 2:14-15⁶⁸⁴; Heb 2:14-15⁶⁸⁵; Jn 12:31-32⁶⁸⁶).
During Jesus' death on the cross God gave four miraculous signs:

⁶⁸⁴ “It was on the cross (v. 14b) that God ‘disarmed’ the rulers and authorities, but it was in Christ’s resurrection and ascension that God put on public display the reality of that victory over the powers” (Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008], 215); see also David W. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 173 and Clinton E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 286f.

The term “triumphing over” (θριαμβεύω) does not refer to the victory over enemies, but rather to leading the conquered enemy in a victory parade (Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, WBC [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982], 128; etc.). In the Roman triumph the “victorious general led his troops through the city, with the spoils of war displayed for all to see and the defeated enemy paraded before his chariot” (R. McL. Wilson, *Colossians and Philemon*, ICC [New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2005], 212f). Col 2:15 speaks of “the ‘principalities and powers’ who have been conquered and are drawn along in God’s triumphal procession. . . . God parades these powerless ‘powers’ and ‘principalities’ to make plain to all the magnitude of the victory (Eduard Lohse, *Colossians, Philemon*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1971], 112). Their period of rule is finished; they must worship and serve the victor. These authorities are not depicted as gladly surrendering but as submitting against their wills to a power they cannot resist” (O’Brien, 129). Gregory K. Beale (*Colossians and Philemon*, BECNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2019], 202) and David W. Pao (*Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 172f) concur.

“Christ’s death and resurrection have deprived the evil forces of any effective power against Christ himself or against those who are incorporated into him and appropriate his power. . . . The evil powers are powerless toward the Colossian Christians insofar as they recognize and appropriate their authority in Christ. They [Colossian Christians] are not automatically immune to the influence of the hostile powers” (Clinton E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism*, 278-280; cf. 281-287).

⁶⁸⁵ “Destroy” (καταργέω) denotes “render powerless or inoperative” (cf. “to render ineffective the power or force of something,” L-N #

76:26; “to deprive something of its power,” Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010], 115 and Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews*, AB [New York, NY: Doubleday, 2001], 231). Jesus is “the champion who crushed the tyrant who possessed the power of death in order to rescue those whom he had enslaved.” This imagery is taken from Yahweh as the divine warrior who armed himself in order to defend his people from humiliation and enslavement (Is 42:13; 49:24-26; etc.). The motif draws upon the older practice of conducting warfare as a contest of champions (e.g., David vs. Goliath), as an alternative to devastating standard combat. The Christological counterpart is Lk 11:21-22 (William Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC, 2 vols. [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991], 61f). Christ has defeated death (καταργέω, 2 Tim 1:10; Rv 1:18) and delivered believers from the fear of death (Heb 2:15).

⁶⁸⁶ In the Gospel of John, Jesus being “lifted up/exalted” and “glorified” include both His atoning death on the cross and his exaltation to His heavenly throne (cf. Phil 2:8-11; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:3; Lk 9:51). The casting out/expulsion of Satan signifies “the transfer of power over the present God-hating world into the hands of the **Son of man** [Dn 7:13-14]. . . . The ruler of this world is judged and fundamentally stripped of his power in the eschatological ‘hour’ which has now begun with the exaltation of Jesus. . . . The judgment of ‘this world’ and the casting out of ‘this world’s ruler’ cannot be understood only in an anticipatory sense. . . . **In Jesus’ exaltation he [Satan] loses his claim on the world and is thus driven from the center of his power.** . . . In contrast with the expulsion of the ruler of this world, Jesus is lifted up from the earth as the Son of man and clothed with all power by the Father, In him and in the work he has accomplished, the way has been opened to a new rule, that of God’s **kingdom**, in which the **world is torn away from the power of Satan**” (Herman Ridderbos, *Gospel of John*, 438f; bold added). “From heaven, the place to which he returns by way of the cross, the exalted Lord will draw people to himself, now that the **power of sin, sickness, death, and the devil will have all been overcome.** . . . Satan fails, because with the crucifixion he has lost all grounds of appeal against sinful humanity; redemption has been achieved through Jesus’ vicarious sacrifice” (Andreas Kostenberger, *John*, BECNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004], 384f; bold added). “**Satan was dethroned**

the three-hour darkness (Mt 27:45 // Mk 15:33 // Lk 23:44-45); the torn veil of the temple (Mt 27:51 // Mk 15:38 // Lk 23:45); an earthquake (Mt 27:51); and the resurrection of many dead saints (Mt 27:52-53).

and the Son of Man enthroned over the world for which he died. . . . [Lifting up in vv. 31-32 is] the eschatological event which forms **the turning point of the ages**. It is alike the hour of the judgment of the world, the **overthrow of Satan's power**, and the **exaltation of Christ as Lord** of the saving sovereignty of God. As such it is the climax of the work of the incarnate Son to bring the **kingdom** of God to humankind" (George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1987], 214, 219; bold added); cf. "Jesus' statement depicts the cross as the locus of a cosmic battle in which Jesus achieves a decisive victory over Satan" (Edward W. Klink, III, *John*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016], 555). The language is that of exorcism, with Satan (the ruler of the demons) about to be cast out (J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, NICNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010], 695f). "In one sense Satan was defeated by the outbreathing power of the kingdom of God even within the ministry of Jesus (Lk 10:18). But the fundamental smashing of his reign of tyranny takes place in the death/exaltation of Jesus" (cf. Rv 12:11) (D.A. Carson, *John*, 443).

In calling Satan "the ruler of this world," the Greek word translated "world" (κόσμος) is not used in a geographical sense that would refer to the earth or the physical world. Neither does it denote the human inhabitants of the world, nor worldly affairs or possessions. Rather, it is used in an *ethical* sense to denote the ungodly and what is hostile to God, i.e., those who serve Satan. See: DBAG, 562, def. 7b; BAGD, 446, def. 7; G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (A-S), 3rd ed. (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1981), 255, def. 4c; cf. Thayer, 357, def. 6. In light of some Jewish texts, Craig S. Keener suggests that "this 'ruler of this world' may well be seen as the evil prince who ruled the angels of the nations, in this case at work not only through the political leaders of the world system as a whole but specifically through the leaders ('rulers') of Israel (12:42; cf. 7:48)" (*The Gospel of John*, 2 vols. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003], 2:880).

Biblical evidence for the presence of Christ's kingdom during His earthly ministry

1. Christ and the Apostles preached that the kingdom “has come near”⁶⁸⁷ and that it “has come upon you.”⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁷ ἐγγίξω in the perfect tense (Mt 3:2; Mt 4:17 // Mk 1:15; Mt 10:7; Lk 10:9, 11) means “has come” (BDAG, 270). “The present tense *engizeí*, would have conveyed the standard eschatological hope, it ‘is coming near,’ but the perfect *engiken* suggests something more actual. That which has completed the process of ‘coming near’ is already present, not simply still on the way” (R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 103). In Mk 1:15 the phrase “has come near” does not stand alone, but is preceded by “the time is fulfilled” (v. 14, also in the perfect tense) (R.T. France, *Divine Government: God’s Kingship in the Gospel of Mark*, 23). “Has come near” “expresses the end of the time of preparation. God’s kingdom . . . is already in the present time” (NIDNTT, 2:54). “With Jesus the waiting time came to an end and the kingdom of God broke into history. . . . In his [Jesus’s] word and work there is an initiation of the sovereign action of God that brings salvation and is to end in a transformed universe” (George R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 74; cf. 72–74). “The Kingdom has come into history” (Robert Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, WBC [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989], 34A:43, on Mk 1:15). See also: I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, NIGTC, 422; and Ceslas Spicq, TLNT, 1:266f; cp. C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, rev. (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1961), 28–30. (Contra William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, ICC, 3 vols. [Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1988–1997], 392; Werner G. Kummel, *Promise and Fulfilment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus*, Studies in Biblical Theology 23 [Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1957], 19–25; cf. 105–109.)

⁶⁸⁸ φθάνω (Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20) means “has just arrived” (cf. BDAG, 1052; TDNT, 9:90–92). “The verb φθάνειν in the aorist cannot be understood except as ‘has actually come’; any attempt to tone down this note of fulfillment is unjustified” (Rudolf Schnackenburg, *God’s Rule and Kingdom* [Freiburg, West Germany: Herder, 1963], 124). Cf. Ceslas Spicq, TLNT, 1:267; Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider,

2. Miracles, e.g., healing the sick and driving out demons,⁶⁸⁹ are signs of the presence of God's kingdom (Mt 12:28-29 // Mk 3:27; Lk 11:20-22; cf. Lk 10:18). Indeed, Jesus bound Satan and then plundered his possessions (Mt 12:29 // Mk 3:27). Jesus used this supernatural empirical evidence to reassure John the Baptizer of Jesus' messiahship and the inauguration of the prophesied messianic age (Lk 7:18-23 // Mt 11:2-6, citing Is 35:5-6 and 61:1-2). (See below.)
3. During Christ's earthly ministry, people were entering into the kingdom.

Jesus taught the arrival of the kingdom in His person in His sermon in Nazareth (Lk 4:18-21, citing Is 61:1-2).

Lk 17:20-21 ESV "The kingdom of God is in your midst."

Mt 21:31 "The tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God before you."

Lk 11:52 (cf. Mt 23:13) "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering."

Mt 11:12 NIV "The kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it."

eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (EDNT), 3 vols. (ET: Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990-1993), 1:202; and R.C.H. Lenski, *Interpretation of Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1961), 480 (who cites Archibald T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* [Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1934], 842).

⁶⁸⁹ "The kingdom of God has broken in with the concrete event of Jesus' exorcisms" (Ulrich Luz, βασιλεία, EDNT, 1:202). "The exorcism of demons is proof that the Kingdom of God has come among men and is at work among them. The casting out of demons is itself a work of the Kingdom of God. . . . The exorcism of demons is proof that the Kingdom of God is present" (George E. Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959], 47f).

Lk 16:16 ESV “The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.”

Col 1:13 “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”

Rv 11:15, 17 “The kingdom of the world **has become** *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever. . . . We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and **have begun to reign.**”

The kingdom is expanding on earth during Christ’s heavenly reign through the Spirit empowering Christ’s prophetic church

We have already learned that Colossians 2:14–15 and John 12:31–32 apply to both the crucifixion and the resurrection-enthronement of Jesus. Let’s examine some other key passages.

Resurrection, ascension, enthronement, pouring out the Holy Spirit on the church at Christ’s coronation

The kingdom of God began its expansion throughout the earth with Jesus Christ’s resurrection, ascension, enthronement, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:24–36

Consider the Spirit-filled Apostle Peter’s preaching on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts. In the context, verse 23 speaks of the death of the Messiah, verses 24–32 describe the resurrection of the Messiah, and verses 33–36 declare the present reign of the Messiah.

³⁰ “Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him [David] that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his [David’s] **throne**,³¹ “he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the **resurrection** of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.³² “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.³³ “Therefore being **exalted to the right hand of God**

[Ps 110:1], and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.³⁴ “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, **“Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ Till I make Your enemies Your footstool [Ps 110:1].”**’”³⁶ “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both **Lord** and **Christ**” (Acts 2:30–36).

One of the crucial truths taught in this passage is that the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ is presently seated on David’s throne in heaven, from where He reigns as sovereign Lord over heaven and earth (cf. Mt 28:18) (contra dispensationalism). George Ladd elaborates:

In his ascension, however, Jesus entered into a new exercise of His messiahship. This is expounded in Acts 2:24–35. Jesus has been seated at the right hand of God and **installed upon the throne of David** (2:30). Here Peter under inspiration reinterprets the prophecy of Ps 110:1. The throne of David is no longer in Jerusalem; it is in heaven at the right hand of God. **Jesus is even now reigning as messianic king** (Messiah). . . . The most instructive passage is 1 Cor 15:24–26, which reflects the theology of **Christ’s session at the right hand of God** and His messianic reign. The purpose of the reign is to put His enemies under His feet.⁶⁹⁰

A second crucial truth taught in this passage is that the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ poured out the promised Holy Spirit on the church, thereby rendering the church to be the new covenant temple where God’s covenantal presence, power, and glory are manifested. The Lord Jesus fulfilling His promise to send the Holy Spirit (the “Helper,” Jn 15:26; 16:7) is proof that He is at the Father’s right hand and that the messianic kingdom has come with power (Ac 2:33–36; 1:8; Mk 9:1; 1 Cor 4:20). “The kingdom of God is . . . in the Holy Spirit” (Ro 14:17). Thereafter the kingdom of God began greatly

⁶⁹⁰ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of God,” ISBE₂, 3:29.

expanding throughout the earth (the book of Acts; Ro 1:8; 10:18; 16:26; 15:23; Col 1:6, 23).⁶⁹¹

Since the Spirit-filled Apostle Peter applied Psalm 110 to the present reign of King Jesus, let's examine this passage in more depth.

Psalm 110:1–3

Psalm 110 is the Old Testament text most frequently cited or alluded to by Christ and His Apostles, as recorded in the New Testament. Psalm 110 is quoted or alluded to approximately 30 times in the New Testament. It is quoted in eleven out of 27 New Testament books, and by six of the eight New Testament authors. Psalm 110 depicts Jesus' messianic rule, which began at His resurrection-ascension and continues until all His enemies are effectually put under His feet (Ac 2:30–36; cf. Mt 22:44; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:42; Heb 1:13; 10:13).⁶⁹²

⁶⁹¹ The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, as evidenced by speaking in tongues, was the proof of the coronation of the Messiah (Ac 2:33). “Where the Spirit of God operates, there the kingdom of God comes” (Geerhardus Vos, *The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom and the Church*, 56). “The Baptist makes the Holy Spirit the element wherein Jesus will baptize, and thus **the distinctive element of the coming kingdom**” (Geerdhardus Vos, “The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit,” in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writing of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980], 99). **Speaking with tongues is a sign of God's inaugurated dominion** (Ac 2:33, 36) (TDNT, 5:579).

⁶⁹² See Psalms commentators: Joseph A. Alexander, 457; John Calvin, 4:299; Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 7 vols. in 2 bindings (reprint: Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984), 5:186; Donald M. Williams, CC, 2:301f.

“‘The day of power’ [Ps 110:3] is the era of the Messiah's reign from the right hand of God; it is the time when he extends his dominion from Zion and treads down all his enemies” (William O. Einwechter, “Psalm 110 and the Postmillennial Hope,” in *Thine is the Kingdom: Studies in the Postmillennial Hope*, ed. Kenneth L. Gentry [Vallecito, CA: Chalcedon, 2003], 36).

Psalm 110 is an exceptional messianic psalm in that there is no Old Testament historical referent, but only the New Testament referent, Jesus the Messiah.

The first three verses of Psalm 110 declare Yehowah's eternal decree:

“The day of His wrath” “speaks of the judgment of God that falls upon rulers and nations during the course of history for refusing to repent of their wickedness and serve the Lord (cf. Jer 18:7-10; Ps 9:15-17; Dt 9:5) . . . any day that the Lord comes in judgment upon those who despise his reign” (Einwechter, 40).

See Einwechter's summary of the New Testament's application of Psalms 110 (56-59).

A Psalm of David.⁶⁹³ The LORD said⁶⁹⁴ to my Lord, “**Sit at My right hand,⁶⁹⁵ Till⁶⁹⁶ I make Your enemies Your footstool.**”² The LORD

⁶⁹³ This psalm was written by “David himself” (Mk 12:36–37; Lk 20:42; Ac 2:34). The psalm is what David “said by the Holy Spirit” (Mk 12:36). Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, TOTC, 2:391f and 1:32f; Geoffrey W. Grogan, *Psalms*, THOTC, 184, 357. The Pharisees of Jesus’ day believed that this psalm was Davidic and prophetic-Messianic (Mt 22:41–46 // Mk 12:35–37 // Lk 20:41–44) (Franz Delitzsch, KD, *Psalms*, 3:184).

⁶⁹⁴ In the Old Testament the Hebrew term *ne’um* (“said”) is almost always used for prophetic oracles (Daniel J. Estes, *Psalms 73–150*, NAC [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2019], 342; cf. HECOT, # 5536).

⁶⁹⁵ David’s Lord “is to sit on the throne of YHWH and at YHWH’s right side . . . a real *co-enthronement* of the addressee, that is, a participation in the exercise of YHWH’s own royal rule . . . the ‘throne companion’ of YHWH: YHWH and the king exercise royal rule together” (Frank L. Hossfeld and Eric Zenger, *Psalms 3*, Hermeneia, 147f; cf. W. Dennis Tucker Jr. and Jamie A. Grant, *Psalms*, Volume 2, NIVAC [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018], 592).

“Dn 7:12–13 forms the most ancient commentary upon ‘Sit thou at my right hand.’ There the Son of Man comes on the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days, to the heavenly throne of God . . . a passage which our Lord, in Mt 26:24, connects with the one before us [Ps 110], the real import of which he explains in Mt 28:18” (Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 3 vols. [Cherry Hill, NJ: Mack, n.d.], 3:332).

⁶⁹⁶ “The idea running through the whole psalm is, that it is in and through him that Jehovah acts for the destruction of his enemies, and that for this very end he is invested with almighty power, as denoted by his session at the right hand of God. This session is to last until the total subjugation of his enemies” (Joseph A. Alexander, *The Psalms* [1864; reprint: Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.], 457).

In light of the Apostle Paul’s application of Ps 110:1 in 1 Cor 15:25 Kraus states, “In the kingdom of Christ as the ‘transitional kingdom,’ the Messiah’s enemies are defeated. It is God himself who crushes the hostile powers at the feet of Christ The lordship of the exalted

Christ is thus not something to be enjoyed in a static superiority to the world, but it is **movement in history**, it is God's struggle and God's victory" (Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992], 188; bold added).

"However numerous those enemies may be who conspire against the Son of God, and attempt the subversion of his kingdom, all will be unavailing, for they shall never prevail against God's immutable purpose, but, on the contrary, they shall, by the greatness of his power, be laid prostrate at Christ's feet" (John Calvin, *Psalms*, 4:299). "The sight of Jesus enthroned in divine glory is the sure guarantee that all things are moving onward towards ultimate victory. Those rebels who now stand high in power shall soon be in the place of contempt, they shall be his footstool. He shall with ease rule them, he shall sit and put his foot on them; not rising to tread them down as when a man puts forth force to subdue powerful foes, but retaining the attitude of rest, and still ruling them as abject vassals who have no longer spirit to rebel, but have become thoroughly tamed and subdued" (Charles H. Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 5:186).

shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.⁶⁹⁷ **Rule**⁶⁹⁸ **in the midst of Your enemies!**³ Your people *shall be* volunteers⁶⁹⁹ In the day⁷⁰⁰ of

⁶⁹⁷ Zion was the location of God's temple (which represented the kingdom of God, including both its ecclesiastical and its civil aspects) and the place where God frequently made His presence known among His people. Spurgeon recognized only the ecclesiastical aspects of the kingdom of God when he wrote, "It is in and through the church that for the present the power of the Messiah is known. Jehovah has given to Jesus all authority in the midst of his people, whom he rules with his royal sceptre, and this power goes forth with divine energy from the church for the ingathering of the elect, and the subduing of all evil" (Charles H. Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 5:186).

⁶⁹⁸ The verb translated 'rule' is not applied in usage to a peaceful reign, but to coercive, or compulsory dominion over conquered enemies" (Joseph A. Alexander, *Psalms*, 458; cf. John Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006-2008], 3:294).

⁶⁹⁹ "A host of volunteers rallying to their leader in a holy war" (Derek Kidner, *Psalms* TOTC, 2:394). "Entirely cheerful readiness; ready for any sacrifices, they bring themselves with all that they are and have to meet him" (Franz Delitzsch, KD, *Psalms*, 3:190).

⁷⁰⁰ Some suggest that "'The day of power' is apparently, the day of the enthronement of the King" (Arnold A. Anderson, *Psalms*, NCB, 2 vols [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981], 2:769). It certainly began then, but it includes "the time period in which the Messiah sits at the right hand of the Father (v. 1)" (Donald M. Williams, CC, *Psalms* [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989], 2:302). "'The day of power' is the era of the Messiah's reign from the right hand of God; it is the time when he extends his dominion from Zion and treads down all his enemies" (William O. Einwechter, "Psalm 110 and the Postmillennial Hope," in *Thine is the Kingdom: Studies in the Postmillennial Hope*, ed. Kenneth L. Gentry, 36).

Your power; In the beauties of holiness,⁷⁰¹ from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.⁷⁰²

Psalms commentator David Williams provides summary and application:

His [David's Lord] exaltation and reign are in effect until all of His enemies have been conquered. The victory is symbolized as they become like the footstool of His throne. Under His feet, they submit and are humiliated. Thus, this heavenly reign goes on right now as the Kingdom of God is extending throughout the earth, overcoming Satan's kingdom of evil, until all things are subject to the Son of God. . . . When we evangelize in His name, and pray in His name, and cast out demons in His name, and heal in His name, His reign is being extended, not in the safe realms of heaven, but in the midst of His enemies, here on the battleground of earth.⁷⁰³

Verse four declares Yehowah's eternal decree regarding the everlasting priesthood of David's Lord:

The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."⁷⁰⁴

Verses 5-7 depict David's Lord as the victorious Warrior:⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰¹ "The people without distinction wear holy festive garments. . . . It is a priestly people which he leads forth to holy battle, just as in Rv 19:14" (Franz Delitzsch, KD, *Psalms*, 3:192).

⁷⁰² The host of young men are vigorous and innumerable (Franz Delitzsch, KD, *Psalms*, 3:191).

⁷⁰³ Donald M. Williams, *Psalms*, CC, 2:301f.

⁷⁰⁴ The warrior-king is also a priest. "The priesthood is to be united with the kingship in him who rules out of Zion, just as it was in Melchizedek, king of Salem, and that for ever" (Franz Delitzsch, KD, *Psalms*, 3:193).

⁷⁰⁵ "The Priest-King's enthronement is not the final scene but the prelude to world conquest. Psalm 2 showed the same sequence. Now the Lord (i.e., Yahweh) and His King act as one. . . . He and His King are so united that by verse 7 it is clearly the human partner who is in

5 The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.⁷⁰⁶ 6 He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. 7 He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; Therefore He shall lift up the head.

Autonomous earthly kings wrongfully

owe fealty to other gods, and institutionalize in their government an exception to the LORD's worldwide dominion. For that reason they will be judged and defeated by God. . . . [The enthronement of the] Davidic king was the answer to the question of meaning in history, to the question about what power is in control and what is to come of the disastrous hostility among the powers of the world. . . .

The psalm holds the enthronement of Jesus in relation to the question of **political power in the world**. It insists that the office of Jesus **concerns nations and rulers**. . . . It is an assertion that every nation and ruler is subject to the royal judgment of Messiah Jesus. His ways and values are final. . . . All nations who think and dream of autonomous dominance and destiny are in that way enemies of

the foreground. . . . [The King will] press on to complete the rout" (Derek Kidner, TOTC, *Psalms*, 2:396).

⁷⁰⁶ "The day of His wrath" "speaks of the judgment of God that falls upon rulers and nations during the course of history for refusing to repent of their wickedness and serve the Lord (cf. Jer 18:7-10; Ps 9:15-17; Dt 9:5) . . . any day that the Lord comes in judgment upon those who despise his reign" (William O. Einwechter, "Psalm 110 and the Postmillennial Hope," in *Thine is the Kingdom: Studies in the Postmillennial Hope*, ed. Kenneth L. Gentry, 40). "In this conflict Yahweh will crush the leaders of the world, effecting total victory (cf. Ps 2:5). Not even powerful kings can withstand the power of Yahweh's anger as he implements divine justice in support of his chosen one" (Daniel J. Estes, *Psalms 73-150*, NAC, 344).

the coming kingdom of God and its Messiah, including the one in which we happen to live.⁷⁰⁷

New Testament quotations and allusions to Psalm 110:

PASSAGE QUOTED	QUOTED IN
Ps 110:1	Mt 22:44; 26:64; Mk 12:36; 14:62; Lk 20:42-43; 22:69; Ac 2:34-35; Heb 1:13
Ps 110:4	Heb 5:6; 7:17, 21
Allusions & verbal parallels	
Ps 110:1 ⁷⁰⁸	Mk 16:19; Ac 2:25, 33; 5:31; 7:55-56; Ro 8:34; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2; 1 Pt 3:22
Ps 110:4	Jn 12:34; Heb 5:10; 6:20; 7:3
Ps 110:5-7	Rv 19:11-16 ⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁷ James L. Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1994), 352, 354f (bold added). Yehowah acts “defending and accomplishing the world order he has established, above all against kings and rulers who flout this universal order of justice” (Frank L. Hossfeld and Eric Zenger, *Psalms 3*, Hermeneia, 150).

This passage deeply affected Martin Luther. He wrote somewhat prophetically: “According to this prophecy, I fear, the same thing will eventually happen to Germany. People will say: ‘There lies our dear Germany, destroyed and ravaged because of our ingratitude and on account of the raging and the raving of the bishops, priests, and tyrants.’ With all their might they insist that God play the same game with them that He played with Rome and Jerusalem” (Selected Psalms 2, *Luther’s Works* [LW], eds. Jaroslav Pelikan, *et. al*, 55 vols. [St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1955-1986], 13:339).

For people to call a nation “sovereign” is blasphemous. Sovereignty is an attribute of God alone.

⁷⁰⁸ Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, TOTC, 2:393; 1:32f. Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 401f note.

⁷⁰⁹ “Revelation 19:11-21 is describing the same messianic victory as Psalm 110:5-7. Therefore, as Psalm 110:5-7 is a symbolic description of the victorious warfare of the Messiah that takes place during his reign at the right hand of God, so does Revelation 19:11-

Bill Einwechter summarizes the New Testament's application of Psalm 110 in seven statements:

- Christ is the messianic King who was raised to that position at His ascension (Mt 26:64; Ac 2:30-36; 5:31; 1 Pt 3:22).
- The messianic throne promised in the Davidic Covenant is not a temporal throne located in Jerusalem, but a heavenly throne located at the right hand of God (Mt 26:64; Ac 2:30-36).
- The exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God the Father is proof of His deity, for no mere man or angel could ever occupy such a high and glorious position (Mt 22:42-45; Heb 1:3, 13).
- The messianic kingdom promised in the Old Testament began at Christ's ascension and [subsequent enthronement on the heavenly throne of David, and it] will continue until Christ's Second Coming (Mt 26:64; Ac 2:17, 30-36; 1 Co 15:23-28).
- The reign of Christ in the present dispensation will eventuate in the defeat of all His enemies, without His leaving His position at the right hand of God (i.e., return at the end of the age) before this victory is accomplished (1 Cor 15:23-25; Heb 10:12-13; Rv 19:11-21).

21 depict the victorious warfare during this present age” (William O. Einwechter, “Psalm 110 and the Postmillennial Hope,” in *Thine is the Kingdom: Studies in the Postmillennial Hope*, ed. Kenneth L. Gentry, 56f). Einwechter lists seven parallels between Ps 110:5-7 and Rv 19:11-21. This comports with Benjamin B. Warfield, “The Millennium and the Apocalypse,” in *Biblical Doctrines*,” *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 2:646-648.

- Christ is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek and the Savior of His people (Heb 5:5-10; 6:20; 7:11-28; Ac 5:31).
- The church is Christ's army in the conflict with His foes, whom He sends by the Great Commission to subdue the nations to His lordship through the preaching of the gospel (Mt 28:18-20; Rv 19:11-15).⁷¹⁰

In sum, Psalm 110 is the Old Testament passage Jesus Christ and His Apostles preached and taught from the most. The contemporary church should reflect both this priority and the message of Psalm 110 summarized above. Any other gospel is not the gospel of the kingdom.

Psalm 2

According to Acts 4:25, David is the human author of Psalm 2. The "Davidic covenant provides the theological background of Psalm 2"⁷¹¹

⁷¹⁰ William O. Einwechter, "Psalm 110 and the Postmillennial Hope," in *Thine is the Kingdom: Studies in the Postmillennial Hope*, ed. Kenneth L. Gentry, 58f.

⁷¹¹ "From a redemptive-historical perspective, the Lord's covenant with David provides the essential theological framework for understanding the Psalms" (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015], 14; cf. 24). "Eventually, Messiah's kingship must merge with Yahweh's kingship so that the kingdoms of earth and heaven, of time and eternity, are one. . . . Messiah's throne is effectively merged with Yahweh's throne" (15, 60; cf. 24, 48). "Psalm 2 stresses four major themes derived from the Davidic covenant . . . (1) the kingship of Yahweh over all the nations; (2) the locale of his rule in Mount Zion of Jerusalem; (3) the permanent establishment of the Davidic dynasty; and (4) the merger of Yahweh's throne with David's throne" (57). Cf. Tremper Longman III, *Psalms*, TOTC, 60. Also note blessings of the Abrahamic covenant: "heir of the world" (Ro 4:13); great name (Gn 12:2); enemies cursed and defeated (Gn 12:3; 22:17); cp. John Goldingay, *Psalms*, 1:95.

(2 Sm 7:12-14 // 1 Ch 17:11-14). The theme of Psalm 2 is “**the kingdom of God and of His Christ, to which everything must bow.**”⁷¹²

Stanza 1, vv. 1-3, irrational international conspiracy and rebellion against Yehowah and His Anointed King:

1 Why do the nations rage [conspire, NIV, NRSV], And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 “Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.”

Stanza 2, vv. 4-6, the heavenly Lord’s confrontational response to the worldwide rebellion:

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 “Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.”

Stanza 3, vv. 7-9, the Son-Messiah declares Yehowah’s royal covenantal decree:

⁷¹² Franz Delitzsch, KD, *Psalms*, 1:88. Cf. “God’s sovereign rule over rulers and nations” (C. Hassell Bullock, *Psalms 1-72*, TT [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015], 23); “the relation between the kingdom of the LORD and the kingdoms of the earth and their rulers” (James L. Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation, 45). “Kingship is the comprehensive theological metaphor. . . . All nations and people with their rulers belong to his dominion. The prayers and praise and poetry of the book are all psalms of the kingdom of God” (Mays, 48).

For lexical and thematic connections between Pss 1 and 2, see C. Hassell Bullock, *Psalms 1-72*, TT, 16; John Goldingay, *Psalms*, 1:94f. Pss 1-2 provide the introduction to the entire Psalter (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure*, 13-15, 54-61).

7 “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son,’⁷¹³ Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

Stanza 4, vv. 10-12, worldwide warning to kings and judges to submit to God’s king:

10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

The New Testament interprets this Psalm for us. Acts 4:25-28 interprets Psalm 2:1-3 (stanza 1) as prophesying the time of Jesus Christ’s arrest, trials, and crucifixion in A.D. 30. “Kings” and “rulers” refer to King Herod and Pontius Pilate.⁷¹⁴ “Nations” refer to Gentiles. All these, plus the peoples of Israel conspired together against the Lord and His Anointed, Jesus Christ.⁷¹⁵ Note that “the people of

⁷¹³ “The decree of Yahweh says, ‘You are my Son’ in accordance with the precise wording of the Davidic covenant (Ps 2:7; cf. 2 Sm 7:14)” (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology*, 14f). This father-son language (“You are My Son”) is used in 2 Samuel 7:14a, “I will be his Father, and he shall be My son”—which recounts the establishment of the Davidic Covenant (cf. C. Hassell Bullock, *Psalms 1-72*, TT, 22). Thus, “The background of this [father-son] relationship is clearly the Davidic covenant described in 2 Samuel 7:4-16” (Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms*, NIV Application, 1:111).

⁷¹⁴ Herod Antipas was the tetrarch (i.e., emperor-appointed provincial ruler) over Galilee and Perea from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39. He is called “king” in Mk 6:14, 22. Pontius Pilate was the Roman procurator (i.e., governor) of Judea from A.D. 26-36. H. Wayne House, *Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 63.

⁷¹⁵ “The roles of kings and rulers [were] fulfilled by, respectively, Herod and Pilate, and those of nations and peoples by ‘the Gentiles

Israel” are included with the pagan nations opposing Yehowah and His Christ/Messiah (Ac 4:27).

In Acts 13:33 the Apostle Paul interprets Psalm 2:7 (in stanza 3): “God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has **raised up** Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You’ [Ps 2:7]. (The theme of each of the verses in Acts 13:30–37 is the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah.)⁷¹⁶ Thus, the prophetic “today” in Psalm 2:7 was the day of Jesus’ bodily resurrection from the dead.⁷¹⁷ Undeniably, this dates the fulfillment of Psalm 2:7 to A.D. 30.

and the peoples’ (plural as in the psalm) ‘of Israel,’ united against the Lord’s anointed, or in Greek, His Christ” (Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, TOTC, 1:50).

⁷¹⁶ “Paul rightly proclaims that this promise of enthronement is now fulfilled in the resurrection of God’s Son from the dead. **Easter inaugurates the new age—the age of salvation (Ac 13:33). It is through His resurrection that Jesus, in conquering death, receives all authority and rules all things (Mt 28:18–20).** While He is eternally God’s Son, He is declared Son of God in power by His resurrection from the dead (Ro 1:4). In this sense, **the Son is ‘begotten’ by the Father to be the second Adam, the ‘Firstborn from the dead,’ the progenitor of a whole race of new men and new women sharing His resurrection life** (see 1 Cor 15:23–24)” (Donald M. Williams, *Psalms*, CC, 1:35).

⁷¹⁷ “Today” is “the precise day on which the Lord had set His King on Zion. . . . The resurrection of Christ was the key-stone of His redemption-work, the starting point of His setting forth as the Son of God, and of His establishment in the kingdom” (Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Psalms*, 1:30). “Paul teaches us in Acts 13:33, cp. Ro 1:4, how the ‘today’ is to be understood. “The ‘today’ according to its proper fulfillment, is the day of Jesus’ resurrection. Born from the dead to the life at the right hand of God, He entered on this day, which the church therefore calls *dies regalis* [day of royalty], upon His eternal kingship” (Franz Delitzsch, KD, *Psalms*, 1:91). “The day of Christ’s coronation was the day of His resurrection. From henceforth He sits at the right hand of the Father, waiting till His enemies be made His footstool” (J.J. Stewart Perowne, *Psalms*, 2 vols. in 1 [reprint: Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1989], 1:117). “The psalm is a

Romans 1 confirms that Jesus Christ was declared to be God's Son at His resurrection. Revelation 12:5⁷¹⁸ and Hebrews 5:5⁷¹⁹ also tie Psalm 2:7-9 to Jesus' resurrection-ascension-heavenly rule. Thus, these New Testament authors have unanimously interpreted this Old Testament prophecy for us. We don't have to wonder what it refers to.

Yehowah's decree in history is the working out of the eternal covenant of redemption between God the Father and God the Son.⁷²⁰

coronation psalm and its interpretation with respect to Jesus is indicative of the coronation of Jesus within the kingdom of God. . . . It is above all Jesus' resurrection from the dead which publicly declares that he is King, or Son of God (Ro 1:4)" (Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms*, WBC [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983], 1:69). "Immediately after his resurrection he entered upon the administration of his mediatorial kingdom; it was then that he said, 'All power is given unto me' [Mt 28:18]" (Matthew Henry, 3:199). "What is here said has a principal allusion to the day of his resurrection" (citing Ac 13:33 and Ro 1:4) (John Calvin, *Psalms*, 1:18). "Today" is "the day of coronation" (Arnold A. Anderson, *Psalms*, NCB, 1:68; cf. Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms*, WBC, 1:67). Cf. Donald M. Williams, *Psalms*, CC, 1:35; David Dickson, *Psalms*, 2 vols. [reprint: Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1980], 1:7.

⁷¹⁸ Revelation 12:5 literally reads: "She bore a male Child who is about [μέλλει] to rule all nations with a rod of iron [alluding to Ps 2:8-9]. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne." μέλλει ("is about") is a present active indicative verb followed by a present infinitive, which means "be about to, be on the point of." When followed by the present infinitive it includes the thought of "is destined" (by divine decree) (BDAG); cp. Ps 2:7 "the decree." Thus, Jesus Christ was "about to rule"; then He was "caught up to God and His throne" at His resurrection-ascension, where He began to rule. (Cf. Dn 7:13-14 "the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days").

⁷¹⁹ At the post-ascension reign at the Father's right hand, Christ also became the heavenly High Priest after the order of Melchizedek; cf. Ps 110:1, 4.

⁷²⁰ David Dickson, *Psalms*, 1:6-8.

Verse 8 “Ask of Me [i.e., God the Father], and I will give You [i.e., the Messiah-Son] The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.”

“Ask of Me.”—That Jesus Christ did ask His Father for the nations is implied by the words of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ during the Great Commission: “All authority **has been given**⁷²¹ to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Mt 28:18b-19a).⁷²² This is confirmed in Revelation 2:27, where the resurrected Lord Jesus addressed the first-century church of Thyatira, quoted Psalm 2:8-9 and then added, “as I also **have received** from My Father.”

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power [i.e., authority] over the nations — ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ [Ps 2:8-9] — as I [i.e., Jesus] also **have received**⁷²³ from My Father” (Rv 2:26-27). [Not only has Jesus already received the authority to rule all nations, but He desires to share that authority with His overcoming church!]

The words “the nations . . . the ends of the earth” (Ps 2:8) unambiguously state that the nations are Christ’s “inheritance.” The Anointed Son-King has a worldwide dominion; the messianic

⁷²¹ Ἐδόθη (“given”) is an aorist passive indicative verb, from δίδωμι.

⁷²² James L. Mays, Interpretation, *Psalms*, 50f. Joseph A. Alexander claims, “That he [the Son] had asked it and received it, is implied in the dominion claimed for him in verses 2 and 3, where the nations are represented in revolt against him as their rightful sovereign. It was to justify this claim that the divine decree is here recited, the constitution of Messiah’s kingdom, in which its limits are defined as co-extensive with the earth” (*Psalms*, 17). However, Alexander misses the first-century chronology of verses 1-7 and the eschatological change with the resurrection-enthronement.

⁷²³ εἰληφα (“have received”) is a perfect active indicative verb from λαμβάνω (take, receive [what is given]). The perfect tense emphasizes the present effect of an action completed in the past.

kingdom includes the entire earth.⁷²⁴ The dominion of the Messiah-Son must correspond proportionally to the sovereignty of the heavenly Father who gave Him the inheritance.⁷²⁵

Furthermore, “God signifies that he would bring the nations into submission through the agency of his warrior king.”⁷²⁶ Indeed, “The messianic agent is charged with the responsibility of subduing the wicked and all power structures that are subversive to God’s intents,”⁷²⁷ as the following verses elaborate.

V. 9 “You [i.e., the Messiah-Son] shall break them with a rod/scepter of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

A king’s “scepter” would normally be made out of “wood, silver, gold, or ivory. But iron is here selected, as being the hardest metal, to indicate the strength and crushing force with which the Anointed would chastise the revolvers.”⁷²⁸ An iron scepter is “an instrument of despotism”⁷²⁹ toward rebels. Clearly, “The Messiah is the Lord of the nations.”⁷³⁰

Christ (in His messianic/mediatorial kingdom) will rule over the nations, smashing all resistance to His rule—in history! Note the contrast between the absolute power of the iron rod of Christ’s

⁷²⁴ Joseph A. Alexander, *Psalms*, 17.

⁷²⁵ James L. Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation, 47.

⁷²⁶ Tremper Longman III, *Psalms*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014), 60. Cf. Rv 19.

⁷²⁷ Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (EBC₂), eds. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, 13 vols., rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 5:90. “The consequence or end result of establishing the Lord’s anointed as king is to bring all other kings and all nations to the service and worship of the God of Israel. The world rule of the Lord’s king means the world’s worship of the Lord” (Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1986], 92).

⁷²⁸ Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Psalms*, 1:33.

⁷²⁹ Franz Delitzsch, KD, *Psalms*, 1:97; cited approvingly by Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” EBC₂, 5:96.

⁷³⁰ Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 185.

authority and the fragileness and total helplessness of the pottery—with the metaphor “potter’s vessel” representing the rebellious nations. (Observe that Christ executing wrathful judgment in Pss 2 and 110 is totally consistent with Jesus’ teaching in the New Testament: Lk 19:27; Mt 13:40-42; 21:44; 24:50-51; 25:41, 46; cf. Rv 6:16-17 and chapter 19.)

The divine grant of worldwide rule was never a historical reality to any of the Old Testament kings of Judah.⁷³¹ “The Davidic empire at its height . . . was hardly the equal of other empires at its time.”⁷³² Then, “Davidic kingship came to an end in 587 [B.C.] and was never reestablished.”⁷³³ Thus, Jesus the Christ/Messiah is the only Son of David to whom these words ever applied (cf. Lk 1:31-33; Mt 1:1 with 28:18-20). Consequently, Psalm 2 must be interpreted as an eschatological promise foretelling the reign of Jesus the Messiah—not as a royal ritual involving Judah’s kings. It goes without saying that no Jesus-rejecting, biological Jews have any God-given right to rule the world (contra the false religion of Talmudic Judaism).

How does Psalm 2 relate to the millennial question? In my opinion, both premillennialism and amillennialism render Christ’s kingdom impotent in history, until Christ’s second coming. In their perspectives, the only victorious kingdom in history is Satan’s

⁷³¹ “It is inconceivable that such notions [messianic Psalms] were entertained in any directly personal way concerning the line of monarchs who followed David in Judah” (J. Alec Motyer, “Messiah,” in *New Bible Commentary* [NBC₃], eds. G.J. Wenham, J.A. Motyer; D.A. Carson; R.T. France [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994], 756). “Unless, therefore, we suppose this prophecy concerning the vast extent of kingdom to have been uttered in vain and falsely, we must apply it to Christ, who alone has subdued the whole world to himself, and embraced all lands and nations under his dominion. . . . The whole world is subjected to his authority” (John Calvin, *Psalms*, 1:19).

⁷³² James L. Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation, 47. Cf. “We know of no time when Israel ruled the size of empire presupposed by the psalm” (John Goldingay, *Psalms*, 1:96).

⁷³³ John Goldingay, *Psalms*, 1:105.

kingdom. But this distorts the first-century fulfillment and applications of Psalm 2 that the New Testament writers teach began with the resurrection and enthronement of the Lord Jesus Christ. The same could be said regarding Psalm 110 (see Ac 2:29-36; 1 Cor 15:20-28), and with the dominate message of the New Testament, which is, Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

Vv. 10-12 (stanza 4) worldwide warning to kings and judges to submit to God's king

10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.

Because of the covenant between Yehowah and His Son-Messiah, earth's kings and judges are solemnly warned to be "wise." Numerous Scriptures teach that wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord (i.e., the covenant Lord, Yehowah; Ps 111:10; Pr 1:7; 9:10; 15:33). Thus, unbelieving rulers lack wisdom.

Kings and judges can only gain such wisdom by "be[ing] instructed." They must "cease from opposition and take laws from Christ."⁷³⁴ Several prophetic Scriptures declare that Christ will establish justice in the nations of the earth through His law (Is 2:2-4; 42:1-4; Mi 4:1-3; cf. Is 51:4; Jer 33:15).

Vv. 11-12 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

"Serve" "has political overtones and implies that the foreign nations should submit as vassals" to Yehowah.⁷³⁵ The term "serve" is also used in the Old Testament to denote worship. Thus, "the monarchs of the

⁷³⁴ David Dickson, *Psalms*, 1:9. Cf. Matthew Henry, 3:200.

⁷³⁵ Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms*, WBC, 1:68.

world are called not only to submission but to worship⁷³⁶ of the one true, tri-Personal God.

“Trembling” depicts the fear of the Lord.

“Kiss”—“In the ancient world, to kiss the feet of a king (or the ground in front of the king’s feet) was a symbol of humility and political obedience (see Ps 72:9; Is 49:23; Mc 7:17).”⁷³⁷

Unequivocally, there can be no serving the Lord without submitting to His Son, Jesus the Messiah (Jn 5:23; 1 Jn 2:23; 2 Jn 9; cf. Jn 15:24)⁷³⁸—contra Judaism and Islam.

The classic first-century fulfillment of the wrathful Christ breaking nations with His rod/scepter of iron was His “coming” to destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Mt 24:1–35 // Mk 13:1–31 // Lk 21:5–33; Rv 6–19).⁷³⁹ Cf. “the wrath of the Lamb” (Rv 6:16).

The messianic Son’s power is manifested in both just-wrath and in mercy (v. 12). “There is no refuge from Him: only in Him.”⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁶ C. Hassell Bullock, *Psalms 1–72*, TT, 22f; cf. “loyalty and obedience” (William S. Plumer, *Psalms* [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975], 47).

⁷³⁷ DeClaissé-Walford/Jacobson/Tanner, *Psalms*, NICOT, 70. In this context, “kissing was a sign of homage and submission (cf. 1 Sm 10:1; 1 Ki 19:18)” (Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms*, WBC, 1:68).

⁷³⁸ “All who do not submit themselves to the authority of Christ make war against God” (John Calvin, *Psalms*, 1:12). “It is impossible to submit to God without submitting oneself to his Messiah” (Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” EBC₂, 5:92).

⁷³⁹ “This was in part fulfilled when the nation of the Jews, those that persisted in unbelief and enmity to Christ’s gospel, were destroyed by the Roman power” (Matthew Henry, 3:199). “The destruction of Jerusalem is constantly represented by the Lord as His work” (Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Psalms*, 1:33). Robert E. Fugate, “Six Different Ways Christ “Comes” after His Resurrection,” 1–4, unpublished paper.

⁷⁴⁰ Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, TOTC, 1:53.

“Where does the power to control the powers at work in world history ultimately reside? . . . In the messiah, the son of God to whom the sovereign of heaven has given the right and power to rule the world.”⁷⁴¹

Psalm 2 ends with a promise of blessing: “Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him” (v. 12). One outstanding Old Testament scholar observes that the term “blessed” “is associated with an Eden-like existence that includes harmonious relationship with God and humanity, as well as material well-being.”⁷⁴² This blessing certainly includes the all-encompassing blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.⁷⁴³

In sum, Psalm 2:1–3 was fulfilled during Christ’s passion (Ac 4:25–28). Psalm 2:7, “Today I have begotten Thee,” refers to Jesus’ resurrection (Ac 13:33, cf. Ro 1:4). Psalm 2:8–12 parallels Matthew 28:18–20 and Psalm 110:1–3, 5–7 (and NT citations); it depicts the expansion of Christ’s victorious kingdom throughout the rest of history.

Applications

- God is sovereign over the world, including over all nations.
- Depraved men hate God’s rule (religious, epistemological, and ethical antithesis).
- God’s sovereignty is represented in the world by His Anointed, Son-King, the Lord Jesus Christ. (This is the center and the interpretive key to human history.⁷⁴⁴)
- Every nation, people, and civil magistrate that possesses and uses authority and power autonomously—i.e., independent of the rule

⁷⁴¹ James L. Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation, 45.

⁷⁴² Tremper Longman III, *Psalms*, TOTC, 63.

⁷⁴³ Robert E. Fugate, “Blessings of Abrahamic Covenant: Our Inheritance in Christ,” unpublished paper.

⁷⁴⁴ Donald M. Williams, *Psalms*, CC, 1:31.

of Jesus, God’s Anointed King—is in rebellion against God Almighty.⁷⁴⁵

- Human rebellion against God and His Anointed King is futile and will result in receiving God’s destroying wrath.
- The kingdom of Jesus Christ shall surely triumph. Nothing can resist its power and endless increase (Is 9:7).⁷⁴⁶
- People’s only options: Submit to Christ’s lordship and worship Him in the fear of the Lord and in joy, or be destroyed by Him—either covenant blessings or covenant curses.

Psalm 2 in the New Testament

“Psalm 2 is one of the psalms most frequently quoted and alluded to in the NT; from the perspective of early Christianity, it was a messianic psalm par excellence.”⁷⁴⁷

PASSAGE QUOTED	QUOTED IN ⁷⁴⁸
Ps 2:1-2	Ac 4:25-26

⁷⁴⁵ James L. Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation, 48.

⁷⁴⁶ William S. Plumer, *Psalms*, 49.

⁷⁴⁷ Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms*, WBC, 1:68. Franz Delitzsch asserts, “In the New Testament this Psalm is cited more frequently than any other” (KD, *Psalms*, 1:90)—although many would say that Psalm 110 has that distinction.

⁷⁴⁸ *The Greek New Testament* (UBS₄), eds. Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren, 2nd rev. ed. (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1996, 1968), 906. *The Greek New Testament* (UBS₄), eds. Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, 4th rev. ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: United Bible Societies, 1993, 2001), 895. *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* (NA₂₇), eds. Barbara and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, 27th ed. (Germany: German Bible Society, 1993–2007), 785.

Ps 2:7	Ac 13:33, Heb 1:5, ⁷⁴⁹ and 5:5 ⁷⁵⁰ You are My Son, today I have begotten You
Allusions & verbal parallels	
Ps 2:1	Rv 11:18 ⁷⁵¹ the nations were angry
Ps 2:2	Jn 1:41 the Messiah Rv 11:15 The kingdoms of this world have become <i>the kingdoms</i> of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever! Rv 17:18 the kings of the earth Rv 19:19 ⁷⁵² gathered together to make war against Him
Ps 2:7	Jesus' baptism: Mt 3:17 // Mk 1:11 // Lk 3:22 // Jn 1:49 This is My beloved Son.

⁷⁴⁹ Note the context in Hebrews 1. Verse 2 “His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things.” Verse 8 “But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom’” (quoting Ps 45:6-7). Verse 13 quotes Ps 110:1.

⁷⁵⁰ Heb 5 quotes Ps 110:4 in the next verse (Heb 5:6). Cf. Heb 7:28 “appoints the Son” (v. 21 cites Ps 110:4 with its oath).

⁷⁵¹ The kingdom was given to the Lord Jesus Christ at His ascension. Now Daniel’s fifth kingdom is beginning to spread throughout the world (Dn 2:34-35, 44) (*Revelation: Four Views A Parallel Commentary*, ed. Steve Gregg, 246-250).

⁷⁵² Rv 19 describes the continuing spiritual warfare (note the sword out of Jesus’ mouth, vv. 15, 21) of the church through the proclamation of the gospel following the fall of Babylon. Judgment falls on the beast and the false prophet (i.e., the contemporary Roman world empire and its religious agent)—not on mankind throughout the world. See *Revelation: Four Views A Parallel Commentary*, ed. Steve Gregg (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 448-454; Benjamin B. Warfield, “The Millennium and the Apocalypse,” in *Biblical Doctrines, The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 2:647. For the correlation between Rv 19:11-21 and Ps 110 see William O. Einwechter, “Psalm 110 and the Postmillennial Hope,” in *Thine is the Kingdom: Studies in the Postmillennial Hope*, ed. Kenneth L. Gentry, 56-59.

	Jesus' transfiguration: Mt 17:5 // Mk 9:7 // Lk 9:35; 2 Pt 1:17 This is My beloved Son.
Ps 2:8	Heb 1:2 His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things
Ps 2:8-9	Rv 2:26-27 rule all nations with a rod of iron . . . dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels Rv 12:5 rule all nations with a rod of iron Rv 19:15 rule all nations with a rod of iron
Ps 2:11	Phil 2:12 with fear and trembling

See especially: Acts 4:25-26; 13:33; Hebrews 1:2, 5; 5:5; Revelation 2:26-27; 12:5; 19:15; cf. Hebrews 7:28.

Additional allusions to Psalm 2 include: "the Lord's Christ" (Lk 2:26); "you are the Son of God . . . the King of Israel" (Jn 1:49); "the Christ, the Son of God" (Mt 26:63).

Daniel 7:13-14

¹³ "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve/worship⁷⁵³ Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.

This passage depicts a coronation or enthronement scene in heaven. The Son of Man, riding upon the clouds of heaven and escorted by angels, comes into the presence of the Ancient of Days (i.e., God the Father), where this Son of Man is invested with dominion, glory, and sovereignty to rule forever over the cosmos.

There are four crucial truths in these verses:

⁷⁵³ The term *pelach* includes more than service; it includes worship and reverence. The Son of Man is worshipped (Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, NAC [Broadman & Holman: n.p., 1994], 208; Edward J. Young, *Daniel*, Geneva, 156).

- “The Son of Man” is a divine Person.⁷⁵⁴
- “The Son of Man” is the Lord Jesus Christ.⁷⁵⁵
- The Son of Man “came to the Ancient of Days . . . near before Him.” This passage does not describe Jesus’ second

⁷⁵⁴ “The two main participants are divine.” “The attendants are celestial and not human creatures.” “He is riding the cloud chariot, which is the prerogative of God alone” (Pss 68:4; 104:3-4; Is 19:1; Na 1:3) (Tremper Longman III, *Daniel*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999], 186f).

“None but the Lord of nature can appear upon the clouds of heaven. . . . There can be no question, but that Deity is intended here” (Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. [McLean, VA: MacDonald, n.d.], 2:796).

“The Figure likened to a Son of Man, represents a supernatural Person, for He comes with the clouds, is conducted to the throne of God, and the universal and eternal kingdom is given Him.” Angels presented him (Edward J. Young, *Daniel*, Geneva, 155f).

“The coming with clouds is an exclusively divine attribute. . . . The Son of Man is not only king but God” (Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel*, TOTC [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1978], 142, 154).

⁷⁵⁵ “There can be no doubt that the Lord applied this prophecy to himself” (cf. Mt 10:23; 16:27-28; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31; 26:64). The view that the Son of Man is Christ “was supported by the whole of the early Christian Church with very few exceptions” (Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, 2:801, 799). In fact, Jesus applying Daniel 7:13-14 to Himself resulted in the high priest condemning Jesus on the charge of blasphemy (Mk 14:61-64). See Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, NAC, 209. “The employment of this title [Son of Man] by Jesus Christ is one of the strongest evidences that He attributed Deity to Himself” (Edward J. Young, *Daniel*, Geneva, 156). Dn 7:13-14 “has been read continuously in the Church of England as one of the lessons for Ascension Day” (John A.T. Robinson, *Jesus and His Coming* [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1979], 51).

coming to earth. It depicts His ascension into heaven, after His resurrection.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵⁶ “This passage, then, without the slightest doubt, ought to be received of Christ’s ascension” (cf. Mt 28:18; Eph 1:21; 2:7; Ps 110:1). It depicts “the commencement of the reign of Christ, and ought not to be connected with its final close, as many interpreters forced and strained the passage. . . . He does not here speak of the last judgment, but is only teaching us the object of his ascension to heaven” (John Calvin, *Daniel*, 2:44–46).

“In Dn 7:13–14 this ‘son of man’ *comes* before God to be enthroned as king. There is nothing in the imagery of Daniel to suggest a coming *to earth*, as Christian interpretation has traditionally found in these passages; he *comes* in the clouds of heaven *to God*. . . . Despites centuries of later Christian interpretive tradition, **when the gospels speak of ‘the Son of Man coming’ the presumption must be that they are speaking not of an eschatological *parousia* but of a heavenly enthronement**” (R.T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 396; cf. Keith A. Mathison, ed., in *When Shall These Things Be?: A Reformed Response to Hyper-Preterism* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004], 181f). R.T. France is by far the best commentator on Matthew’s and Mark’s use of Daniel 7:13–14.

“According to New Testament doctrine, Christ, the Son of man, receives a dominion and power over all nations not for the first time on the day of judgment, after the destruction of the world-kingdoms by the Father, but He received it (Mt 28:18) after the completion of His work and before His ascension” (Carl F. Keil, *Daniel*, KD, 271). “Daniel leaves no doubt that it is a coming to God” (cp. 1 Enoch 14:8; 4 Ezra 13:3) (John A.T. Robinson, *Jesus and His Coming*, 50f). Cf. Eric W. Heaton, *Daniel*, Torch, 183.

See Matthew Henry, 6:842f (= 1447 in one-volume edition); cf. Jerome, *Daniel*, 80f (cites Ac 1:11; Phil 2:6–8); and the Geneva Bible notes. Cf. Robert H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929), 186f.

- The Son of Man, i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ, is now reigning in His universal, everlasting kingdom, which includes the earth.⁷⁵⁷

This passage describes the bestowal of a physical kingdom through which the Son of Man/Messiah will rule the earth. All the other kingdoms described in this chapter (Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome) are real, earthly empires; and it is best to see this kingdom as real and earthly as well (rather than merely “spiritual” and invisible). Unlike the bestial empires, this kingdom is universal and eternal.⁷⁵⁸

Daniel 7:13-14ff is fulfilled in three stages:

⁷⁵⁷ “Dn 7:12-13 forms the most ancient commentary upon ‘Sit thou at my right hand’ [Ps 110:1]. There the Son of Man comes on the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days, to the heavenly throne of God . . . a passage which our Lord, in Mt 26:64, connects with the one before us, the real import of which he explains in Mt 28:18” (Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Psalms*, 3:332).

“When our Lord uttered these words [Mt 28:18-20], there can be no doubt that He had in mind this passage in Daniel” (Edward J. Young, *Daniel*, Geneva, 156). Cf. Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Daniel*, CC (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), 157f.

“The Father gave to the Son all power in heaven and on earth; that He gave the power over the nations which the rulers of the earth had, in which they used only for oppression of the saints of God, to the Son of man, and in Him to the people of the saints, and thereby founded the kingdom which shall endure forever” (Carl F. Keil, *Daniel*, KD, 272). See Matthew Henry, 6:842f. Cf. Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 3 vols. (reprint: Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, n.d.), 2:832. R. Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, D. Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.), 635.

⁷⁵⁸ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, NAC, 210. (Miller is writing this as a premillennialist.) The Son of Man’s “kingship [is] exercised over the earth indeed, but located in the heavenly throne room” (R.T. France, *Mark*, NIGTC, 342f).

- The enthronement of Jesus the Messiah immediately after His resurrection and ascension (Mt 10:23; 16:27-28; 26:64; 28:18; Mk 8:38-9:1; Mk 14:62; Lk 9:26-27; 22:69; 2 Pt 1:16);
- Jesus' kingly rule being manifested and extended through historical judgments on His enemies, such as the Jewish war with Rome, which included the destruction of Jerusalem (Mt 24:1-3, 30, 34 // Mk 13:26 // Lk 21:20-27, 32); and
- Jesus' kingly rule to be manifested in the future at the final judgment of all nations (Mt 19:28[?]; 25:31).⁷⁵⁹

Additional Scriptures

Several additional Scriptures teaching the kingdom of God expanding due to the resurrection and enthronement of Jesus the Messiah could be examined, but for the sake of brevity we will simply list them (Rv 12:5-10; Jn 16:11; Ps 24:7-10; Mt 10:23; Mt 16:27-28 // Mk 8:38-9:1 // Lk 9:26-27 based on Dn 7:13-14; Mt 26:64 // Mk 14:62 and Lk 22:69, quoting Dn 7:13-14 and Ps 110:1).

Spirit-empowered evangelism

We are examining how the kingdom of God is expanding on earth during Christ's heavenly reign through the Spirit empowering Christ's prophetic church. First, we learned that the kingdom of God expanded through the resurrection, ascension, enthronement, and outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church at Christ's coronation. We will now study a second means by which the messianic kingdom expands on earth: Spirit-empowered evangelism.

⁷⁵⁹ R.T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1982), 145, 235f. The Scripture references are updated using France's NICNT commentary on Matthew and his NIGTC commentary on Mark.

The public evangelistic ministry of Jesus Christ was comprised of three things: (1) proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom; (2) healing the sick; and (3) driving out demons.⁷⁶⁰

Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom

God's "kingdom coming on earth is the fundamental content of the *gospel* (Mt 3:2; 4:17, 23; 5:3ff; 9:35; 10:7; 12:28; 24:14; Ac 1:3; 8:12; 20:25; 28:23, 31)."⁷⁶¹ "Essentially, the gospel in the New Testament is the good news that the kingdom of God has come in Jesus (Mt 4:23; 9:35; Mk 1:14; Lk 4:43; Ac 20:24-25)."⁷⁶² Matthew and Mark term the gospel "the gospel of the kingdom" (Mt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mk 1:14).

What is the meaning of "the gospel of the kingdom?" The "gospel of the kingdom" is **the good news that the prophetically-promised, eschatological reign of God⁷⁶³ has already broken into human history in the divine person of the Lord Jesus Christ.**⁷⁶⁴ King Jesus has come to make all things right, bringing righteousness, enforcing God's law in the world (Is 2:2-4; 42:1-4; Mi 4:1-3; cf. Is 51:4; Jer 33:15), destroying lawlessness (Heb 1:9 NASB, NKJV, quoting Ps 45:7; Mt 7:23; 13:41-42), and defeating Satan's usurping kingdom (Mt 12:28-29; Lk 10:9, 17-20; 11:20-22; Mk 16:17; Eph 1:20-23; 2:6; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14-15; 1 Jn 3:8).⁷⁶⁵ Missionary Douglas Layton boils the

⁷⁶⁰ George E. Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959), 40-51. John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1986).

⁷⁶¹ John Frame, *The Escondido Theology*, 256.

⁷⁶² John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 185.

⁷⁶³ The Messianic or mediatorial kingdom of God.

⁷⁶⁴ The term "Christ" (Χριστός), in its first century Jewish setting, denoted the eschatological Messiah, i.e., a kingly-military deliverer to fulfill the Davidic Covenant (2 Sm 7:14) (BDAG, 1091; *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 109).

⁷⁶⁵ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, 248. Frame adds, "It is important for us to distinguish between salvation by grace and salvation by works, but I don't think Scripture justifies a sharp distinction between law and gospel." Interestingly, Frame is writing

message of the gospel of the kingdom down to this: “The good news is that, when Christ rules a nation, all things are made right. This is the gospel we are supposed to be preaching.”⁷⁶⁶

Jesus taught that, “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Mt 24:14).

“The gospel of the kingdom” was the gospel proclaimed by: the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt 4:17, 23; 9:35; Mk 1:14-15; Lk 4:43; 8:1; 9:11; 16:16); the Apostles (Mt 10:1, 7-8 // Lk 9:1-2 // Mk 6:7; Mt 24:14; Ac 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31; cf. 2:30-36; 17:6-7); and other disciples of Christ (Lk 9:60; 10:1, 9, 11, 17-20; Ac 8:12; Mt 24:14).

If one is not proclaiming “the gospel of the kingdom,” then he or she is not proclaiming the same gospel that the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles proclaimed.

Great Commission: disciple all nations

Virtually every mission’s agency and evangelistic organization in the world appeals to the Great Commission to define their mission and for the justification of their existence. But, how many have carefully analyzed the Great Commission—especially its worldview and cultural implications? Let’s do that now.

his massive, multi-volume systematic theology under the overarching theme, “A Theology of Lordship.”

⁷⁶⁶ Douglas Layton, *Our Father’s Kingdom*, 45.

And Jesus came and said to them,⁷⁶⁷ “**All authority** in heaven and **on earth has been given**⁷⁶⁸ to me.”¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of **all** nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe [practice and guard] **all** that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you **always**, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:18-20 ESV; cp. //Mk 16:15-20; Lk 24:47-49//Ac 1:3-8).

Four key points to observe are:

- The absoluteness and the pervasiveness of the **present** authority of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., “all authority in heaven and on earth”);
- The Great Commission itself is predicated on the Lord Jesus Christ’s present rule over the earth (“therefore”);

⁷⁶⁷ In Mt 28:18 the pronoun “them” particularly refers to Jesus’ Eleven disciples. However, if the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ’s appearance to over 500 brethren at once (1 Cor 15:6) is recorded anywhere else in Scripture, it is this occasion of the giving of the Great Commission in Galilee (Mt 28:18-20; cf. 26:32 // Mk 14:28; Mt 28:7 // Mk 16:7; Mt 28:10). See commentators on 1 Corinthians: Thiselton, 1206; Lenski, 636f; Godet, 762f; Hodge, 316f; Robertson/Plummer, 337; RWP, 4:188; EBC, 2:920; Morris, 202f; Findlay, EGT, 2:920; commentaries on Matthew: Carson, 593f; Nolland, 1262; Osborne, 1069 (on 28:10); Lenski (1166f); Tasker (277); Broadus (590f); Morris (745); Mounce (267); and many harmonies of the gospels (e.g., Thomas/Gundry NASB, 261 § 256; A.T. Robertson, 249); cf. J.P. Lange, *The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ*, 3:411f; Ned B. Stonehouse, *The Witness of the Synoptic Gospels to Christ*, 170-181.

⁷⁶⁸ Ingressive aorist, i.e., “has just been given” (Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 310; cited approvingly by W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison Jr., *Matthew*, ICC, 3:682 and R.T. France, *Matthew*, TNTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985], 413).

- The comprehensiveness of the four alls (i.e., “all authority”; “all nations”; “all” Jesus’ authoritative teachings⁷⁶⁹; “with you always”);⁷⁷⁰ and
- The parallel passages emphasize the supernatural power of the soon-to-be-given Holy Spirit that will enable believers to accomplish this Great Commission (Mk 16:15–20⁷⁷¹; Lk 24:47–49; Ac 1:3–8).⁷⁷²

What does the word “nation” mean in Matthew 28:19? The Greek lexicons define ἔθνος as: “a body of persons united by kinship, culture, and common traditions, *nation, people*”⁷⁷³; “the largest unit

⁷⁶⁹ “All things” (Mt 28:20 NKJV) must include the Old Testament (Mt 5:17–19; 13:52) (Craig S. Keener, *Matthew* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999], 720).

⁷⁷⁰ Kenneth L. Gentry, *The Greatness of the Great Commission*.

⁷⁷¹ Some inferior ancient Greek manuscripts, such as Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, entirely omit the last twelve verses of Mark’s Gospel (16:9–20). These verses are present in the Majority/Byzantine Text. See Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, chapter 14, especially pages 650–652. For in depth study see: John W. Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to S. Mark* (1871; repr., n.p.: The Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1959); Wilbur N. Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text IV* (n.p., 2014), 299–315, 327f; Edward F. Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, 3rd edition (Des Moines, IA: The Christian Research Press, 1991), 131–141.

⁷⁷² “With you” depicts Jesus’ covenantal presence. (Jesus is “Immanuel,” i.e., “God with us,” Mt 1:23.) Throughout Scripture God’s covenantal presence includes supernaturally leading, empowering, and defending His people. For example, consider Gideon asking (during a time of Israel’s apostasy), “If the LORD is with us . . . where *are* all His miracles (Jdg 6:13)? Lack of God’s manifest, supernatural power is a sign of God’s covenantal judgment.

⁷⁷³ ἔθνος denotes “a body of persons united by kinship, culture, and common traditions, *nation, people*” (BDAG, 276 def. 1).

into which the people of the world are divided on the basis of their constituting a socio-political community—‘nation, people.’”⁷⁷⁴

But we need to ask a more penetrating question: What comprises any “nation?” Every nation includes various domains or spheres:⁷⁷⁵

- religion (e.g., worship of Baal, Molech, Ashtoreth, Artemas);
- family and social welfare;
- civil governments, laws, armies (1 Sa 18:5, 19–20);
- education (e.g., Ac 7:22; Dn 1:4, 10);
- economics and business (including science and technology) (e.g., herdsmen, craftsmen,⁷⁷⁶ tradesmen; coins, Mt 22:19–21; just weights and measures); and
- media, the arts, and sports (e.g., Greek and Roman games, 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 2:5).

If these (and other) domains or spheres are included in a “nation,” then Jesus’ command to disciple all nations is comprehensive indeed! This means that the Great Commission has broad worldview and immense cultural implications. All pietistic⁷⁷⁷ notions of evangelism must be rejected as truncated and unbiblical. Can such a view be substantiated from the commentaries? Since the comprehensiveness of the Great Commission is such a crucial point, we will cite numerous commentators to buttress this truth.

Quotes from commentators:

⁷⁷⁴ L-N, 1:130 # 11.55. Cf. TDNT, 2:369; NIDNTTE, 2:91; Thayer, 168. For a bibliography see the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 687.

⁷⁷⁵ Cf. Douglas Layton, *Our Father’s Kingdom*, 42.

⁷⁷⁶ Herbert Lockyer, *All the Trades and Occupations of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986). “Crafts,” ISBE₂, 1:798–800.

⁷⁷⁷ See Robert E. Fugate, “A Summary of Crucial Errors of Pietism,” available at <http://www.lordofthenations.com/free-downloads>.

“Christianity should be twisted in with national constitutions, that the kingdoms of the world should become Christ’s kingdoms [Rv 11:15], and their kings the church’s nursing-fathers [Is 49:23]. [2.] What is the principal intention of this commission; to *disciple* all nations.⁷⁷⁸ *Matheteusate*—“Admit them disciples; do your utmost to make the nations Christian nations’; not, “Go to the nations, and denounce the judgments of God against them, as Jonah against Nineveh, and as the other Old-Testament prophets” (though they had reason enough to expect it for their wickedness), “but go, and *disciple them.*” Christ the Mediator is setting up a kingdom in the world, bring the nations to be his subjects; setting up a school, bring the nations to be his scholars; raising an army for the carrying on of the war against the powers of darkness, enlist the nations of the earth under his banner. The work which the apostles had to do, was, to set up the Christian religion in all places, and it was honourable work; the achievements of the mighty heroes of the world were nothing to it. They conquered the nations for themselves, and made them miserable; the apostles conquered them for Christ, and made them happy.” (Matthew Henry, 5:362 = one volume ed. 1175f).

“Jesus has spoken several times, using the language of **Dan 7:13-14**, of the future sovereignty of the Son of Man (16:28; 19:28; 24:30-31; 25:31-34; 26:64), three of those passages have indicated that that sovereignty would be achieved in the near future, to be seen by those then alive (16:28; 24:30-34; 26:64; cf. also 10:23). But now what had been a vision for the future, albeit the imminent future, has become present reality” (R.T. France, NICNT, 1112f; cp. Davidic royal genealogy, 1:1-17).⁷⁷⁹ This is how the Lord’s Prayer is being answered (R.T. France, NICNT, 1113 n 25, citing N.T. Wright, *Resurrection*, 643).

⁷⁷⁸ The term “all nations” included the nation of Israel (W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison Jr., *Matthew*, ICC, 3:6824).

⁷⁷⁹ “What he had pointed forward to during his life has now become fact. The kingdom has come, and Jesus reigns as Son of man” (R.T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 142f). Cf. R.T. France, *Matthew*, TNTC, 413.

“Jesus is not waiting passively in heaven for his glorious arrival as judge and king but is already exercising his Lordship as God’s plenipotentiary Son. The Great Commission is thus founded on Jesus’ *present* Lordship (note the ‘therefore’ of v. 19)” (Douglas R.A. Hare, *Interpretation*, 333).

Matthew is alluding to **Dn 7:13-14** LXX, in which the “Son of Man” receives from God the authority to sovereignly rule the kingdom (Davies/Allison, 3:682f, and most modern commentators). The resurrected “Jesus is exalted and made **Lord of the cosmos.**” This enthronement Christology is also taught in Eph 1:20-23; Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20; 1 Pt 3:18-22 (3:683). “The prophecy that in **Abraham** all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gn 12:3) comes to fulfilment in the mission of the church” (683). “Universal lordship means universal mission” (684). “The **resurrection** is the exaltation of Jesus as **Lord of all.** . . . The resurrection is the end of an old time and the beginning of a new time. . . . The mission to ‘all the nations’ reminds that Jesus is the Son of **Abraham** (1:1)” (W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison Jr., *ICC*, 3:688).

“In heaven and on earth” means “over the whole creation.” “Jesus at his **resurrection** has been exalted and installed as **Lord of the universe.** For all of early Christianity it is true that all powers are subject to the exalted Jesus (Ro 1:4; Phil 2:9-11; Col 1:18-20; Eph 1:20-22; 1 Pt 3:22; Heb 1:3f). Thus the entire world was turned upside down by the **resurrection** of Jesus . . . now raised from the dead and installed by God as ruler of the universe [refers to Ps 110:1 and Dn 7:13f]. . . . **His kingdom will begin not with his return as World Judge** but already, in the present.” . . . The **risen** Jesus **now has all the power in the entire cosmos.** . . . It is unlimited” (Ulrich Luz, *Hermeneia*, 3:623f).

Jesus “is the chief executive officer of the universe, in complete control of the world . . . the **Cosmocrator**” (Eph 1:22-3; Rv 1:5; 11:15). “**All social, political, and economic power** (‘on earth’) are in **his hands**” (Frederick D. Bruner, *The Christbook*, 1094f). “Since Jesus is the **plenipotentiary** of the universe, disciples move out to say so. From now on the endtime people of God should proclaim to all

nations that these nations too belong to the territory of the sovereignty of the Son of Man” (1096). “**The usual missionary terms are not employed here. . . . To disciple means to make students of, bring to school, educate**” (1096). “The phrase ‘all nations’ comes from the heart of the OT revelation—the **Abrahamic Promise** (Gn 12:3; 18:18; 22:18)” (1097). “With you” means protection and defense, but especially enabling (cf. Mt 4:19) (1106).

“ . . . establishing the basis for his command here, his **absolute all-embracing authority** as **Risen Lord** . . . the **enthronement** of the **Messiah** as **eschatological ruler** and **judge**. This is an allusion to **Dan 7:13-14** . . . It is critical to note that the command is **not to evangelize** but to perform the broader and deeper task of ‘**discipling**’ the nations. Many denominations and mission groups misunderstand this and spend all their effort winning new converts rather than anchoring them in the Christian faith. . . . The **parousia power and glory are his now and are given to his followers**. . . . We disseminate the Lordship of Christ in this world as we proclaim his truths. . . . The task of the church is not just to evangelize but to disciple the world for Christ. A **huge error has occurred over the last two hundred years in the missionary movement**. . . . The shallowness there [many Third World churches] is the fault of the mission organizations” (Grant R. Osborne, ZECNT, 1078, 1080, 1082, 1084).

The passive “has been given” “assumes God as the acting subject: God **has given** Jesus this **comprehensive sovereignty over the whole of the created order**. . . . Jesus’ authority (v. 18) and his presence (v. 20) will empower his disciples to fulfill the commission. . . . The universal authority of Jesus is the basis of the universal mission of the church. . . . The emphasis in the commission thus falls not on the initial proclamation of the gospel but more on the arduous task of nurturing into the experience of discipleship, an emphasis that is strengthened and explained by the instruction ‘teaching them to keep all that I have commanded’ in v. 20a” (Donald A. Hagner, WBC, 2:886f).

“God’s bestowal of universal authority or power upon Jesus echoes **Dan. 7:13-14, 18, 22, 27**. . . . Matthew’s theology of the **kingdom** is

found *in nuce* [in a nutshell] here. The **resurrection** has already installed Jesus as the glorious Son of Man. . . . Obedience to the mission mandate turns out to fulfill, as a by-product, the original **creation mandate** that God gave to humanity's first parents in the garden of Eden. . . . The **renewal of the world** (19:28) had begun" (David L. Turner, BECNT, 689, 691).

In this passage, **Dn 7:14** "refers to **the transfer of all authority to the Risen One, which has now been accomplished**" (cf. Mt 26:64) (Rudolf Schnackenburg, 298).

[Mt 28:18] "clearly recalls **Dn 7:14** and should be understood in light of that verse. . . . 'All authority . . . in earth' [refers to] His authority **over all power and dominion manifested on earth**. . . . The Great Commission is based on Christ's **resurrection** from the dead, and the gathering of all nations into the church exhibits His victory over the powers of darkness. . . . The glory of Christ's resurrection is manifested by His breaking of the power of darkness, not only in a limited region, but through all the world, and by His bringing all nations back to God" (Herman N. Ridderbos, BSC, 553-555).

"Jesus has become the plenipotentiary—all power/authority in heaven *and* on earth had been given to him. . . . Jesus is enthroned as the ruler of the world by his resurrection, which was also his exaltation. Jesus is alluding to **Daniel 7:14** and his fulfilling the commission given there to the divine Son of Man. . . . Now since Jesus has all power and authority over all peoples, his disciples must broaden their field of operation to include the nations, all the nations that Jesus now rules. . . . The emphasis is on teaching rather than preaching. . . . The chief means of making disciples is teaching" (Ben Witherington III, S&H, 532-534).

"Jesus claims universal authority . . . complete and universal authority. . . . The authority thus given is still possessed. . . . All the nations shall be discipled unto him. . . . [The verb 'disciple' to Christ means to bring] "into the relation of pupil to teacher, 'taking his yoke' of authoritative instruction (Mt 11:29), accepting what he says as true because he says it, and submitting to his requirements as right because

he makes them. . . . One religion for all the world” (John A. Broadus, 592f).

The claim to possess “all authority” “goes far beyond any Messianic categories. . . . No king of Israel ever claimed, no future ‘Messiah’ was ever promised, any kind of authority in heaven. Jesus now proclaims that sovereignty over the entire universe has been committed to him” (Francis W. Beare, 544).

“The spheres in which Christ now exercises absolute authority are enlarged to include . . . the entire universe. . . . The Son becomes the one through whom all God’s authority is mediated. He is the mediatorial King” (D.A. Carson, EBC₁ 594f = EBC₂ 665). “The blessings of the **Abrahamic Covenant** are now to be fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah” (D.A. Carson, EBC₂ 667).

“**Every form of authority**; command of all means necessary for the advancement of the Kingdom of God . . . session on His celestial throne at the right hand of God . . . **universal cosmic dominion**” (Alexander B. Bruce, EGT, 1:339).

“His authority during His earthly life had been great (Mt 7:29; 21:23–24; cf. 11:27), but now it is limitless—the fulfillment of the vision in **Dn 7:14**” (Alan H. M’Neile, 435).

“‘Given’—by the Father, in the fulfillment of the Eternal Covenant. . . . The Resurrection was its last seal—the **Ascension was the taking possession of the Inheritance**. But the Inheritance is already won; and the Heir is only remaining on earth for a temporary purpose—the assuring His joint-heirs of the verity of his possession” (Henry Alford, AGT, 1:306).

“Authority” denotes “**absolute power and jurisdiction**. There is **nothing outside the sovereign control of the risen Christ**” (Robert H. Mounce, NIBC, 267f).

“Marching orders . . . [Converts must be] “**nurtured in the whole counsel of God’s revelation**” (Craig L. Blomberg, NAC, 431, 433).

“Go conquer the world for Me; carry the glad tidings into all lands and to every ear, and deem not this work at an end till all nations shall have embraced the Gospel and enrolled themselves My disciples (JFB, 64). “On earth” means “power over all persons, all passions, all principles, all movements—to bend them to this high object, the evangelization of the world: All this ‘is given unto Me,’ as the risen Lord of all, to be by Me placed at your command—‘Go ye therefore’” (Robert Jamison, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown, 64).

“His mediatorial government extends, therefore, over the material world, over angels, over devils, over wicked men, and over his own people” (Albert Barnes, 145).

The risen Christ is charging this band of five hundred men and women with world conquest and bringing them to believe it possible and to undertake it with serious passion and power. . . . Push on the campaign for world conquest” (Archibald T. Robertson, RWP, 1:244f).

“The whole globe was held under His sway, and that a doctrine was published which would **subdue all high-seeking**, and bring the whole human race into humility. . . . He is establishing the throne of His Kingdom upon earth” (John Calvin, 249f).

“‘All authority,’ **embracing everything over which rule and dominion can be exercised** . . . the Divine government of the whole universe and of the Kingdom of Heaven” (Alford Plummer, 428).

“All things” (Mt 28:20 NKJV) must include the Old Testament (Mt 5:17–19; 13:52) (Craig S. Keener, 720).

Jesus is with his disciples (Mt 1:23; 18:20; 28:20) as Yahweh was protectively with his covenant people (Gn 26:24; 28:15; Ex 3:12; Josh 1:5, 9; Jdg 6:12, 16; 2 Sa 7:3; Is 41:10; 43:5; Hg 1:23) (Robert H. Gundry, 597).

“Observe” denotes to obey, preserve, and keep inviolate (R.C.H. Lenski, 1179).

A disciple is both a continuing learner and a follower (Leon Morris, PNTC, 746; cf. Robert H. Mounce, NIBC, 268).

The Great Commission is “a **republication of the cultural mandate**,” within the context of the covenant of grace.⁷⁸⁰

Matthew 28:18-19 is the new covenant fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 2:8, “Ask of Me, and I will give *You* The nations *for Your* inheritance, And the ends of the earth *for Your* possession.”⁷⁸¹

(Bold and underlining in the above quotes are added.)

In sum, Jesus’ resurrection, ascension, enthronement, and present reign (i.e., the messianic kingdom) are eschatological events that have effected massive changes. The comprehensive Great Commission is an important component of the Biblical worldview, and it has an enormous impact on the believer’s cultural task. The Dominion Covenant or Cultural Mandate that was given in the Genesis creation account (Gn 1:26-30) will be accomplished by Jesus Christ and His church.

Jesus Christ’s coming in judgment in A.D. 70

A third event by means of which the kingdom of God expanded on earth during Jesus Christ’s heavenly reign was His coming in judgment during the seven-year Jewish war (A.D. 66-73) to destroy persecutors of His church (Mt 24:1-35 // Mk 13:1-31⁷⁸² // Lk 21:5-

⁷⁸⁰ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 310 (bold added). William Edgar, *Created & Creating: A Biblical Theology of Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017), 161, 215; citing Harvie M. Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace*, 63. Gregory K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 169, 175-177.

⁷⁸¹ James L. Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation, 51.

⁷⁸² R.T. France lists the time indicators and sequence in Mt 24 (*Matthew*, NICNT, 900) and Mk 13 (*Divine Government: God’s Kingship in the Gospel of Mark*, 128). He notes that the answer to the disciples’ question “when” (Mk 13:4) does not come until vv. 26-27.

33; Mt 23:36–39; 21:40–45; 8:11–12; cf. Rv 11:15, 17; Mt 26:64?).⁷⁸³ This divine judgment particularly included unbelieving Jews throughout the Roman Empire⁷⁸⁴ (especially in Jerusalem and Judea), but also included judgments on the Roman Empire itself (Rv 13–19). Jesus had forewarned His disciples, “So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near” (Lk 21:31; cf. 19:43–44; 23:28–31).

Jesus Christ inherited and is possessing all nations

A fourth aspect of the kingdom of God expanding on earth during Christ’s heavenly reign comes by means of the Holy Spirit empowering Christ’s prophetic church to fulfill the Great Commission and the cultural mandate. This is only possible because the Lord Jesus already inherited all the nations from His Father, Who is putting all enemies under Christ’s feet (Pss 2:6–12; 110:1–3; Dn 7:13–14; Mt 28:18–20; Ac 2:34–36; 1 Cor 15:23–28; Eph 1:20–23; 4:10). The resurrected Lord Jesus Christ commissioned His church to disciple all His nations into a lifestyle of obedience to His kingship (Mt 28:18–20). The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to empower Christ’s church to fulfill these marching orders. Thus, the Gospels narrated what Jesus “began both to do and to teach”⁷⁸⁵ until

⁷⁸³ Note the phrase “this generation” in Mt 23:36; 24:34 // Mk 13:30 // Lk 21:32. The term γενεά (generation) denotes *the whole multitude of men living at the same time . . . used especially of the Jewish race living at one and the same period*” (Thayer, 112); “the sum total of those born at the same time, expanded to include all those living at a given time and frequently defined in terms of specific characteristics, *generation, contemporaries*” (BDAG); cf. L-N, 1:121 # 11.4. It is poor exegesis and special pleading to mistranslate γενεά as “race,” as some dispensationalists have done.

⁷⁸⁴ Over 1.3 million Jews were killed. James Ussher, *The Annals of the World* (1658; repr., Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003), 882.

⁷⁸⁵ In Acts 1:1 “to do” and “to teach” are both present infinitives. For the significance of the present tense in this verse, see Archibald T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (RWP), 6 vols. (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1930–1933), 3:4.

His ascension (Ac 1:1); the book of Acts recorded what the ascended Lord Jesus Christ continued to do through the Holy Spirit empowering and directing the members of Christ's church on earth.

Jesus Christ sharing His dominion with His covenant people

A fifth way in which the kingdom of God is expanding on earth during Christ's heavenly reign is by means of Christ restoring dominion to the people of God (Dn 7:18, 22, 27;⁷⁸⁶ Lk 12:32;⁷⁸⁷ Eph 2:6; 4:8; 2 Tim

⁷⁸⁶ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, 2:21, 73-77.

⁷⁸⁷ Jesus' followers were promised a share in royal dominion (Dn 7:27, 17, 22) (I. Howard Marshall, *Luke*, NIGTC, 530; John Nolland, *Luke*, WBC, 2:694). Cf. Jesus conferred present authority ("I am bestowing") to the Eleven (Lk 22:29-30) (Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, BECNT, 2:1740) to (judicially) rule the church (Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, AB, 2:1419; Marshall, 817; contra Bock).

2:12; Rv 1:6;⁷⁸⁸ 2:26–27;⁷⁸⁹ 3:21;⁷⁹⁰ 5:10;⁷⁹¹ 20:4, 6;⁷⁹² 22:5;⁷⁹³ cf. Gn 1:26–30; Ps 8:5–6; Mt 5:5; Ro 4:13; 5:17; 1 Cor 6:2–3; 3:21–23).

⁷⁸⁸ Christians are to be “faithful witnesses by mediating Christ’s priestly and royal authority to the world” (Gregory K. Beale, *Revelation*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999], 193). Cf. Ex 19:6; 1 Pt 2:5–10.

⁷⁸⁹ In Jewish thought “the morning star” represents (by metonymy) the messianic reign (cf. Rv 22:16; Nu 24:17). “The morning star (Venus) was a symbol of sovereignty in the ancient world and especially in Rome. Roman emperors claimed to be descended from the goddess Venus. Roman generals built temples dedicated to the star, and it was a sign carried on the standards of the Roman legions. . . . Christ is the true world sovereign in contrast to the claims of evil world empires like Rome” (Gregory K. Beale, *Revelation*, NIGTC, 268f).

⁷⁹⁰ As present participants in Christ’s messianic kingdom, believers who are presently overcoming may enjoy a measure of sharing in Christ’s present rule in history—as well as in eternity (noting that believers are already participants in Christ’s kingdom and are even called “kings,” Rv 1:5–6, 9) (Gregory K. Beale, *Revelation*, NIGTC, 310).

⁷⁹¹ “John does not think of Christ as having withdrawn from the scene of his earthly victory, to return only at the Parousia. In and through his faithful followers he continues to exercise both his royal and his priestly functions. . . . Any suggestion that the reign of the Christians belongs to an ultimate future is, however, beside the point, since we have now been twice told that they are already kings and priests” (George B. Caird, *Revelation*, HNTC [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1966], 77). Rv 5:10 is based on Dn 7:22b, 27a and (the fulfillment of) the Passover lamb (a type) which provides for the exodus (cf. Rv 1:5–6).

⁷⁹² Robert E. Fugate, “Revelation 20:4–6 Two Resurrections,” unpublished paper. Gregory K. Beale, *Revelation*, NIGTC, 1002–1015.

⁷⁹³ Christians will eternally rule over various aspects of God’s creation, e.g., the earth, animals and plants, and probably angels (cf. Gregory K. Beale, *Revelation*, NIGTC, 1116f).

Jesus Christ reconciling and restoring “all things”

A sixth way in which the kingdom of God will expand on earth during Christ’s heavenly reign is by Christ reconciling and restoring “all things” (Col 1:20;⁷⁹⁴ Eph 1:10;⁷⁹⁵ Ac 3:21⁷⁹⁶). This process coincides

⁷⁹⁴ Salvation affects not only individuals, but the entire cosmos, which has also been affected by sin (Gn 3:17-18; Ro 8:19-23). “All things” (Col 1:20) refers to the scope of Christ’s cosmic redemption and dominion. “The idea of ‘reconciliation’ in this passage is a reference to the restoration of all things . . . a harmonious restoration of the entire animate and inanimate creation. . . . There is a reconciliation of the alienation that has occurred in the spirit world, the human world, and the material world” (Gregory K. Beale, *Colossians, Philemon*, BECNT, 111f). However, this verse does not support the heretical doctrine of ultimate reconciliation. It is possible to understand “reconcile” broadly to include evil principalities and powers being compelled to submit against their wills to a power they cannot resist (F.F. Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, NICNT, 74-76; Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, WBC, 56f; cf. Eduard Lohse, *Colossians, Philemon*, Hermeneia, 59-61); cf. Phil 2:10-11.

⁷⁹⁵ The term “all things” denotes “God’s creation, animate and inanimate, which are going to be united under Christ” (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002], 223; cf. Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999], 112). “God has exalted Christ to heaven as cosmic Lord, thereby ensuring the inseparable connection between heaven and earth that enables both things in heaven and things on earth to be summed up in him. . . . Those who can see that there is therefore **no aspect of this universe which is outside the scope of God’s redemptive purpose**, in which they too have been included, are thereby given grounds for overcoming any sense of weakness and insecurity in the face of hostile cosmic powers” (Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990], 35; bold added).

⁷⁹⁶ F.F. Bruce suggests that Jesus will remain enthroned at the Father’s right hand “until the consummation [establishment, fulfillment] of all that the prophets, from earliest days have foretold . . . the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy, culminating in the establishment of

with Jesus' messianic reign, beginning with His resurrection-enthronement and concluding in its fullness after Jesus' second coming (1 Cor 15:23-28, 51-57; Ac 1:11; 3:20-21; Heb 9:27-28; 2 Pt 3:4, 7, 10-13; etc.).⁷⁹⁷ The παρουσία (i.e., the second coming of Jesus) will occur at the "end of the age" (Mt 24:3), and it marks "the end" of the messianic/mediatorial kingdom of Christ (1 Cor 15:23-24; cf. 1:7-8) and the end of history. "The last enemy," i.e., death, is destroyed at this time with the general resurrection of the dead (1 Cor

God's order on earth. If Jesus must remain in heaven until this consummation, this is in line with Paul's exposition of Ps 110:1: Christ must reign (at the right hand of God) until all hostile powers are overthrown" (*Acts*, NICNT, rev. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988], 84f). C.K. Barrett argues that the term should be translated "restoration" of all things (*Acts*, ICC, 2 vols. [Edinburg, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1994], 1:206f), which would mean undoing the effects of the fall—in mankind (cp. Mal 3:22-23), in the plants and animals, and in the inanimate universe (as the Old Testament had prophesied). It is important to understand that "until the times of the restoration of all things" (Ac 3:21) **"has an already-not yet notion, since the 'restoration' had likely begun with Jesus's [first] coming, his resurrection, and the giving of the Spirit"** (Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 140; bold added).

⁷⁹⁷ Christ's second coming will be: personal, physical, visible (Ac 1:9-11; Rv 1:7?), sudden and unexpected (Mt 24:27, 37-39, 44; Lk 17:24, 26-27; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Th 5:1-4; 2 Pt 3:10), glorious (Mt 25:31; 2 Th 1:7-10; Tit 2:13), and triumphant (1 Th 4:14-17). He will come "with all His saints/holy ones" (angels and the souls of dead believers) (1 Th 3:13; 4:14; 2 Th 1:7).

15:26, 54-55),⁷⁹⁸ followed by the final judgment.⁷⁹⁹ The heavens and the earth will be melted by fire and remade (2 Pt 3:4-12). After His second coming Christ will present His messianic kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor 15:24).

Concluding quotes

The kingdom is presently coming to the people of God through the gospel and the **Spirit**. Specifically, the kingdom comes “through the **Spirit-empowered** witness to Christ in all the world” (Ac 1:6-8).⁸⁰⁰ Believers have been raised with Christ to sit with Christ in heavenly places (Eph 2:5-6), and they have come to Mount Zion (Heb 12:22-24). The resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and the sending of the **Holy Spirit**, inaugurate an overlap of the ages.

“The scope of his [Christ’s] eschatological rule, the extent of his realm, is nothing less than the entire creation; all things are subject to him (Mt 28:18; 1 Cor 15:27; Heb 2:8). . . . Christ is ‘head over everything for the church’ (Eph 1:22).”⁸⁰¹

“The ‘coming’ of the Son of Man is envisaged both within the living generation (Mt 10:23; 16:28; 24:30-34) and as a part of the ultimate

⁷⁹⁸ The general resurrection of the dead occurs at the second coming of Christ (1 Cor 15:24, 51-55; Jn 5:28-29; 1 Th 4:16; Phil 3:20-21). This resurrection will include “all who are in the graves” (Jn 5:28), “both of *the* just and *the* unjust” (Ac 24:15); “those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (Jn 5:29; cf. Ac 24:15; Dn 12:2). This general resurrection will occur on “the last day” (Jn 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24) of history. Death is defeated at this time (1 Cor 15:26, 54-55).

⁷⁹⁹ The final judgment will also occur right after the Lord comes (Mt 25:31-46, 19ff; 2 Th 1:6-10; 2 Tim 4:1, 8) and the dead are raised (Jn 5:27-29; Rv 20:12-13; Dn 12:2-13). This also will occur on “the last day” (Jn 12:48) in history. “The day of judgment” (2 Pt 3:7) will include all “the dead,” believers and unbelievers (Mt 25:31-46; Ro 2:5-9, 16; 2 Tim 4:1, 8; Rv 20:11-15; Jn 5:27-29; Mt 13:39-43; 2 Pt 3:7, 10-13).

⁸⁰⁰ Graeme Goldsworthy, “Kingdom of God,” NDBT, 617.

⁸⁰¹ Richard B. Gaffin, “Kingdom of God,” NDT, 369 (bold added).

consummation (19:28?; 25:31ff). But its basis lies in the imminent vindication predicted in 26:64 [‘from now on’] and already fulfilled by the time Jesus utters the declaration of 28:18.”⁸⁰² The authority Jesus will exercise as king and judge in the final judgment (Mt 25:31-46) “will be only the culmination of an authority exercised progressively from the moment of his vindication through the resurrection.”⁸⁰³

“The goal of God’s kingdom is to subordinate all things to him as the creator, judge and redeemer. . . . The kingdom of God is the fulfillment and finale toward which all God’s ways and works point.”⁸⁰⁴

Erroneous views of the kingdom of God⁸⁰⁵

There are at least seven erroneous views of the kingdom of God within Christianity that have been quite influential. Without taking time to examine each, we’ll simply list them.

1. The humanistic, present, social kingdom of classical Liberalism.
2. The “eschatological” kingdom (Johannes Weiss; Albert Schweitzer).
3. The neo-orthodox, unknowable kingdom (Karl Barth; Emil Brunner).
4. The premillennial Judaistic political kingdom.
5. The amillennial “spiritual” kingdom that is devoid of a material, earthly realm (“not of this world”⁸⁰⁶).

⁸⁰² R.T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989), 315.

⁸⁰³ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁴ Carl F.H. Henry, “Reflections on the Kingdom of God,” *JETS* 35:1 (March 1992), 40, 41f.

⁸⁰⁵ Louis Berkhof, *The Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1951).

⁸⁰⁶ In declaring, “My kingdom is not of this world. . . . My kingdom is not from here” (Jn 18:36), Jesus is asserting that His dominion or sovereign rule does not have an earthly origin or an earthly source of

6. Pietists, dispensationalists, and amillennialists are given to “spiritual” (re)interpretations of God’s material blessings and His kingdom under the new covenant. This unbiblical definition of “spiritual”⁸⁰⁷ is rooted in Greek dualism.

authority; rather, it comes from His Father in Heaven. Jesus’ statement should not be misconstrued to mean that His kingdom is not active in this world, or has nothing to do with this world, or is not ruling over this world (Mt 28:18–20). Additionally, neither Jesus (Jn 8:23; 17:14; cf. 3:31), nor His disciples were “of this world” (Jn 15:19; 17:14, 16)—but they certainly were active in the world, were overcoming the world (Jn 16:33; 1 Jn 5:4–5), and were transforming the world (Ac 17:6) (Robert E. Fugate, “Jn 18:36 Jesus Kingship Not From this World,” unpublished paper). There is always an earthly dimension to God’s kingdom (cf. premillennialist George Eldon Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom*, 55–60; retitled *The Presence of the Future*, 59–64).

⁸⁰⁷ After surveying Paul’s use of the word πνευματικός in his letters (*God’s Empowering Presence*, 28–32), Gordon D. Fee concludes that πνευματικός never means “spiritual” (32). Fee explains that the problem with the English word “spiritual” is that it “is almost always understood over against an antonym of some kind, in a way that the word “Spirit” is not (667). The translation “spiritual” is misleading, since most contemporary uses of the English word “spiritual”—such as “religious,” “nonmaterial” (“a meaning absolutely foreign to Paul”), “mystical,” or, even worse, “the interior life of the believer”—inevitably incorporate elements of Greek philosophical thought (32). “It is extremely doubtful whether Paul would have thought of the blessings associated with the Spirit [Eph 1:3] as being over against such ‘material blessings’” (667).

πνευματικός denotes “pertaining to being derived from or being about the Spirit—‘spiritual, **from the Spirit**’ (in reference to such matters as gifts, benefits, teachings, blessings, and religious songs)”; in Eph 1:3 it denotes “**every blessing which comes from the Spirit**” (L-N §12.21); cf. BDAG, 837 def # 2; “**directly related to the Spirit’s activity**” (Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 666f; cf. 28–32). “The adjective [πνευματικός] does not primarily point to a contrast with what is material (e.g., Dt 28:1–14), secular, or worldly”

7. The Roman Catholic Church is the kingdom.
8. The inclusivist postmodern Emergent kingdom and the Jesus Seminar kingdom.

The kingdom of God and the church

“The NT does not identify the kingdom with the Church. The kingdom is the rule of God, and the realm of His blessings; the Church is the people of the kingdom who have received it, who witness to it, and who will inherit it.”⁸⁰⁸

“The Kingdom may be said to be a broader concept than the Church, because it aims at nothing less than the complete control of all the manifestations of life. It represents the dominion of God in every sphere of human endeavor.”⁸⁰⁹

The kingdom of God creates the church. Christ, the Apostles, the seventy, etc. went about preaching the kingdom of God (see above); they did not preach the church. The kingdom works through the church, which preaches the kingdom and manifests its presence. The church possesses the keys of the kingdom, with power to bind and loose (Mt 16:18–19).⁸¹⁰ The church, and only the church, is made up of the citizens of the kingdom, those who by repentance and faith submit to the redemptive Lordship of Jesus the Messiah.⁸¹¹

(Peter T. O’Brien, *Ephesians*, PNTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999], 95).

⁸⁰⁸ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of God,” *ISBE*₂, 3:28. The kingdom of God “is never directly or exclusively identified with the earthly Church” (Ulrich Luz, βασιλεία, *EDNT*, 1:205).

⁸⁰⁹ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 570.

⁸¹⁰ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven,” *EDT*₂, 660; *Idem.*, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 111–119.

⁸¹¹ Richard B. Gaffin, “Kingdom of God,” *NDT*, 368.

Consequences of equating God's kingdom and Christ's church

Equating and restricting the kingdom of God to the church has grave consequences. Let us consider three radically divergent examples in church history:

1. Roman Catholicism erroneously identifies the kingdom and the church, and concludes that the Roman Catholic Church should rule the state, all of culture, and the entire world (an ecclesiocracy).⁸¹²
2. Luther erroneously identified the kingdom and the church, and inadvertently created a caesaropapacy (i.e., a union of church and state in which the head of the state is the supreme ruler in the church), a form of Erastianism (the state controls the church; the church is a department of the state).
3. Some forms of liberalism identify the kingdom and the church—and indeed, equate the kingdom with all of culture—producing the social gospel, socialism, and various theologies of liberation.

Protestants correctly believe that the church should not control the other spheres of life (e.g., family or state). But, when Protestants erroneously identify and restrict the kingdom of God to the church (whether in their theology or their practice), one is left to conclude that everything on earth that is not strictly ecclesiastical is outside of God's rule; it is secular. This **dualistic** perspective:

⁸¹² “From his [Augustine’s] time on, and throughout the Medieval period, there was a growing tendency to identify the Kingdom of God on earth with the hierarchical organization of the Church. As the embodiment of the heavenly Kingdom, the Church naturally claimed authority over the governments of the world. . . . The Kingdom of God on earth assumed the form of an omnipotent church” (Louis Berkhof, *The Kingdom of God*, 23).

- Makes the temporal, earthly realm autonomous from God and His rule, depriving it of God’s revealed Word, and abandoning it to be governed by man’s depraved reason (natural law) that devises autonomous, humanistic ethics;⁸¹³
- Renders irrelevant and secular (unholy) all human vocations that are not strictly ecclesiastical;
- Produces in Christians a ghetto mentality and cultural isolation; and
- Surrenders the temporal, earthly realm to Satan. “Separating God’s kingdom from this world leads to the surrender of the world to Satan’s kingdom. Thus, it is never a question of ‘earthly kingdom vs. no earthly kingdom’; it is always a question of whose earthly kingdom, God’s or Satan’s.”⁸¹⁴

Success of the kingdom in history

Many contemporary believers (including seminary professors and pastors) lack the faith to believe that Christ’s kingdom/dominion will have success in history, i.e., before the second coming of Jesus Christ. Contrast this perspective with that of the prophet Isaiah, who described Messiah’s kingdom as one of endless increase:

⁶ For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the **government** will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the **increase of *His* government and peace**

⁸¹³ A significant example is Luther’s dualistic doctrine of the two kingdoms (i.e., the earthly, temporal kingdom of this world and the “spiritual,” heavenly kingdom of God). These two kingdoms are governed by two different laws and standards of ethics: the former by man’s reason (natural law), the latter by the Bible (Robert E. Fugate, “Lutherans and the Law,” unpublished paper).

⁸¹⁴ Gary North and Gary DeMar, *Christian Reconstruction: What It Is, What It Isn’t* [Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991], 29. North defines the kingdom of God as “the civilization of God” (30).

There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this (Is 9:6-7). (Cf. Pss 22:27-28⁸¹⁵; 72:8-11, 19.)

² Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *That* the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. ³ Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore (Is 2:2-4 // Mc 4:1-3). (Cf. Is 42:1, 4; 11:6-9; and chapter 60.)

Several Scriptures speak of God's kingdom conquering and destroying its enemies (Pss 2:9-12; 110:5-6; Dn 2:34-36, 44-45; Mt 21:43-44; Lk 19:43-44; Rv 19:11ff). We have already studied Psalms 2 and 110 (and the New Testament's citation of these chapters [e.g., Ac 2:33-36; 1 Cor 15:20-28⁸¹⁶], plus Daniel 7:3, 13-14 and Mt 28:18-20). Consider Daniel chapter 2. God revealed to Daniel that God's kingdom would obliterate and replace four empires (Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome):

⁸¹⁵ Previous verses of Psalm 22 describe Jesus' crucifixion. Ps 22:27-28 speaks of Christ's resurrection and ascension, not His second coming (as demonstrated by the citation in Heb 2:12; cf. vv. 9, 14-15).

⁸¹⁶ In 1 Cor 15:20-28 observe that "the end" occurs at Christ's second coming, at which time "the last enemy," i.e., death, will be destroyed when the resurrection of the dead occurs. This marks the end of Christ's mediatorial reign. Since all non-"last" enemies must have been defeated prior to the "last" enemy, they must be defeated within history, i.e., prior to the second coming of Christ!

The stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. . . . And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom . . . will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever (Dn 2:35, 44).

God's kingdom is indeed dynamic. "The kingdom comes. It is God's rule actively invading the kingdom of Satan."⁸¹⁷ While Christ's kingdom is growing, Satan's kingdom is collapsing (Lk 10:17–20).⁸¹⁸

The growth and success of the messianic kingdom is also expressed in less militaristic terms. "The reign [of God] is progressive and dynamic, like the seed sown and growing on its own (Mk 4:26), or a mustard seed that becomes a large tree (Mk 4:30–32; Mt 13:31–32; Lk 13:18–19), or again leavening whose action is mysterious and independent of human action (Mt 13:33)."⁸¹⁹

Seed growing by itself (Mk 4:26–29)

Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a seed. God has put life and the power of growth and bearing fruit into the seed (Gn 1:11–12; cf. 8:22)—power that utterly transcends anything man can do or even fully understand. In this parable Jesus is teaching that the kingdom of God has life in itself, and it will grow. Man can sow the seed, but the kingdom itself is God's deed.⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁷ George E. Ladd, "Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven," EDT₂, 658.

⁸¹⁸ In Lk 10:9, 17–20 God's kingdom was growing through the preaching of the kingdom, healing the sick, and driving out demons. "The exorcism of demons is proof that the Kingdom of God has come among men and is at work among them. The casting out of demons is itself a work of the Kingdom of God. . . . The exorcism of demons is proof that the Kingdom of God is present" (George E. Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, 47–50). Ladd interprets Jesus' words in Lk 10:18, "While you were preaching the Kingdom and casting out demons, I was watching Satan fall from heaven. In your ministry of delivering men and women from bondage of Satan, I saw his fall" (50). Cf. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 65–67).

⁸¹⁹ Ceslas Spicq, TLNT, 1:267.

⁸²⁰ George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 102f.

The parable teaches that the kingdom of God is ultimately the work of God and that he will sovereignly bring it to pass. . . . God is in charge of human history, and he will bring the kingdom of God to its destined consummation. No human action or opposition can change that.⁸²¹

Thus, God's "kingdom will continue to grow inexorably [inevitably, inescapably, unalterably], though sometimes almost invisibly. . . . At the end of the age the kingdom will have grown into all its fullness, after which Judgment Day will immediately follow."⁸²² God's kingdom most assuredly will grow into all that God intends for it, and there is nothing Satan or man can do to stop it! The kingdom does not come through militaristic revolution (contra the Zealots) and the brute power of man, but by the Spirit of God (Zc 4:6).

Mustard seed (Mt 13:31–32 // Mk 4:30–32; Lk 13:18–19)

The tiny beginning of the kingdom of God (cp. Zc 4:10), in Jesus' little band of disciples, will have a large end, ruling over all the earth⁸²³ (extensive growth). The language is reminiscent of Daniel 4:12, 21, which describes the vast influence of the Babylonian Empire, in which birds (representing subject nations) nested.⁸²⁴ As God can be

⁸²¹ Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 198.

⁸²² Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), 266.

⁸²³ George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 97f. Ladd notes that the mustard seed, while not actually the smallest seed known, was a proverbial illustration of smallness (Mt 17:20; Lk 17:6) (cf. TDNT, 7:287–291). "However, the quick-growing mustard plant is not an apt illustration of slow, gradual growth" (in contrast to the acorn growing into an oak tree, Am 2:9).

⁸²⁴ R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 526f. The tree image representing an empire is also found in Ezk 17:23; 31:3–9. "Since several Old Testament passages identify birds with Gentiles coming in procession to Israel (Ezk 17:23; 31:6; Dn 4:9–12, 20–22), many scholars believe this signifies the Gentile mission," which is a strong emphasis in Matthew's Gospel (Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, ZECNT [Grand

trusted with the growth potential in a planted seed, so He can be trusted with the potential set loose by Jesus inaugurating the messianic kingdom in history.⁸²⁵ Several scholars also suggest that this parable implies “the subversive and dangerous nature of the kingdom for the secular world. . . . The kingdom will grow and triumph by subverting the present evil world.”⁸²⁶

Leaven (Mt 13:33–34; Lk 13:20–21)

The little bit of leaven⁸²⁷ is sufficient to leaven the great mass (50–60 pounds⁸²⁸) of meal. Furthermore, once the leaven has been added, an

Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010], 526; cf. Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, ZECNT, 200).

⁸²⁵ John Nolland, *Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 552.

⁸²⁶ Mustard was invasive and even dangerous to gardens. The first-century Roman author Pliny the Elder wrote, “When it has once been sown it is scarcely possible to get the place free of it, as the seed when it falls germinates at once (*Natural History*, 19:170f; cited by Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, ZECNT, 200). The spreading kingdom of God “was a threat to the existing garden or field of early Judaism. If Jesus’ proclamation took root, it stood in danger of subverting existing kingdom visions and power structures in Israel” (Ben Witherington III, *Mark*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001], 172; cited by Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, ZECNT, 200; cf. David E. Garland, *Luke*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011], 551). Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, ZECNT, 526.

⁸²⁷ Leaven is not yeast. It was “a piece of old fermented dough which was stored in fermenting juices until mixed in with the fresh batch of dough” (John Nolland, *Matthew*, NIGTC, 553); “sourdough” rather than yeast (R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 528).

⁸²⁸ BDAG, 917 σάρτον. 39 liters of sourdough would have been enough for 110 pounds of bread (Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001], 262; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, WBC [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993], 390). Such a large amount of meal could have fed a small village of 100–150 people (R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 528; cf. Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 286). “The kingdom far exceeds daily examples to which it may be compared”

irresistible process begins in which the entire mass of dough (“all”) will become leavened. This means that God’s kingdom “(and those who represent and proclaim it) has a dramatic effect on human society. . . . [Its influence] is **pervasive**,”⁸²⁹ effecting **intensive transformation** of culture.⁸³⁰ Jesus is teaching that the kingdom of God will prevail so that no rival sovereignty exists.⁸³¹

These verses describing the increase and success of Christ’s kingdom on earth are the Father’s answer to the Lord’s Prayer: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done **on earth as it is in heaven**” (Mt 6:10).⁸³²

“The kingdoms of this world **have become** *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!. . . We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, **Because You have taken Your great power and reigned** [i.e., “**have begun to reign**,” NASB, NIV; “**begun to reign**,” ESV, NET, NRSV] (Rv 11:15, 17).

Summary and quotes

The kingdom of God is a dominate theme in Scripture. We have focused primarily on the key aspect of the kingdom of God, i.e., the

(Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999], 389).

⁸²⁹ R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 528.

⁸³⁰ D.A. Carson, *Matthew*, in EBC₁, 8:319 and EBC₂, 9:366. Carson notes that it is quite mistaken to assert that leaven in Scripture always represents evil, as many (classical and revised) dispensationalists have done (but not the progressive dispensational *The MacArthur Study Bible*). Contrary to dispensational claims, leaven is not always treated as evil in the Old Testament (e.g., Lv 7:13; 23:15–18). Cf. David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT, 345.

⁸³¹ George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 98–100. Cf. TDNT, 2:905 “is ordained and able to penetrate the whole earth”; ISBE₂, 3:98 “penetrating or transforming power.”

⁸³² See Westminster Larger Catechism Q&A 191 for exposition of this petition of the Lord’s Prayer.

messianic/mediatorial kingdom that was inaugurated with the first coming of Jesus the Messiah. We particularly addressed the issue of how and when Christ's messianic/mediatorial kingdom comes. Our analysis was divided into two parts:

- The kingdom was present in the person of Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry;
- The kingdom is expanding on earth during Christ's heavenly reign through the Spirit empowering Christ's prophetic church:
 1. Resurrection, ascension, enthronement, pouring out the Holy Spirit on the church at Christ's coronation (Ac 2:24-36; Pss 110; 2; Dn 7:13-14; etc.);
 2. Spirit-empowered evangelism—including proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and fulfilling the comprehensive Great Commission/Cultural Mandate to disciple all the nations (and all aspects of all nations) under the absolute Lordship of King Jesus;
 3. Jesus Christ's coming in judgment in A.D. 70;
 4. Jesus Christ inherited and is possessing all nations in history;
 5. Jesus Christ sharing His dominion with His covenant people;
 6. Jesus Christ reconciling and restoring "all things."

It is impossible to have a truly Biblical worldview and a correct perspective on culture (i.e., Christ the conqueror and transformer of culture⁸³³) without a clear understanding of what Jesus Christ accomplished with His first coming, what the inauguration of the messianic kingdom means, the scope or breadth of the kingdom, the greatness of the Great Commission/Cultural Mandate, and the radical transformation that the outpouring of the Spirit has made.

⁸³³ Robert E. Fugate, *What Is the Relationship between Christianity and Culture?—Five Historical Paradigms and Their Consequences*.

- Any view of God’s kingdom that does not fully embrace and apply the truths of Acts 2, Psalm 110, Psalm 2, Daniel 7:13-14ff, and Matthew 28:18-20 lacks a proper foundation for faith and practice; it is faulty. This applies to both premillennialism and amillennialism.⁸³⁴
- Any view of God’s kingdom that spiritualizes⁸³⁵ it and its blessings is unbiblical (e.g., amillennialism).

Before concluding, a few brief comments about amillennialism and premillennialism are in order. At the heart of amillennialism is an unbiblical spirit-matter dualism (as is also the case with dispensationalism). This is not surprising, since Augustine, the man who originated amillennialism (around A.D. 400) and established it in the church, was trained as a philosopher in Neo-Platonism. In “spiritualizing” God’s kingdom, amillennialism abandons the multitude of Scriptures that connect God’s kingdom promises to an earthly hope. There is always an earthly dimension to God’s kingdom

⁸³⁴ “*Postmillennialism is an inescapable concept.* It is never a question of cultural triumph vs. no cultural triumph prior to Jesus’ Second Coming; it is a question of *which kingdom’s* cultural triumph. The amillennialist has identified the victorious kingdom in history: Satan’s” (Gary North, *Millennialism and Social Theory* [Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990], 116).

To correct some bogus eschatological claims, such as, “the early church was premillennial” and “postmillennialism started in the eighteenth century,” see: Francis Nigel Lee, “Always Victorious! The Earliest Church Not Pre- But Postmillennial,” <http://www.dr-fnlee.org/always-victorious-the-earliest-church-not-pre-but-postmillennial>; Greg L. Bahnsen, “The Prima Facie Acceptability of Postmillennialism,” *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, 3/2, Winter, 1976-77; Kenneth L. Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992), 73-93.

⁸³⁵ Recall our previous discussion of Gordon D. Fee’s conclusion that πνευματικός never means “spiritual” in Paul’s epistles.

(e.g., Am 9:13–15; Is 51:6; 34:4; 65:17; 66:22).⁸³⁶ Consider the repeated Biblical promises that believers will “inherit the earth” (Pss 25:13; 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34; Is 60:21; Mt 5:5).

While not holding to a dualistic view of God’s kingdom, premillennialists generally disparage the earthly promises regarding God’s kingdom until the millennium, which, in their view, will begin in the future, after the second coming of Jesus Christ. This renders numerous Biblical promises irrelevant for this age.

Not maintaining the earthly aspect to God’s kingdom and the present applicability of these promises throughout Christ’s reign from heaven:

- Undermines believers’ faith and hope;
- Weakens their prayers;
- Discourages working to fulfill the cultural mandate; and
- Effectively abdicates from, and surrenders the temporal, earthly realm to Satan.

Both amillennialism and premillennialism provide a convenient theological justification for unbelief regarding laying hold of God’s covenantal promises by faith.

We will conclude our discussion of the messianic kingdom and its relationship with a Biblical, transformational approach to culture with several classic quotes:

The Kingdom . . . aims at nothing less than the complete control of all the manifestations of life. It represents the dominion of God in every sphere of human endeavor.⁸³⁷

To him [Jesus] the kingdom exists there, where not merely God is supreme, for that is true at all times and under all circumstances, but where God supernaturally carries through his supremacy

⁸³⁶ See premillennialist George Eldon Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom*, 55–60 = Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, 59–64).

⁸³⁷ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 570.

against all opposing powers and brings man to the willing recognition of the same. . . . Undoubtedly, the kingship of God, as his recognized and applied supremacy, is intended to **pervade and control the whole of human life** in all its forms of existence. This the parable of the leaven [Mt 13:33] plainly teaches. The various forms of human life have their own sphere in which they work and embody themselves. There is a sphere of **science**, a sphere of **art**, a sphere of **family** and of the **state**, a sphere of **commerce and industry**. **Whenever one of these spheres comes under the controlling influence of the principle of the divine supremacy and glory, and this outwardly reveals itself, there we can truly say that the kingdom of God has become manifest. . . .** It is entirely in accordance with the spirit of Jesus' teaching to subsume these [the various other branches into which the organic life of humanity divides itself] under the kingdom of God and to co-ordinate them with the visible church as **true manifestations of this kingdom, in so far as the divine sovereignty and glory have become in them the controlling principle**. But it must always be remembered, that the latter can only happen, when all these, no less than the visible church, stand in living contact with the forces of **regeneration** supernaturally introduced into the world by the Spirit of God.⁸³⁸

Since the kingdom of God on earth is not confined to the mere ecclesiastical sphere, but aims at absolute universality, and extends its supreme reign over every department of human life, it

⁸³⁸ Geerhardus Vos, *The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom and the Church*, 50, 87–89. Cf. Louis Berkhof, *The Kingdom of God*, 74, 79; B.B. Warfield's review of Herman Bavinck's book, *Certainty of Faith* (48f), in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. John E. Meeter, 2:108–110; "The Kingdom of God," in *Rebuilding Civilization on the Bible*, eds. Jay Grimstead and Eugene C. Clingman (Ventura, CA: Nordskog Publishing, 2014), 46–55, available at <https://www.churchcouncil.org/4-the-kingdom-of-god.html>. Berkhof notes that in the Old Testament typical theocracy "all the relations of life were brought under the direct dominion of God."

follows that it is the **duty of every loyal subject to endeavor to bring all society, social and political, as well as ecclesiastical, into obedience to its law of righteousness.** It is our duty, as far as lies in our power, **immediately to organize human society and all its institutions and organs upon a distinctively Christian basis.** **Indifference or impartiality** here between the law of the kingdom and the law of the world, or of its prince, the devil, is **utter treason** to the King of Righteousness. The Bible, the great **statute-book** of the Kingdom, explicitly lays down principles which, when candidly applied, will **regulate the action of every human being in all relations.** There can be **no compromise.** The King said, with regard to all descriptions of moral agents in all spheres of activity, 'He that is not with me is against me!' **If the national life in general is organized upon non-Christian principles, the churches which are embraced within the universal assimilation power of that nation will not long be able to preserve their integrity.**⁸³⁹

The Christian cannot be satisfied so long as any human activity is either opposed to Christianity or out of all connection with Christianity. Christianity must pervade not merely all nations, but also all of human thought. The Christian, therefore, cannot be indifferent to a branch of earnest human endeavor. It must all be brought into some relation to the gospel. It must be studied either in order to be demonstrated as false, or else in order to be made useful in advancing the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom must be advanced not merely **extensively**, but also **intensively.** The Church must seek to conquer not merely every man for Christ, but also the whole of man.⁸⁴⁰

It is only in so far as they are brought under the direct control of the regenerate life, are led to the obedience of God, are

⁸³⁹ Archibald A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology*, 283f.

⁸⁴⁰ J. Gresham Machen, "Christianity and Culture," in Machen, *What is Christianity?* ed. Ned B. Stonehouse, 161, in Machen, *Education, Christianity, and the State*, ed. John W. Robbins, 50, and in Machen, *Selected Shorter Writings*, ed. D.G. Hart, 403. See Robert E. Fugate, "VanTil Quotes on No Neutrality."

permeated with a true Christian spirit, and are consciously and willingly subservient to the glory of God—that they can even now be said to form a part of the Kingdom of God.⁸⁴¹

The Holy Spirit and eschatology

The subject of pneumatology (i.e., the study of the personhood, deity, work, and gifts of the Holy Spirit) and the debates regarding the cessation of certain gifts are beyond the scope of a worldview book. So we will narrow our focus to an overview of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and eschatology. In so doing we hope to demonstrate that an eschatological perspective on the work of the Holy Spirit can significantly impact one’s worldview and offer faith for cultural transformation.

Promise and fulfillment

Although the Holy Spirit was active in the Old Testament era (Ex 33:14; Ne 9:20; Is 63:11-14; Hg 2:5; etc.), the Old Testament prophets prophesied a future coming of the Holy Spirit that would greatly transcend His work in the Old Testament era (Is 32:15; 35:6-7; 44:3; 59:20-21; 63:11-12; Ezk 11:4-5, 13, 18-20; 34:26-27; 36:26-29; 37:12-14; 39:25-29; Jl 2:28-29; Ho 14:4-8; Mc 7:19; Zp 3:9-13; Hg 2:5; Zc 8:16, 22; 12:10; 13:1; 14:8; cf. Ezk 47:1-9; Nu 11:29). These Old Testament promises that the Spirit would be poured out are clearly eschatological; several of them combine the themes: the future reign of the Davidic king (Messiah); the outpouring of the Spirit; and a glorious future for the renewed Israel. Prior to Acts chapter two, the Holy Spirit was not yet “given” in the new covenant sense (Jn 7:39; cf. Jn 20:22; Ac 19:2 NASB margin).

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for **the Holy Spirit was not yet given**, because Jesus was not yet glorified (Jn 7:38-39).

The Holy Spirit’s work in the Old Testament—prior to His prophesied coming that is recorded in the New Testament—is

⁸⁴¹ Louis Berkhof, *The Kingdom of God*, 79.

analogous to the occasional Old Testament theophanies of the Logos (the Second Person of the Trinity), prior to His prophesied coming in the New Testament.

The dominant New Testament depiction of Jesus the Messiah that was given through His forerunner, John the Baptizer, is that He would baptize in the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:11 // Mk 1:8 // Lk 3:16 // Jn 1:33; Ac 1:5; 11:16).

During Jesus' earthly ministry, the coming of the Holy Spirit was still a future (albeit imminent) "promise" to be fulfilled for Jesus' disciples and for the church (Lk 24:49; Jn 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Ac 1:4-5, 8; 2:16, 33, 39; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13).

Behold, I [Jesus] send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high (Lk 24:49).

But **when the Helper comes**, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will . . . (Jn 15:26).

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will . . . ¹³ However, **when He, the Spirit of truth, has come**, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come (Jn. 16:7-8a, 13).

And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the **Promise** of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Ac 1:4-5, 8).

But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “And it shall come to pass in the last days,⁸⁴² says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days [Jl 2:28-29⁸⁴³]; And they shall prophesy.” ³³ Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call (Ac 2:16-18, 33, 39).

The promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred shortly after Jesus’ enthronement in heaven as universal Lord and Messiah. The outpouring of the Spirit was the earthly proof of Christ’s heavenly coronation (Ac 2:29-36). This promised, eschatological outpouring of the Holy Spirit is when the Lord Jesus first baptized believers in the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of John’s prophecy. The term “baptized

⁸⁴² See our above discussion of “last days” under the heading “Jesus Christ is the key to eschatology.” Virtually all scholars reject the hyperpreterist assertion that “last days” means the last days of the old covenant. To cite only a few examples see: Gregory K. Beale, “Eschatology,” DLNT, 330-334ff; Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*, 92-116, 129-160; Anthony A. Hoekema, “Time, Last,” ISBE₂, 4:8543f; Leon Morris, “Last Day(s), Latter Days, Last Times,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 464-467; “Last Days,” *Dictionary of Biblical Prophecy and End Times*, eds. J.D. Hays, J.S. Duvall, and C.M. Pate (Grand Rapids, MI: Zonderan, 2007), 254f; cf. modern academic commentaries on Hebrews 1:2 and Acts 2:17.

⁸⁴³ “Joel’s prediction [2:28-32] has *initial* fulfillment at Pentecost [Ac 2], *continuous* fulfillment during the Church age, and *ultimate* fulfillment at the second coming of Christ” (Walter K. Price, *The Prophet Joel and the Day of the Lord* [Chicago, IL: Moody, 1976], 65f, author’s italics; cited by Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* [Chicago, IL: Moody, 1985], 94).

in the Holy Spirit” portrays the believer being immersed, deluged, engulfed, and saturated in the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴⁴

If the Spirit did not “come” until the Day of Pentecost (Ac 2), what difference has His eschatological coming made? In what ways is the ministry of the Holy Spirit different in the new covenant than it was in the old covenant? In the teaching and practice of many churches (including many Reformed churches), not much changed!⁸⁴⁵ Yet, this hardly comports with either the Old Testament prophetic promises, or with the experience of the church as recorded in the New Testament, or with the early church. The work of the Spirit in the new covenant era is significantly more powerful and considerably more extensive than it was in the old covenant era, as the following table illustrates.

⁸⁴⁴ βαπτίζω has a range of meanings, including immerse, plunge, drench, overwhelm, soak (BAGD, 131f); “to cause someone to have an **extraordinary experience** akin to an initiatory water rite, to plunge, baptize” (BDAG, 165, definition 3, bold added). “The Spirit is both around (1 Cor 12:13a) and within (v. 13b)” (NIDNTT, 3:1210). The figurative usage conveys the thought “to cause someone to have a highly significant religious experience **involving special manifestations of God’s power and presence**” (L-N, 1:539 # 53.49, bold added).

⁸⁴⁵ For example, in his fine systematic theology Robert L. Reymond devotes about three full pages to the Holy Spirit (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 312–316), plus occasional mention when discussing soteriology (see index entry on page 1205) or controversies in historical theology (331–337). The eschatological significance of the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and His empowering gifts (other than ordained church officers) are ignored.

HOLY SPIRIT UNDER THE OLD COVENANT	HOLY SPIRIT UNDER THE NEW COVENANT
came upon ⁸⁴⁶	Jesus baptizes every believer in the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:11 // Mk 1:8 // Lk 3:16 // Jn 1:33; Ac 1:5; 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13 ESV, NET, NRSV); every believer indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:16-17; 1 Jn 2:27; Ro 8:9; Gal 4:6)

⁸⁴⁶ The Holy Spirit is said to have entered into and filled: Joshua (Nu 27:18; Dt 34:9); Ezekiel (Ezk 2:2; 3:24); Daniel (Dn 4:8-9, 18; 5:11; Micah (Mc 3:8); John the Baptizer (Lk 1:15); Elizabeth (Lk 1:41); and Zechariah (Lk 1:67). However, “The Holy Spirit had not come within them in the way in which God had promised to put the Holy Spirit within His people when the new covenant would come (Ezk 36:26-27; 37:14), nor had the Spirit been poured out in the great abundance and fullness that would characterize the new covenant age (Jl 2:28-9)” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 637; cf. 769-772).

Old Testament believers were regenerated. This regeneration is depicted as: circumcision of the heart (Dt 30:6; 10:16; Jer 4:4; 6:10; 9:25-26; cf. Ro 2:28-29); having a new heart (Jer 18:31; 36:26; 36:26; cf. Jer 32:39-40; 24:7); a heart of flesh (instead of a heart of stone) (Ezk 11:19-20; 36:26); a new spirit within (Ezk 11:19-20; 36:26; 18:31); God writing His law on the heart (Jer 31:33-34); and (perhaps) being changed into another man (1 Sa 10:6, 9).

HOLY SPIRIT UNDER THE OLD COVENANT	HOLY SPIRIT UNDER THE NEW COVENANT
a few Jewish persons (usually prophets, judges, or kings), enabling them to perform certain tasks (e.g., prophesying ⁸⁴⁷ or leadership ⁸⁴⁸)	all believers empowered (Ac 1:8; 2:4) and gifted prophetically, regardless of race, age, sex, or social status (Ac 2:16-18; 1 Cor 12:7, 11; 14:26; Ro 12:3; 1 Pt 4:10; Eph 4:7-8; 1 Cor 7:7) ⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁷ In the Old Testament, the Spirit of the Lord came upon several men to empower them to prophesy: Saul (1 Sm 10:10; 19:23); the seventy elders (Nu 11:25-26); Balaam (Nu 24:2); messengers of Saul (1 Sm 19:20); Amasa (1 Ch 12:18); Azariah (2 Ch 15:1); Jahaziel (2 Ch 20:14); Zechariah (2 Ch 24:20); Isaiah (Is 61:1); Ezekiel (Ezk 3:24; 11:5).

⁸⁴⁸ In the Old Testament, the Spirit of the Lord came upon several men to empower them for civil and military leadership: the prophet/covenant-mediator/judge Moses (Nu 11:17, 25) and his successor Joshua (Dt 34:9, note wisdom; cf. Nu 27:18); judges: the seventy elders (Nu 11:16-17, 25-26), Othniel (Jdg 3:10), Gideon (Jdg 6:34), Jephthah (Jdg 11:29), Samson (Jdg 14:6, 19; 15:14; cf. 13:25); kings: Saul (1 Sm 11:6) and David (1 Sm 16:13; cf. 2 Sm 23:2).

⁸⁴⁹ “In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God is **preeminently the spirit of prophecy**. ... God is going to answer Moses’ prayer [Nu 11:29]. He will pour out his Spirit on all Israel, and **all Yahweh’s people will become prophets**. ... In light of Acts 2 and Joel 2:28-32, we must also speak of the ‘**prophethood of all believers**’. The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost inaugurated a **new age**, the age when Moses’ prayer is realized and **all God’s people are endued with the Spirit of prophecy**. The possession of the Spirit would never again be the restricted preserve of a few” (Raymond B. Dillard, “Joel,” *The Minor Prophets*, ed. Thomas E. McComiskey, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992-1998], 1:294f) (other Joel commentaries are similar). “Acc[ording] to Ac 2:16ff it [NT prophecy] is a specific mark of the age of fulfilment that the Spirit does not lay hold of individuals but that **all members of the eschatological community without distinction are called to prophecy**. . . . Paul urges the Corinthians to **strive after the *charisma* of prophecy**, 1 C[or] 14:1, 5, 12, 39. It is not a gift for

the chosen few” (Gerhard Friedrich, *προφήτης*, TDNT, 6:861). “The hope of Moses (Nu 11:16, 29; cf. Lk 10:1) that ‘all the Lord’s people [might be] prophets’ and the prophecy of Joel (2:28) that ‘God will pour out his Spirit on all flesh’ find their specific import in the prophecy of the Baptist (Mt 3:11) and their fulfilment in the post-resurrection church (Acts 2:16, 33)” (E. Earle Ellis, “Prophecy, Theology of,” NDT, 537). F.F. Bruce, after citing Nu 11:29, adds, “The effect of the Spirit’s outpouring is the gift of prophecy, exercised in visions and dreams and by word of mouth” (*Acts*, NICNT, rev., 61). (In this context tongues are treated as a species of prophecy, a point Bruce also makes [51f].) Bruce also makes the crucial observation that “Certainly the outpouring of the Spirit on 120 Jews could not in itself fulfil the prediction of such outpouring ‘on all flesh’; but it was the beginning of the fulfilment” (61). “Prophecy, elsewhere distinguished from the gift of tongues, is here identified with it to facilitate the scriptural proof. The exceptional position of the prophet, his direct contact with God, becomes **the portion of all**” (Ernst Haenchen, *Acts*, 179). “*προφητεύειν* finds expression at high points in glossolalia. . . . Luke adopts the typically Jewish idea that **the Spirit is the Spirit of prophecy**. . . . *προφητεύειν* is for Luke quite central as *the work of the Spirit*. . . . The eschatological community is for Luke **the community of the prophets**. . . . **The Spirit is essentially the Spirit of prophecy**” (Eduard Schweizer, *πνεῦμα*, TDNT, 6:406–409). “When Luke, and with him Paul in the passages mentioned, ascribe to the Spirit the power to call forth prophetic speech, they follow a precedent set by classic prophets, and almost canonized during later periods: **the Spirit of God is primarily defined as the ‘Spirit of prophecy’**” (Markus Barth, *Ephesians 1–3*, AB [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974], 34:142). Jewish thought believed that “to possess the spirit of God was to be a prophet” (Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, 78). “In Judaism **the Spirit of God is especially the spirit of prophecy**. . . . For the rabbis, too, the Holy Spirit is in the first instance the prophetic spirit and the **instrument of divine revelation**. . . . **Where there are no prophets there is obviously no Holy Spirit**” (Erik Sjoberg, “πνεῦμα, TDNT, 6:381f). “All Christians have the gift of prophecy (Ac 2:17–21; 19:6)” (F. Schnider, “προφήτης, EDNT, 3:185). “Few things are more necessary for an understanding of early Christianity than a perception of the fact that

it was essentially a **prophetic movement**” (K. Lake & H.J. Cadbury, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *The Beginning Christianity*, eds. F.J. Foakes-Jackson & K. Lake, 5 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979], 4:130). “Both Judaism and Christianity perceived the people in the age to come to be a community of prophets” (B.C. Aker, “Initial Evidence, A Biblical Perspective,” *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. S.M. Burgess and G.B. McGee [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988], 458; see 456–458. Aker also suggests that all Christians are called prophets in Rv 22:9 (258; cf. David Chilton, *Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 576). “The characteristic feature of this present church age is the revelatory activity of the Spirit (dreams and visions), which forms the basis for prophetic utterance. **Not all will be prophets** (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:29), but it would appear that **all may prophesy**” (Sam Storms, *The Beginner’s Guide to Spiritual Gifts* [Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 2002], 88 [= p. 112 of the Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2012 edition]). Prophecy “acted as a **sign of God’s presence** and of eschatological reality that the **new age was inaugurated**” (C.M. Robeck, Jr., “Prophecy, Prophesying,” DPL, 758). “The first experience [Ac 2] was understood to set something of a pattern for the reception of the Spirit thereafter (as Ac 11:15–16 suggests): the Spirit was the eschatological gift *par excellence*, and possession of the Spirit would be *the* mark of one who belonged to the messianic community of the last days. . . . Luke draws attention only to inspired utterance (prophecy and glossolalia), but that may be because for him **prophecy is the sign of the Spirit**. . . . The Spirit is tied in with ecstatic [? REF] manifestations to such an extent that its **presence cannot be assumed in the absence of such tangible effects** [citing Ac 8:12ff; 19:1ff; in contrast to Ac 10:44ff; 18:25]. . . . For the first Christians, the Spirit was most characteristically a **divine power** manifesting itself in inspired utterance. . . . Luke shares this view of the Spirit as **pre-eminently the Spirit of prophecy**: it is precisely that gift known at best so sporadically in the old age (Lk 1–2) which **in the new age has become the prerogative of all** (emphasized by the addition of ‘and they shall prophesy’ to the Joel quotation in Ac 2:18). . . . He makes no effort to distinguish prophecy from glossolalia in Ac 2:17–18 = 2:4, 13, and 19:6” (James D.G. Dunn, “Spirit,” NIDNTT, 3:699f; article abbreviated in NIDNTTE, 3:813f). (Bold is added in

the above quotes.) Cf. James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1975], 170f; Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Postbiblical Miracles* [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993], 160. Although this author would not use the exact wording found in several of these quotes, they powerfully illustrate the fact that a seismic eschatological shift took place on the Day of Pentecost (Ac 2)—as recognized by a wide range of standard, scholarly, reference works. This Copernican revolution in new covenant pneumatology teaches a truth neglected in many segments of the church, i.e., the prophethood of every believer (paralleling the priesthood of every believer). In my opinion, cessationist systematic theologians have not come to grips with the truths brought out by Biblical theology regarding the new covenant eschatological outpouring of the Holy Spirit and His gifts. That is why there is such a disparity between their writings and those related to Biblical studies (e.g., Biblical theology dictionaries, major theological word studies, contemporary exegetical commentaries, etc.). (Recall the above discussion that prior to the 20th century theologians did not understand the eschatological nature of the New Testament.) However, this statement should not be misconstrued to endorse many unbiblical practices found in contemporary charismatic circles. Engaging in the debate over which gifts have ceased (if any) in the view of each of the four main types of cessationism that have been taught over the past four hundred years is beyond the scope of a worldview book. Nevertheless, it should be observed that the above table demonstrates discontinuities between the old covenant and the new covenant with regard to the ministry and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Were there any discontinuities between prophecies in the old covenant and the new covenant (e.g., inspiration guaranteeing infallibility, etc.)? Some argue that the same words “prophesy” and “prophet” must have the same meanings in both covenants. But this cannot simply be assumed. Consider that, in the new covenant, all believers (both males and females) are in some sense prophets (Jl 2:28–29; Ac 2:16–18; 1 Cor 14:1, 5, 23–24, 26, 31, 39; Mk 16:17), priests (1 Pt 2:5, 9; Rv 1:6; 5:10), and kings (Rv 1:6; 5:10; 1 Pt 2:9; Ro 5:17). Yet, no theologian believes that new covenant believers are priests in the old covenant sense, which was based on race (Jewish), biological lineage (of the tribe of Levi), gender (male),

HOLY SPIRIT UNDER THE OLD COVENANT	HOLY SPIRIT UNDER THE NEW COVENANT
sometimes temporarily (cf. 1 Sm 16:14; Jdg 16:20; Ps 51:11)	permanently (Jn 14:16-17; 1 Jn 2:27)
a few prophets performed miracles	many believers perform miracles (Mk 16:17-18; 1 Cor 12:8-10; Ac 6:8; 8:5-8, 12; 9:10-18; Gal 3:5; Ja 5:14-16; etc.)

and age (minimum age thirty), who make atonement for sins through the shedding of animal blood, primarily at one centralized location (the tabernacle and later at the temple). Much of the old covenant priestly ministry centered on keeping the Jewish ceremonial law. Obviously, there is a colossal covenantal shift from the old covenant priesthood to the new covenant priesthood of every believer! Yet, the same term “priest” is used in both Testaments. Likewise, all believers (males and females) are not kings in the Old Testament sense of the word, i.e., male civil rulers over nations (or at least over city-states). These radical changes in the meanings of the words “priests” and “kings” should alert us to the possibility of a possible change from old covenant prophets to the new covenant prophethood of every believer (Jl 2:28; Ac 2:16-18; 19:6; 1 Cor 14:1, 5, 23-24, 26, 31, 39; Mk 16:17). Thus, a detailed analysis is needed to determine both continuities and discontinuities between the old covenant and the new covenant gift of prophecy. But this is obviously beyond the scope of a Biblical worldview book. However, it should be noted that a considerable number of Biblical scholars, from a wide range of theological perspectives, teach that the successors to the old covenant prophets were Christ’s Apostles, not new covenant prophets (for citations see Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 513-516).

HOLY SPIRIT UNDER THE OLD COVENANT	HOLY SPIRIT UNDER THE NEW COVENANT
little power over the dominion of Satan; no authority to drive out demons ⁸⁵⁰	Satan disarmed (Lk 11:29-22; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14-15) and bound (Rv 12:9-12; 20:1-3; cf. Jn 12:31); believers given authority over Satan and his demons (Mk 16:17-18; Lk 9:1 // Mt 10:1, 8 // Mk 6:7, 13; Lk 10:9, 17-20)
almost completely confined to the nation of Israel; very little effective evangelism of the nations around Israel	God's kingdom growing worldwide (Dn 2:31-35, 44-45; Mt 13:31-33; Pss 2:4-12; 110:1-4; Ac 2:33-36; Rv 11:15, 17; etc.)

The eschatological shift—marked by the first coming of Christ (including His earthly ministry, resurrection, ascension, enthronement, and present reign) and by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost—is epochal. “The most striking feature of Jesus’ ministry and of the message of the earliest Christians was their conviction and proclamation that the **blessings of the new age were already present**, that the **eschatological Spirit** had already been poured out.”⁸⁵¹ The Spirit’s presence marks out the eschatological people of God (including a “remnant” of Jewish people). The Spirit brings the “powers/miracles of the age to come” (Heb 6:4-5)—power that will characterize God’s rule (kingdom) at the end of time—power that is presently building God’s kingdom on earth through new creations. The new covenant era is called “the ministry of the Spirit”

⁸⁵⁰ See Robert E. Fugate § “Authority and power over demons,” in *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, 21.

⁸⁵¹ James D.G. Dunn, “Holy Spirit,” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (BEB), eds. Walter A. Elwell, *et al.*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988), 2:987 (bold added).

(2 Cor 3:8).⁸⁵² Pentecost publicly marked the transition from the old to the new covenant, and it inaugurated the new age or era in which the eschatological life of the future invades the present evil age.⁸⁵³ The messianic kingdom (i.e., the governmental rule) of God through the Person of His Son, has been inaugurated, and this kingdom/dominion is “in the Holy Spirit” (Ro 14:17).

Already/not yet

The Christian lives in an eschatological tension between the already and the not yet. He possesses the **down payment** or earnest deposit of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14)—a partial installment of future blessings—but still lives in the flesh. (An earnest deposit is the first installment put down as a pledge that the promised remainder will follow.) The Holy Spirit is also compared to **firstfruits** (Ro 8:23).⁸⁵⁴ The firstfruits are the beginning of the harvest, with the full harvest to follow. (Of course, the Holy Spirit was given on Pentecost, which is the Day of Firstfruits.) Or, to use another Pauline metaphor, believers are sealed with “the Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph 1:13 NASB, NKJV). In light of the eschatology of the Spirit, the kingdom of God, and the

⁸⁵² “Paul’s teaching in 2 Corinthians 3 indicates that there is an epochal development from the old to the new, precisely in terms of the ministry of the Spirit” (Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 26).

⁸⁵³ Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 57. The new covenant did not begin at Pentecost. It was formally inaugurated in private at the Last Supper (Lk 22:20) and evidenced when God tore the temple veil and raised some dead saints (Mt 27:51–53) (see Robert E. Fugate, “End of Old Covenant, Beginning of New”). However, the new covenant experience of the Holy Spirit began at Pentecost, because it was then that the enthroned Lord Jesus Christ poured out the Holy Spirit in new covenant fullness and power (Ac 2:33). (Because of their association with Jesus, His disciples had previously received some foretaste of the post-Pentecostal power of the Holy Spirit when they healed the sick and cast out demons [Lk 9:1–2; 10:1, 8, 17–20; etc.]; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 771.)

⁸⁵⁴ Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*, 580–582.

age to come, Pentecost⁸⁵⁵ may be viewed as a prelude to the future second coming of Jesus Christ.

Scripture prophesies wide-ranging effects of the Spirit's ministry, indeed, the regeneration (i.e., new birth, **re-creation**) of all things (Is 30 2:15-17; cf. 32:15; 44:3; 65:17-25; 66:22-23; Ezk 36:27; 2 Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1, 4-5). However, until the future, visible, bodily, second coming of Jesus Christ, there will always be tension between the already and the not yet. Failure to understand this Biblical fact may have misled some members of the Corinthian church into believing that prophecy and tongues were evidence that the charismatic believer had arrived in the eternal state. Instead, prophecy and tongues are temporary gifts that will cease when "the perfect" is come (1 Cor 13:8-10).⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵⁵ Note that Christ described the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost as Christ coming to His disciples (Jn 14:16-18, 23, 28; cf. v. 26).

⁸⁵⁶ The entire Book of First Corinthians deals with problems caused by the heretical Corinthian spiritualized-realized eschatology. "One can make a good deal of sense of the Corinthian view of 'spirituality' if they believed themselves already to have entered into some expression of angelic existence. This would explain their rejection of sexual life and sexual roles (cf. 7:1-7; 11:2-16) and would also partly explain their special interest in 'wisdom' and 'knowledge.' For them the evidence of having 'arrived' at such a spiritual' state would be their speaking in the 'tongues of angels.' Hence the high value placed on this gift. . . . Apparently they have emphasized the 'already' in such a way as to negate rather thoroughly the 'not yet.' Already they are rich, full, and have begun to reign (4:8). Glossolalia apparently serves for them as the 'sign' (cf. 14:20-22) of their 'arrival.' Speaking the language of angels (13:1) means they are already partakers of the ultimate state of spiritual existence, leading them to deny a future bodily resurrection (15:12). As part of his argument against this wrong emphasis on tongues, Paul insists that the gifts do not belong to the future, but only to the present. On this matter they are deluded. The irony is that the gifts, to them the evidence of future existence, will pass away when the true future existence is attained (1 Cor 13:8a)" (Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 201, 893; cf. 893-

Spiritual⁸⁵⁷ gifts may also be considered from the perspective of being eschatological gifts from the resurrected and reigning Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 4:7–11; Ac 2:30–36). These gifts are part of the heavenly prophetic-priestly-kingly ministry of the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit (cf. Ac 1:1).⁸⁵⁸ They constitute a dynamic dimension of Immanuel’s covenantal presence with and in His people (Mt 28:20; Mk 16:20; Jn 14:16–18) and of Christ’s active headship over His church. The Lord Jesus is now manifesting His glorious power and

895). (The first part of this quote is also found in Fee, *1 Corinthians*, NICNT, 1987, 631, = revised ed., 2014, 699.)

⁸⁵⁷ The entrenched term “spiritual” (πνευματικός) is problematical. After surveying Paul’s use of the word πνευματικός in his letters (*God’s Empowering Presence*, 28–32), Gordon D. Fee concludes that πνευματικός never means “spiritual” (32). Fee explains that the problem with the English word “spiritual” is that it “is almost always understood over against an antonym of some kind, in a way that the word “Spirit” is not (667). The translation “spiritual” is misleading, since most contemporary uses of the English word “spiritual”—such as “religious,” “nonmaterial” (“a meaning absolutely foreign to Paul”), “mystical,” or, even worse, “the interior life of the believer”—inevitably incorporate elements of Greek philosophical thought (32). “It is extremely doubtful whether Paul would have thought of the blessings associated with the Spirit [Eph 1:3] as being over against such ‘material blessings’” (667).

πνευματικός denotes “pertaining to being derived from or being about the Spirit—‘spiritual, **from the Spirit**’ (in reference to such matters as gifts, benefits, teachings, blessings, and religious songs)”; in Eph 1:3 it denotes “**every blessing which comes from the Spirit**” (L-N §12.21); cf. BDAG, 837 def # 2; “**directly related to the Spirit’s activity**” (Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 666f; cf. 28–32). “The adjective [πνευματικός] does not primarily point to a contrast with what is material (e.g., Dt 28:1–14), secular, or worldly” (Peter T. O’Brien, *Ephesians*, PNTC, 95). Since πνευματικός denotes “from the Holy Spirit” or “directly related to the Spirit’s activity,” it connotes “supernatural” (Howard M. Ervin, *These Are Not Drunken as Ye Suppose* [Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1968], 233, 227–233); cf. Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 168).

⁸⁵⁸ E. Earle Ellis, “Spiritual Gifts,” IDBSup, 841.

performing His ministry on earth through His body, the church. The Holy Spirit empowers new-creation believers to be Christ's prophetic-priestly-kingly ministers/servants on earth, thereby extending Christ's kingdom.

The already/not yet eschatological structure underlying New Testament teaching is the eschatological-theological framework for the new covenant charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:8-10).

The already. We noted above several quotes demonstrating the eschatological shift with regard to the coming of the Holy Spirit. Here we'll put a few such quotes into the context of "the already," i.e., those promised realities that have already been inaugurated/realized.

In the resurrected and exalted Messiah the church already participates in the age to come, and particularly so in the gifts from the Lord by which it exercises its ministry. . . . The gifts are realities of the coming age, a new work of the Spirit that is so different and unique that those who are incorporated into it can be called "a new creation." . . . The gifts of the Spirit [are] set forth in ministry and manifest the reality of the new creation that is the kingdom of God [Eph 4:8, 11].⁸⁵⁹

Thus, believers already enjoy a measure of "the powers/miracles of the age to come" (Heb 6:5).⁸⁶⁰ Consider the eschatological gift of prophecy in this new age.

⁸⁵⁹ E. Earle Ellis, "Prophecy in the New Testament Church and Today," in Johannes Panagopoulos, ed., *Prophetic Vocation in the New Testament and Today*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 45 [Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1977], 55, 48f.

⁸⁶⁰ Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 199, 205f, 208; F.F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Corinthians*, NCB (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 128; Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988), 250 (= revised ed., Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000, 214). TDNT, 6:422-424. EDNT, 1:254. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (NY, NY: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900), 138.

Acc[ording] to Ac 2:16ff, it [New Testament prophecy] is a specific mark of the age of fulfilment that the Spirit does not lay hold of [only a few] individuals but that all members of the eschatological community without distinction are called to prophesy.⁸⁶¹

The eschatological community is for Luke the community of the prophets.⁸⁶²

[The New Testament gift of prophecy] acted as a sign of God's presence and of eschatological reality that the new age was inaugurated.⁸⁶³

Until the second coming of Christ, Christians know and prophesy "in part" (1 Cor 13:9, 2).

Speaking in tongues is unique to the new covenant age.⁸⁶⁴

The not yet. The charismata are a partial sampling of the revelation and power that the believer will experience after the second coming of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 13:8–12). As such, the charismata function as eschatological prophecies foretelling the ultimate removal of the effects of the Fall and the ensuing perfection in the eternal state. Tongues "prophesy" the final removal of the effects of the Fall on human speech (which proceeds from man's fallen mind)—particularly speaking directly to God, and the removal of the curse given at the Tower of Babel (Gn 11).

⁸⁶¹ Gerhard Friedrich, *προφήτης*, TDNT, 6:861.

⁸⁶² Eduard Schweizer, *πνεῦμα*, TDNT, 6:408.

⁸⁶³ Cecil M. Robeck, "Prophecy, Prophesying," DPL, 758.

⁸⁶⁴ "The Christian phenomenon of 'tongues' is thus a 'new' phenomenon in the contemporary literary world" (Max Turner, "Languages," NDBT, 629).

Warfield's postmillennial perspective on the success of the Spirit in the new covenant

Benjamin Warfield was a cessationist regarding post-Biblical miracles.⁸⁶⁵ Despite this exegetical and theological error,⁸⁶⁶ his postmillennial eschatology gave him optimism regarding the impact Christianity will make on the world within history, as the following quotes illustrate.

The New Dispensation is “the Dispensation of the Spirit, characterized by the giving of the Spirit.”⁸⁶⁷

The Old dispensation was preparatory for the New. “The object of the whole dispensation was only to prepare for the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh.” In the Old dispensation the Holy Spirit restrained His power, directing His activities toward preserving the Kingdom seed. In the New Covenant “the great day of the Spirit is

⁸⁶⁵ Benjamin B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* (1918; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1986). Warfield’s purpose in writing this book was to refute Roman Catholic claims that miracles validated their theology.

⁸⁶⁶ Jon Ruthven exposed gaping weaknesses in Warfield’s thesis, such as: Warfield’s philosophical foundation of Scottish Common Sense Realism; his use of Enlightenment historical-critical methodology, including the deistic arguments of Conyers Middleton; and his medieval definition of “miracle” borrowed from Thomas Aquinas (*On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Postbiblical Miracles* [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993]). Warfield inconsistently used Enlightenment historical-criticism in his apologetics and textual criticism, but adamantly opposed it in his systematic theology. Of course, Warfield’s entire apologetical system was based on a faulty epistemology, requiring epistemological neutrality and postulating that truth is obtained by means of raw empirical data plus probabilistic reasoning. But there is no epistemological neutrality. Empiricism devolves into skepticism, and inductive reasoning can never lead to truth or certainty about anything.

⁸⁶⁷ Benjamin B. Warfield, *Faith and Life* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1990), 136; cf. 140.

come” in which the Kingdom of God is filling the earth (cf. the parable of the mustard seed). The Church, then like a pent-in stream (Is 59:19–21), now has its “barriers broken down and the Spirit of the Lord is driving . . . on its gathered floods till it shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.” It is a day for “the perfecting of the fruitage and the gathering of the harvest.”⁸⁶⁸

“It is because this is the dispensation of the Spirit that it is a missionary age; and it is because it is the dispensation of the Spirit that missions shall make their triumphant progress until earth passes at last into heaven.”⁸⁶⁹

Smeaton and Ferguson

George Smeaton and Sinclair Ferguson also recognized the ongoing impact of the giving of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

The promise ([Jl 2:28–32] cannot be limited to that day [Pentecost, Ac 2]. . . . It was the opening of the river of the water of life which will flow on for ever. . . . The fulfillment is a germinant fulfillment, which takes in all subsequent times. The effusion was not an abruptly terminated fact. . . . It is the issuing forth of the river of the water of life (Ezk 47:1).⁸⁷⁰

The inaugural outpouring of the Spirit [Pentecost] creates ripples throughout the world as the Spirit continues to come in power. Pentecost is the epicenter; but the earthquake gives forth further after-shocks. Those rumbles continue through the ages. Pentecost itself is not repeated; but a theology of the Spirit which did not give rise to prayer for his coming in power would not be a theology of *ruach!*⁸⁷¹

⁸⁶⁸ Benjamin B. Warfield, “The Spirit of God in the Old Testament,” *Biblical and Theological Studies* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1968), 155f; cf. *Faith and Life*, 141f, 145.

⁸⁶⁹ Benjamin B. Warfield, *Faith and Life*, 145.

⁸⁷⁰ George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (1882; reprint, London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), 30f.

⁸⁷¹ Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 91; cf. 16–18.

Summary

The eschatological shift that occurred with the first coming of Jesus the Messiah (including inaugurating the messianic kingdom, providing atonement for the elect on the cross, defeating Satan and all demons, Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the throne of David in heaven, etc.) and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit have radically affected all creation and altered history. Things will never be the same.

The resurrected Lord Jesus Christ presently possesses all authority both in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18; Eph 1:20-22; Jn 3:35; Ac 10:36 "Lord of all"), and He will "subject all things to Himself" (Phil 3:21). Christ now manifests His triumph through His church (cf. Ac 1:1-2ff; 2 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:6; 3:10), through which He will "fill all things" (Eph 4:10). Jesus Christ must have the preeminence in all things (Col 1:18; Ps 110:1-2ff).

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit supernaturally empowered and equipped Christ's church to fulfill God's purposes, including discipling the nations, bringing them under the rule of King Jesus. A proper vision of the supernatural work of the eschatological Spirit engenders faith in the believer to accomplish the God-given cultural mandate, applying the Lordship of Jesus the Messiah to every area of thought, life, and culture. Apart from these eschatological truths, one cannot have a truly Biblical worldview.

Summary of the foundation and pillars of the Biblical worldview

The epistemological foundation of the Biblical worldview: The Bible is the criterion or standard of truth

8 Pillars of the Biblical worldview:

1. The uniqueness of the tri-personal, infinite God of the Bible
2. Creation
3. Reformed theology
 - Sovereignty and absolute Lordship of God

- Fall
 - Redemption
4. Hermeneutical framework of covenant theology (unity of the entire Bible)
 5. Presuppositionalism
 - God's Word is truth
 - Antithesis
 - No epistemological, religious, or ethical neutrality
 6. Rationality and logic
 7. The sufficiency of Scripture (*sola Scriptura*)
 8. Victorious eschatology within history

As you understand these eight pillars, which stand upon the bedrock foundation of God's Word, you will have the necessary building materials to construct a Biblical worldview in each area of life. Why should you work to this end? Because God has called every Christian to apply Christ's lordship and the authority of God's infallible and sufficient Word to every area of life—for the extension of Christ's kingdom and for the glory of the triune God.

7 APPLICATIONS OF THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

A Biblical philosophy of history

We must apply the Biblical worldview principles we have learned to the realm of history, beginning with the epistemological foundation: the Bible is the criterion or standard of truth by which all other truth claims must be judged (e.g., archeological findings, ancient historical records and chronologies). The Bible also defines reality, and it is the source of absolute, universal, invariant ethics. The insufficiency of general revelation and the Biblical doctrine of total depravity are relevant to the study of history. The Biblical doctrines of Creation and Fall (pillar two) define man's origin, purpose, nature, and problem, as well as give us the beginning point of history and explain the evil acts of men in history. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17) (pillar seven) applies to history and chronology.

Presuppositionalism (pillar five)—especially the principles of antithesis and no neutrality—must be applied to the study of history. This means that there is no such thing as an epistemologically-neutral, religiously-neutral, or ethically-neutral writing of objective history. That is why the brilliant Christian philosopher Gordon Clark quipped, “The most deceiving and the most deceived author is the one who thinks he is simply describing what is there. The *there* itself cannot be selected without presuppositions.”⁸⁷² Christian apologist, Cornelius Van Til elaborates, “To interpret a fact of history involves a philosophy of history. But a philosophy of history is at the same time a philosophy of reality as a whole.”⁸⁷³

⁸⁷² Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason and Revelation*, 14.

⁸⁷³ Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 2. Carl F.H. Henry adds, “All historical writing is selective and all science subject to change. . . . Indeed, all historical writing is interpreted, because every writer inevitably excludes certain events and includes others, and does so according to some evaluative principle or criterion [i.e., what is important and why?]. . . . The writing of history rests inescapably on

We began our description and definition of a worldview with two quotes by R.J. Rushdoony regarding the interpretation of “facts” in the Hindu, Buddhist, and existentialist worldviews:

The facts of the physical universe differ widely for a humanist, a Christian, and a Hindu. For the **humanist**, all factuality is a product of chance evolution; all facts are thus ultimately meaningless, and their only reality is a physical one, and an irrational one. For the **Christian**, all factuality is God-created and the product of His eternal purpose; all facts are thus totally rational, because the mind of God is behind them, and their reality is thus more than physical and natural. For the traditional **Hindu**, all factuality is really illusion, because nothingness is ultimate; all things are burdened with Karma, and their goal is release from the illusions of this world into final nothingness. What we call facts is determined by our faith.⁸⁷⁴

The “facts” of the universe are very different for a Buddhist, an existential humanist, and an orthodox Christian. For the **Buddhist**, all is illusion and misery; his faith requires a world and life negation. *Maya* and *karma* determine all things. For an **existential humanist**, “facts” have only a purely personal meaning, the meaning which each man assigns them. Neither man nor creation have any essence, any created and preordained meaning. Good and evil and every other form of meaning is [*sic*] self-generated: they are values I assign to things in terms of my will. Nothing has any meaning from God’s creative act; all meaning

philosophical or theological premises” (“The Authority and Inspiration of the Bible,” EBC, 1:27; cf. idem., *God, Revelation and Authority*, 4:318). “There is no history without philosophy, without religion and ethics” (Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation*, 134).

For a Biblical philosophy of history, see: Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Biblical Philosophy of History*; Gordon H. Clark, *Historiography: Secular and Religious*.

⁸⁷⁴ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*, 149f.

comes from man's creative act. In **Biblical** thought, however, every fact is God-created and God-interpreted so that the meaning of all creation is to be understood in terms of Him and His Kingdom.⁸⁷⁵

These two quotes clearly illustrate that a humanist, an existential humanist, a Hindu, a Buddhist, and a Christian will view any given "fact" in terms of his worldview, and they will have radically different interpretations of all facts. This principle must be applied to the study of historical "facts" as well. History is part of a worldview, and it cannot be properly studied apart from worldviews.

In ancient Greek thought, history was controlled by the absolute, impersonal, irrational force of fate. History was viewed as being cyclical—endless, meaningless repetition. Thus, the Greeks had little interest in studying history. Similarly, Oriental thought, with its religious philosophy of nothingness and meaninglessness, had no interest in history. For a nihilist, history is meaningless. Modernism depicted history as inevitable utopian social progress through science and education. However, postmodernism is much more pessimistic toward history, viewing it as ongoing process, (a) comprised of aimless, meaningless sequences and (b) having no objective or goal.⁸⁷⁶ Today in America, study in the social sciences and in the humanities has replaced the study of history.

Recall our above discussion of "A Biblical philosophy of language," where we learned that, for the socialist, language is a tool of revolution. Instead of being a means of communicating objective truth, language is basically an instrument of power. For the Marxist or Fascist, truth is whatever advances their agenda. This same principle applies to their philosophies of history, which necessitates their rewriting history for the purpose of promoting revolution, expunging Christian vestiges from culture, and gaining and maintaining

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid., 129 (bold added).

⁸⁷⁶ Carl F.H. Henry, "Postmodernism: The New Spectre?" in *Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, ed. David S. Dockery (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1995), 38, 48f. See Robert E. Fugate, *Modernism and Postmodernism: Their History, Beliefs, Cultural Influence—and How to Refute Them*.

dictatorial political and cultural power (which are all part of class struggle in history).

Consider how various philosophical views of truth would affect the writing of history. Is truth the sum total of perspectives (Georg W.F. Hegel), or is truth subjectivity (existentialist Søren Kierkegaard), or is truth a conflict of interpretations (Friedrich Nietzsche), etc.?⁸⁷⁷

Is Immanuel Kant's distinction between *Historie* and *Geschichte* valid? (*Historie* is the realm of objective, verifiable facts of actual history occurring in the time-space world, which is part of Kant's *phenomena* realm. *Geschichte* or "salvation history" is "history" from the perspective of religious faith—"history" that never actually happened in the time-space world; "salvation history" is located in Kant's *noumena* realm.)⁸⁷⁸

Contrast such pagan views of history with the Biblical philosophy of history. "Christianity involves history. To say only that is already to have said something remarkable, because it separates the Judeo-Christian world-view from almost all other religious thought. It is rooted in history."⁸⁷⁹ "The whole Bible presents its message as

⁸⁷⁷ Robert E. Fugate, *A Biblical Philosophy of Truth with Contemporary Applications*, 26-32.

⁸⁷⁸ Neo-orthodox theology, which is based on the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, excludes miracles from *Historie*, relegating them to the realm of *Geschichte*. Robert E. Fugate, *A Biblical Philosophy of Truth with Contemporary Applications*, 27.

⁸⁷⁹ Francis A. Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1979), 159 = *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer*, 5 vols. [Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1982], 5:389.

"For the New Testament as for the Old, faith in the living God cannot be divorced from historical actualities. The Hebrew canon that records the history of the acts of Yahweh calls into question every rival understanding of ancient history; that record is carried forward by the New Testament. Both Testaments affirm the ongoing significance of the redemptive acts of God and their revealed meaning for man in all ages. The Old Testament, and the New Testament no less so, are at

theology within a framework of history.”⁸⁸⁰ “History is not a social science; it is a theological science, because it is an aspect of God’s creation.”⁸⁸¹

With this Biblical worldview foundation, let’s proceed to specific principles required for a Biblical philosophy of history. There are at least fourteen key tenets of a Biblical philosophy of history.

1. The infinite, personal God created the space-time universe out of nothing. Thus, time and history have a beginning point.
2. God created mankind in His image, wrote the basic moral requirements on his heart (Ro 2:14-15; 1:32), and gave him the cultural mandate/Dominion Covenant (Gn 1:26-30). Thus, there is unity in the human race (Ac 17:26). Additionally, man was created mature human, not a primitive being (contra evolutionary biology and anthropology).
3. The Trinitarian God of the Bible (three Persons, one God) makes the one and the many equally ultimate, providing the only basis for maintaining both unity and diversity in culture.⁸⁸² Unitarian cultures (such as Islamic and Communist nations) impose unity at the expense of individual liberty. Polytheistic cultures (e.g., Hindu and animist) repudiate the idea of unifying

the same time a primary resource of redemptive faith and a historical sourcebook. That sourcebook speaks of history as a moral arena in which the God of creation and redemption and final judgment is even now rewarding righteousness and judging evil in anticipation of an irreversible endtime” (Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 2:256; cf. 313).

⁸⁸⁰ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 24.

⁸⁸¹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*, 40; cf. 42.

⁸⁸² Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Foundation of Social Order*. Idem., *The One and the Many*. Douglas F. Kelly, *The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World*.

truth, so they impose diversity, thereby producing social fragmentation.

4. God providentially governs history, working out His purposes (Eph 1:11; Dn 4:35; Ro 11:36)—even in particular events, such as the free actions of men (Pr 21:1; Ex 9:12; Gn 50:20) and apparently random or chance events (Pr 16:33; 1 Ki 22:34).⁸⁸³ Neither Satan nor evil men can thwart God’s sovereign will (Ps 2; Ac 4:25–28). All events are in some way related. There is no impersonal fate, random chance, or impersonal determinism operating in the universe.
5. God personally speaks and acts in history. (He is immanent.)

The objective, historical nature of God speaking His Word to His prophets can be demonstrated by the fact that its coming could be identified in both space (i.e., the geographical location) and time (i.e., dated in relation to other historical events) (e.g., Jer 1:2; 32:1; 36:1; Ezk 1:1–3; 24:1; 29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1; Hg 1:1; 2:10; Zc 1:1; 7:1; Lk 3:1–2; cf. Is 6:1; Rv 1:10).

The living God is speaking and acting in history, revealing Himself, revealing and imposing His moral law (Ex 20), establishing His covenants, bringing covenantal blessings and curses upon persons and nations, providing salvation for His covenant people, performing miracles, building His glorious church (Mt 16:18; Eph 5:26–27; Rv 21) that will disciple all nations under His Lordship (Mt 28:18–20), and putting all enemies under Christ’s feet until His kingdom fully comes in all its power and glory (Ps 2:6–12; 110:1–3; Dn 7:13–14; Mt 28:18–20; Ac 2:30–36; 1 Cor 15:23–28; Eph 1:20–23; 4:10) and God’s will is done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt 6:10)!⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁸³ For a plethora of verses teaching God’s providential control over all things see Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Topical Analysis of the Bible*, 189–221.

⁸⁸⁴ “The essence of history lies in a mighty conflict between darkness and light, sin and grace, heaven and hell. . . . Revelation teaches that God is Lord of the ages and that Christ is the turning point of these

Thus, the study of history necessarily involves the study of God's moral laws in His government over men and nations (not merely reciting names, dates, places, and events). Violating God's moral law and not living according to the Biblical worldview always have negative repercussions.

6. God directed several prophets in Scripture to make written records of His acts and words, so that future generations might learn from them and obey Him (Ex 17:14; 34:27-28; Dt 17:18-20; 31:19, 21-22; Ps 78; Jer 30:2; Ezk 43:11; Ro 15:4; 1 Cor 10:1-14; Heb 3-4; cf. Lk 1:1-4). God also instructed His prophets to record historical events before they happened (Jer 36:1, 27-28; Dn 12:4, 8-9; Rv 1:11, 19; 21:5). Because God has chosen to reveal Himself in history, a large portion of Scripture is a historical record (e.g., the Pentateuch, Joshua-Job, the many historical accounts in the prophets Isaiah-Malachi, the four Gospels, Acts, Rv 1-3, etc.).
7. The Bible gives us the only absolutely true chronology for ancient history.⁸⁸⁵
8. The intellectual, political, military, economic, racial, and cultural history of any nation is the outworking of its religion. For example, countries that have been controlled by Roman Catholicism have always tended toward totalitarianism and socialism.⁸⁸⁶ Animist countries have always been poor, illiterate,

ages. And thus it brings into history unity and plan, progress and aim. The aim is not this or that special idea, not the idea of freedom, or of humanity, or of material well-being. But it is the fullness of the Kingdom of God, the all-sided, all-containing dominion of God, which embraces heaven and earth, angels and men, mind and matter, cultus and culture, the specific and the generic; in a word, all in all" (Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation*, 141).

⁸⁸⁵ James Ussher, *The Annals of the World*. Floyd N. Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to the Basics*.

⁸⁸⁶ John W. Robbins, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church* (n.p.: Trinity Foundation, 1999). Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, 3-7, 13f

backward, and violent. Communist and Islamic nations are usually militant, supporting revolutions throughout the world.

9. Ultimately, God will bring history to its climax after all things are put under Christ's feet (Ac 2:30-36; 1 Cor 15:23-27) and Jesus comes again. Thus, history is linear—not cyclical. Cf. # 5.
10. History is purposeful, for God works through history, revealing Himself and His plan, thereby glorifying Himself. History is not meaningless, impersonal, evolutionary processes, governed by chance. It is the sovereign rule of the omniscient, tri-personal God over the affairs of men.
11. History displays the conflict between the sovereign kingdom of God and the rebellious, conspiratorial kingdom of Satan, between covenant keepers and covenant-breakers (Gn 3:14-15; Ps 2:1-3; Mt 13:38-39; 1 Jn 3:8, 10; Ac 13:10-11; 26:18; 2 Tim 3:8-9, 13; Rv 13-14; 19-20; 11:15-18). Christians can have no stability and lasting Biblical confidence in times of uncertainty or persecution until they learn to view history from the perspective of the conquest and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ps 110:1-2; Ac 2:30-36; 1 Cor 15:23-27).
12. The four key events of history are: the triune God creating the space-time universe out of nothing in six days; the Fall of man into sin; the incarnational salvation provided through the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the consummation of God's redemptive kingdom at the glorious second coming of Jesus Christ.
13. All non-Christian philosophies of history are arbitrary, self-contradictory, and thus irrational. Most presuppose some sort of evolution (e.g., biological, cultural, religious, economic, psychological). Non-Christian historians cannot justify why we should study history.

(noting Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Southern Ireland, and Latin America).

14. Neo-orthodox dualism (based on Kantian philosophy), which postulates the realm of freedom (“faith,”⁸⁸⁷ meaning, values, and the suprahistorical⁸⁸⁸) versus the realm of nature (the empirical time-space world of history and science), is unbiblical.⁸⁸⁹

⁸⁸⁷ Neo-orthodox “faith” is an objectless, subjective, irrational “leap in the dark.” This is the antithesis of Biblical faith.

⁸⁸⁸ The German term *Geschichte* is often used to denote the special actions of God in “salvation history,” i.e., history from the perspective of religious faith (in contrast to *Historie*, i.e., the objective, verifiable facts of actual history).

⁸⁸⁹ For a succinct refutation of neo-orthodoxy see Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 793–802. For extensive refutations of Barth see: Gordon H. Clark, *Karl Barth’s Theological Method* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1963) and Cornelius Van Til, *Christianity and Barthianism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1962); For a summary of Van Til’s critique of Barth see John M. Frame, *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1995), 364f.

A Biblical philosophy of language

We must apply the Biblical worldview principles we have learned to the realm of language, beginning with the epistemological foundation: the Bible is the criterion or standard of truth by which all other truth claims must be judged (e.g., the philosophy of linguistic analysis). The Bible also defines reality, and it is the source of absolute, universal, invariant ethics. The centrality of propositional revelation, the insufficiency of general revelation, and the Biblical doctrine of total depravity are important in the realm of language. The uniqueness of the living, speaking, triune God (pillar one) is of paramount importance for a Biblical philosophy of language. The Biblical doctrines of Creation and Fall (pillar two) present man as the image of God, defining man's origin, purpose, nature, and problem. Presuppositionalism (pillar five)—especially the principles of antithesis and no neutrality—must be applied to the area of language (opposing the philosophy of linguistic analysis and literary deconstruction). This means that there is no such thing as religiously-neutral language. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16–17) (pillar seven) applies to language.

Language (like history) does not function apart from some worldview. For example, consider the epistemology and ethics underlying the use of language by socialists (e.g., Communists and Fascists):

Truth is at all times a central casualty. Since there is no truth apart from the scientific socialist state, any device, any lie, any strategy which will further the socialist experiment is valid. The lie is spoken to delude the masses and the enemy; speech has as its purpose not the communication of truth but utility to the dictatorship of the proletariat as a weapon of warfare. Semantics therefore becomes a major concern of socialism. Language must be used; it is a superb weapon. Certain words have powerful meanings to many men, and one way of using men's minds against themselves is to misuse the words that have a particular meaning to them. To expect language to have the same content to a socialist as it does to a Christian is a delusion. For the socialist, language is **instrumental**; it is a **tool of revolution**. Instead of

representing a means of communicating an objective order of truth, language is basically an **instrument of power**. For the socialist state to neglect to use language as an instrument of power is for it to be guilty of bourgeois sentiments and illusions.⁸⁹⁰

In other words, for the Marxist or Fascist, truth is whatever advances their agenda—not that which corresponds to the mind of God and His revealed Word. For the Marxist or Fascist (including most Western politicians), speaking truth is saying what people want to hear in order to deceive and manipulate them. Clearly, one’s worldview affects his or her use of language.

One of the primary contemporary philosophical arguments against the Bible is the assertion that human language is inadequate to convey truth. In fact, literary deconstruction asserts that there is no objective meaning in any text.⁸⁹¹ Readers impute their own meaning into the text. Of course, literary deconstructionist professors expect their students to properly understand their syllabi, lecture slides, and tests! How would a postmodernist professor react to a student telling her that her lecture against Christianity was deconstructed to mean that she hated Afro-Americans, homosexuals, feminists, and Muslims, and that she wanted to murder the university President? Can you picture how a deconstructionist professor would respond to a student saying: To me, your assertion that language has no objective meaning is saying that, unless you repent of your sin and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, you will suffer the endless torments of hell! Or, try telling the IRS that you interpret the tax regulations to mean that you deserve a million dollar refund! Or, why not tell a police officer at a roadside stop that you are the Governor and that he had better back off? Postmodernists cannot consistently put their beliefs into practice. They cannot live by what they profess to believe. No one uses a

⁸⁹⁰ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Law and Liberty*, 136f.

⁸⁹¹ Robert E. Fugate, *Modernism and Postmodernism: Their History, Beliefs, Cultural Influence—and How to Refute Them*, 16f. Christopher Watkin, *Jacques Derrida* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017). Idem., *Michel Foucault* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2018).

postmodernist hermeneutic when reading the label of a medicine bottle.

Such political-economic and philosophical-linguistic attacks against the Bible illustrate the fact that language can be a weapon. In light of such assaults on the Christian faith, it is incumbent upon Christians to understand the Biblical philosophy of language.

With this Biblical worldview foundation, let's proceed to specific principles required for a Biblical philosophy of language.

1. Origin of language.

The eternal, self-existent, tri-personal God uses language, i.e., God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit use language to communicate with each other (Gn 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Is 6:8; Jn 16:13-15; 11:42; 17). The triune God also used language to create the universe, speaking it into existence (Gn 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; Pss 33:6, 9; 148:5; Heb 11:3). Thus, language in both the mind of God and in His spoken word preceded creation.⁸⁹² God then blessed His creation (Gn 1:22, 28-30). He exercised His sovereignty by assigning names to material objects that He created (Gn 1:5, 8, 10). Indeed, all of Scripture presents God as the living God who speaks!⁸⁹³ The word of God is dynamic

⁸⁹² “When God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light [Gn 1:3], the word [light] (and therefore the idea) chronologically and logically preceded the visible light. . . . Language precedes creation” (Marla Perkins Bevin, “Linguistics and the Bible,” *The Trinity Review* 262 [December 2006], 2; available at <http://trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=230>; reprinted in *For the King: The Trinity Review, 1999-2008*, eds. John W. Robbins and Thomas W. Juodaitis, 434).

⁸⁹³ Phrases such as “thus says the LORD,” “the LORD said,” “the word of the LORD came to,” “hear the word of the LORD,” etc. occur over 3,800 times in the Old Testament alone (Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949], 110)!

and powerful (Heb 1:3; 4:12).⁸⁹⁴ The Second Person of the Trinity is the Logos, i.e., the Word (Jn 1:1, 14; 1 Jn 1:1; 5:7; Rv 19:13).

2. Possibility of communication.

Human language is possible because the tri-personal God (the first language user, Gn 1) created man in His image: a rational being (Gn 1:27; Col 3:10; Eph 4:24; cp. 2 Pt 2:12; Jude 10),⁸⁹⁵ having the ability to speak.

Since “God spoke to create the world, then the world from its beginning, and down to its roots, is structured by God’s language.”⁸⁹⁶ Furthermore, “God has implanted the *a priori* human aptitudes for knowing and harmonized them with the [so-called] laws of nature. . . . God has also implanted in us the organizing principles of thought, which lies [*sic*] behind language as its necessary condition. Communication of information is possible, therefore, because we who use language are enlightened by the divine Logos [Jn 1:9; cf. Ac 17:28]; that is, we are in possession of certain innate ideas that reflect God’s mind.”⁸⁹⁷ For example, because man’s mind contains the idea of “God,” man can use the words or sounds “God,” “*Deus*,” “*Theos*,” or “*Elohim*.”⁸⁹⁸ Communication between people is possible because

⁸⁹⁴ Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 711f.

⁸⁹⁵ Man’s rationality is demonstrated in his knowledge and his ability to use logic. Man can reason abstractly (e.g., analyzing philosophical concepts, ethical problems, etc.) and develop new technology on the basis of scientific study.

⁸⁹⁶ Vern S. Poythress, *In the Beginning Was the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 24.

⁸⁹⁷ Ronald H. Nash, “Gordon H. Clark,” in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 189.

⁸⁹⁸ Gordon H. Clark, “God and Logic,” *The Trinity Review* (Nov-Dec 1980), 6; available at <http://trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=16>; reprinted in *Against the World*, ed. John W. Robbins, 52–56. Gordon H. Clark, *Language and Theology*, 2nd ed. (Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1993), 139.

all minds have at least some thoughts in common.⁸⁹⁹ Simply stated, human language is a good gift from God.

Human language is complex and abstract, expressed through thought, speech, and writing.

3. Primary purposes of language: rational thought and the communication of some of one's thoughts to another person.

We have already noted that the Persons of the Godhead use language to communicate with each other. Language is also used by God to converse with man—even prior to any human-human communication (Gn 1:28–30; 2:16–17). The Second Person of the Trinity, the Logos (i.e., the Word, Jn 1:1, 14; 1 Jn 1:1; 5:7; Rv 19:13), is the mediator of all God's revelations.⁹⁰⁰

Language is used by man to worship God and to converse with God, and to converse with his fellow men.⁹⁰¹ Indeed, God created

⁸⁹⁹ Gordon H. Clark, *Language and Theology*, 152, 142.

⁹⁰⁰ “The mediating agent in all divine revelation is the Eternal Logos—preexistent, incarnate, and now glorified. Just as he is the divine Agent in creation, redemption and judgment, so also the *Logos* who became incarnate in Jesus Christ is the divine Agent in revelation. God who creates, redeems and judges by his Word (cf. Gn 1; Jn 1:5) also reveals himself by that selfsame living Word. . . . This emphasis that the eternal Logos is mediator of all divine revelation guards against two prevalent errors, namely, that of reducing all revelation to the revelation found in Jesus of Nazareth; and that of isolating general revelation by treating revelation outside of Jesus of Nazareth as something independent of the Logos who became incarnate” (Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 2:11f). Henry expounds this thesis in 3:203–215.

⁹⁰¹ “Man's endowment with rationality, his innate ideas and a priori categories, his ability to think and speak were given to him by God for the essential purpose of receiving a verbal revelation, of approaching God in prayer, and conversing with other men about God and spiritual realities” (Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason and Revelation*, 135).

man for the purpose of fellowship with Him. Human language also serves man's ultimate purpose of glorifying God (1 Cor 10:31; Ro 11:36; Col 3:16-17). With regard to conversing with one's fellow man, language makes possible teaching, preaching the gospel of King Jesus, convincing, encouraging, comforting, exhorting, admonishing, correcting, rebuking, etc.

4. Adequacy of human language.

"The omnipresence of God guarantees that God himself extends the presence of language beyond my personal world. All the world conforms to God's language, because God created it."⁹⁰² God produced language, and He is able to use it with perfect precision. God wrote in human language (Ex 24:12; 31:18; 32:15-16; 34:1; Jn 8:6, 8; cf. Dn 5:5, 24). "The Second Person of the Trinity, the *Logos*, had no difficulty expressing divine truth in the human languages of Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew while He walked on Earth; and the Third Person, the Holy Spirit, wrote the perfect, completely accurate, fully adequate, and inerrant Scriptures in human language."⁹⁰³ Thus, human language is adequate to accomplish those purposes that the omnipotent God intended to accomplish through it.⁹⁰⁴ God is both "the Creator and Lord of human language ('Who made man's mouth?' [Ex 4:11]),

"Rationality belongs to persons. Persons have rational capacities, but not rocks, trees, and subpersonal creatures. If the [linguistic] rules are rational, which linguists assume they are, then they are also personal" (Vern S. Poythress, *In the Beginning Was the Word*, 71).

⁹⁰² Vern S. Poythress, *In the Beginning Was the Word*, 312.

⁹⁰³ John W. Robbins, "The Heresy Matrix: Part 2," *The Trinity Review* (October 2003), 3; available at <http://trinityfoundation.org/PDF/The%20Trinity%20Review%200204a%20TheHeresyMatrix.pdf>; reprinted in *For the King: The Trinity Review, 1999-2008*, eds. John W. Robbins and Thomas W. Juodaitis, 275.

⁹⁰⁴ When unbelievers or even professing Christians assert that human language is incapable of expressing literal truth, ask them, Is your theory as you have framed it literally true? (Robert L. Reymond, *Preach the Word!* 9f).

who is able to use language however He wills in order to accomplish His purposes.”⁹⁰⁵ “If reason, i.e., logic, which makes speech possible, is a God-given faculty, it must be adequate to its divinely appointed task. And its task is the reception of divinely revealed information and the systematization of these propositions in dogmatic theology.”⁹⁰⁶

5. Words correspond to metaphysical reality (contra structural linguistics and literary deconstruction).

In the Genesis account God Himself named several physical objects, e.g., firmament/expanse, light, day, night, sky/heaven, land/earth, seas, lights (Gn 1:3, 5-6, 8, 10, 14). These terms already existed as concepts in God’s mind. “The created thing and its meaning correspond to the meaning of God’s utterance,”⁹⁰⁷ which proceeded from the mind of God. Elsewhere in Scripture God named several people—their new names portraying their character or callings. God brought the animals and birds to His image-bearer, Adam, so he could give them appropriate names (Gn 2:19-20).

6. Language is a spiritual battleground.

⁹⁰⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, “Scripture’s Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture,” in *Scripture and Truth*, eds. Donald A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 20. Cf. Gordon H. Clark, *Language and Theology*; idem., *God’s Hammer*, 118; idem., “Inspiration and Language,” in *Religion, Reason and Revelation*, 111-150; James I. Packer, “The Adequacy of Human Language,” in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 214, 220; Vern S. Poythress, *In the Beginning Was the Word*, 38; Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, 1:99f; Philip E. Hughes, *The True Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 57f.

⁹⁰⁶ Gordon H. Clark, *Revelation and the Bible*, 41 = *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 85.

⁹⁰⁷ Vern S. Poythress, *In the Beginning Was the Word*, 27.

Satan uses deceitful language and lies to tempt man to sin against God (Gn 3:1-5, 13; Jn 8:44; Mt 4:1-10; Rv 12:9; 2 Cor 11:3; 10:4-5; Ac 5:3). Indeed, the New Testament Greek word translated “devil” (*diabolos*) means slanderer or accuser. After the Fall, depraved man imitates Satan in the sinful use of language (Jer 23:36; Ac 13:10; 20:30; Ro 16:18; 2 Cor 4:2; Eph 4:14; Col 2:4, 8; 2 Tim 2:17-18; 2 Pt 2:1, 18; 3:16).

As a form of judgment, God, in His providential rule over all things, sometimes confuses the thought and speech of hardened sinners, thereby preventing them from effectively communicating with each other and carrying out their evil plans. A poignant example is God confusing human language at the Tower of Babel “that they may not understand one another’s speech” (Gn 11:4-9). (Note also God sending a lying spirit into Ahab’s false prophets, 1 Ki 22:20-23.) Another divine judgment was Jesus teaching in parables so His hearers would not understand His teaching (Mt 13:10-16 // Mk 4:11-12 // Lk 8:10; Is 6:9-10). God has even given His covenant people Biblical imprecatory prayers petitioning Him to bring confusion on His enemies (e.g., “Confuse the wicked, O Lord, confound their speech,” Ps 55:9 NIV).

A Biblical philosophy of science

Science is part of a worldview. It is no coincidence that science developed under the influence of the Christian worldview.⁹⁰⁸ Conversely, scientific study did not develop within other religions. For example, the ancient

Greek mind looked upon the natural world largely as simply an exercise for the magnificent Greek reason. The world was not to be changed. It was not to be used; it was simply to be understood. . . . Nor could science have originated in India among the Hindus, nor in China among the Buddhists, for both Hinduism and Buddhism teach that the physical world is unreal and that the only reality is that of the world's soul and that the greatest thing anyone has to learn is that the physical world is not real. [Furthermore, monism allows for no change.] . . . Science could never have come into being among the animists of central or southern Africa or many other places in the world because they never would have begun to experiment on the natural world, since everything—whether stones or trees or animals or anything else—contained within it living spirits of various gods or ancestors. . . . The Arabs never introduced nor ever created any real science. Why? Because of their religion. Because of the fatalism that dominates the Muslim religion. Since everything is fatalistically determined, obviously there is no point in trying to manipulate the natural world to change anything, because all things are unchangeable.⁹⁰⁹

The Biblical worldview produces science

In our discussion of epistemologies, we learned that the non-Christian worldview cannot justify:

- the (immaterial, invariant, universal, absolute) laws of logic;

⁹⁰⁸ Henry M. Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998). Idem., *Men of Science, Men of God* (El Cajon, CA: Master Books, 1988).

⁹⁰⁹ D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 93–95.

- the inductive principle (i.e., probabilistic reasoning, which is the basis for learning from experience and is the basis for science);
- moral absolutes;
- the dignity of man; or
- the freedom of man's mind.

Unbelievers simply assume all of these things!⁹¹⁰ (And so do the vast majority of Christians, since they are not epistemologically self-conscious, thinking and living on the basis of the Biblical worldview.)

Why did science develop under the influence of the Christian worldview?⁹ The reason is simple, but profound: only the Christian worldview provides the preconditions of intelligibility for doing science.

Metaphysically, only Christianity provides a real, material universe that operates in an orderly, regular fashion (Gn 1:14; 8:22; Jer 33:20; 2 Pt 3:4), according to the comprehensive plan of the infinite, personal, rational, omniscient, omnipotent God of the Bible. This God created man with: a rational mind; the compatibility to function in the space-time universe; and the intellectual and behavioral freedom (contra determinism) to be His steward over the earth.

Epistemologically, only Christianity provides the foundation for the objectivity of knowledge, the demands for rationality, the laws of logic,

⁹¹⁰ “Among the presuppositions of science, the scientist presupposes the reality of his universe, the reality and rationality of his own mental activity, the compatibility between the universe about him and his mind, which assures to him the mental capacity to extract meaning from the universe and to make such meaning coherent to other rational creatures, and finally, he assumes the law of causality and the uniformity of nature” (Robert L. Reymond, *A Christian View of Modern Science*, 13).

the existence of general classes or universals, and induction or scientific inference.

Ethically, only Christianity provides the moral foundation necessary for doing science (such as not falsifying lab results to gain grant money). Furthermore, the Dominion Covenant (also called the Creation Mandate; Gn 1:26–28) provides the ethical basis for man’s developing and utilizing the earth’s natural resources (including living things, such as plants, fish, birds, and animals). In fact, to fully keep the Dominion Covenant, man must develop science and technology, since science and technology are tools helping man subdue, fill, and steward God’s earth.

God created the cosmos and everything in it

In our study of the second pillar of the Biblical worldview, we learned that the infinite, tri-Personal God, as a free act of His will (Rv 4:11), created the space-time universe (Gn 1; Ex 20:11; Ps 33:6; Jn 1:3, 10; Ac 4:24; 14:15; 17:24; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Heb 11:3; Rv 4:11; 10:6; etc.): out of nothing (Gn 1:1ff; Jn 1:3; Ro 4:17; Heb 11:3; Ps 33:6, 9); in six literal days (i.e., in six twenty-four hour, consecutive, contiguous days); “very good” (Gn 1:31); to show His glory (Ps 19:1–2; Is 43:7; Rv 4:11). We included a table demonstrating numerous false ideologies prevalent in science, philosophy, and religion that are precluded by these Biblical truths.

The sovereign Creator’s providential rule vs. deism

The whole created order is continually dependent upon the sustaining activity, and providential control, of its infinite personal Creator (Heb 1:3; Col 1:17). It is subject to His sovereign will. Thus, nature is not autonomous or sovereign. In this sense, there are no inviolable laws of nature. When scientists attempt to mathematically and statistically describe regularities in nature (Gn 8:22), they are merely formulating a mathematical description of how God has elected to ordinarily rule His creation. “The ‘laws of nature’ which we

formulate are nothing but our transcripts of God's 'customary ways.' . . . They record His habits."⁹¹¹

The Christian defines nature as what God does with His creation, and a natural law [a law governing nature] as but a mathematically exact [?] description upon the part of man of how God has elected to order His creation. There are no 'absolute natural laws,' but only the mind of God. From man's point of view, the regularity of the universe is called 'law,' but from God's point of view it is 'will.' Here the Christian worldview conflicts sharply with the scientific method. Almighty God, not absolute impersonal law, is the power behind all phenomena.⁹¹²

When God performs a miracle,⁹¹³ "the laws of nature are not violated [which would be deistic terminology], but superseded at a particular point by a higher manifestation of the will of God."⁹¹⁴ God's providential control over the regularity of the universe (Gn 8:22; Heb 1:3; Col 1:17) serves as a backdrop for His miracles (i.e., His extraordinary works).

God's providential rule includes sending divine judgments within history, such as the worldwide Flood (Gn 6-8; 1 Pt 3:20; 2 Pt 3:5-6; cf. Lk 17:26-27; Mt 24:37-38).

⁹¹¹ Henry Stob, "Miracles," in *Basic Christian Doctrines*, ed. Carl F.H. Henry (NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1962), 83.

⁹¹² Edward J. Carnell, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948), 251.

⁹¹³ A miracle (enacted by God) may be described as **a visible, extraordinary work of God whereby He accomplishes His sovereign, redemptive purposes in the realm of nature and human history, bearing witness to Himself (as redeemer and judge) and arousing people's awe and wonder.** Cf. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 355-372, 1027; Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and His Gifts in the New Testament Church and Today* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 272 n 31.

⁹¹⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 177.

Scientists must not be autonomous

Science is not to be pursued in an autonomous manner. Instead, science must always be subordinated to the infallible, Word of God written, which alone is absolute truth (Jn 17:17). God and science cannot both be lord.

If science is not subordinate of Scripture, then Scripture must be subordinate to science and science itself will be autonomous. If science is independent of revelation, then nature must be assumed to be self-sufficient and containing in itself the principles for its own interpretation. Thus God is either identified with nature (the error of pantheism) or is shoved out of the picture altogether (the practical result of deism). Either God is God, or science deifies itself.⁹¹⁵

Only the Christian worldview can provide the metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical foundation that enables anyone to do any scientific research at all!

Limits of science

1. In the very nature of the case, science is based on inductive (probabilistic) reasoning, which can never lead to absolute certainty or absolute truth.
2. Science is based on empiricism. The history of philosophy illustrates the point that autonomous empiricism results in skepticism.

⁹¹⁵ Greg L. Bahnsen, "Revelation, Speculation, and Science," *Presbyterian Guardian* 40:1 (Dec-Jan, 1970-71): 14f. "If man does not own the authority of Christ in the field of science, he assumes his own ultimate authority as back of his effort" (Cornelius Van Til, *The Doctrine of Scripture* [n.p.: den Dulk Foundation, 1967], 5).

For a Biblical philosophy of science, see: Gordon H. Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*; Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*.

3. The scientific method is based on the logical fallacy of asserting the consequent.⁹¹⁶
4. Science is always changing. If scientists would ever get their theories right, they would not have to keep changing them! Truth does not change; but few modern scientific theories last more than twenty years.
5. The subject of origins is not properly a scientific question, since it is concerned with events that are neither recurring and observable, nor repeatable under experimental control.

Science does not discover truth

Because of the limitations of science, science should never be viewed as discovering truth.⁹¹⁷ John Robbins has pointed out that there are at

⁹¹⁶ Asserting the consequent is a logical fallacy that reasons as follows: if p , then q ; q , therefore p . For an explanation and examples (even citing philosopher/logician/mathematician Bertrand Russell, "Limitations of Scientific Method") see John W. Robbins, "The Scientist as Evangelist," *Trinity Review* (Jan-Feb 1986), <http://trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=35>; reprinted in *Against the World*, 203f; "Foreword," in Gordon H. Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*, x-xi. Cf. Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy*, 133.

⁹¹⁷ For examples of philosophical problems and logical self-contradictions in autonomous science, see: W. Gary Crampton, "The Biblical View of Science," *The Trinity Review* (January, 1997), <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=163>; reprinted in *Against the Churches*, ed. John W. Robbins (Unicoi, TN: The Trinity Foundation, 2002), 355-357; John W. Robbins, "The Sagan of Science," *Trinity Review* (Sept-Oct 1988), <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=90>; reprinted in *Against the World*, ed. John W. Robbins, 309-317; John W. Robbins, "The Scientist as Evangelist," *Trinity Review* (Jan-Feb 1986), <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=35>; reprinted in *Against the World*, 202-209; Gordon H. Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*. Robbins' essay, "The Scientist as Evangelist" (203), as well as his "Foreword" to Clark's book (viii-xi), include quotes from world-renowned philosophers (e.g., Bertrand

least five logical difficulties with science, i.e., five reasons why science can never give us truth.⁹¹⁸

1. **“Observation is unreliable.** Scientists do not perform an experiment only once. Experiments are always repeated, and the results most always differ in some way. Why? Because the senses tend to deceive us; they are not to be trusted. Hence, numerous readings are taken in an attempt to guard against inaccurate observation. So much is this the case in science, that tests with unrepeatable results are never taken seriously. But if observation is unreliable, if the senses are so easily deceived, if the results frequently differ, why should one ever believe that he has discovered truth through observation?
2. **All scientific experiments commit the fallacy of asserting the consequent.** In syllogistic form this is expressed as: ‘If p, then q. q; therefore, p.’ Bertrand Russell, certainly no friend of Christianity, stated it this way:

All inductive arguments in the last resort reduce themselves to the following form: ‘If this is true, that is true: now that is true, therefore this is true.’ This argument is, of course, formally fallacious. Suppose I were to say: ‘If bread is a stone and stones are nourishing, then this bread will nourish me; now this bread does nourish me; therefore it is a stone, and stones are nourishing.’ If I were to advance such an argument, I should certainly be thought foolish, yet it would not be fundamentally different from the argument upon which all scientific laws are based.

Russell, Karl Popper), who assert that it is philosophically impossible for science to discover truth.

⁹¹⁸ This material is taken W. Gary Crampton, “The Biblical View of Science,” *The Trinity Review* (January, 1997), <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=163>; reprinted in *Against the Churches*, ed. John W. Robbins, 355–357; Crampton is summarizing material from John W. Robbins, Logic Seminar, Westminster Institute, July 1995. Bold added (R.E.F.).

In the laboratory scientists work with a hypothesis. In this case the hypothesis is: 'If bread is a stone and stones are nourishing, then this bread will nourish me.' The scientist then attempts to deduce the predicted results that should occur if the hypothesis is true, such as 'this bread nourishes me.' He then performs an experiment to test the hypothesis to see if the predicted results occur. So he sits down at the table and eats the bread, and wonder of wonders, the bread does nourish him. The hypothesis, he concludes, is confirmed: 'This bread is a stone and stones are nourishing.' Silly you say? Yes! Yet, as Russell has asserted, it is not 'fundamentally different from the argument upon which all scientific laws are based.' That is to say, all scientific laws are based on fallacious arguments.

3. **Science commits the fallacy of induction.** Induction is the attempt to derive a general law from particular instances. Science is necessarily inductive. For example, if a scientist is studying crows, he might observe 999 crows and find that they all are black. But is he ever able to assert that all crows are black? No; the next crow he observes might be an albino. One can never observe all crows: past, present, and future. Universal propositions can never be validly obtained by observation. Hence, science can never give us true statements.
4. **Equations are always selected, they are never discovered.** In the laboratory the scientist seeks to determine the boiling point of water. Since water hardly ever boils at the same temperature, the scientist conducts a number of tests and the slightly differing results are noted. He then must average them. But what kind of average does he use: mean, mode, or median? He must choose; and whatever kind of average he selects, it is his own choice; it is not dictated by the data. Then too, the average he chooses is just that, that is, it is an average, not the actual datum yielded by the experiment. Once the test results have been averaged, the scientist will calculate the variable error in his readings. He will likely plot the data points or areas on a graph. Then he will draw a curve through the resultant data points or areas on the graph. But how many curves, each one of which describes a different equation,

are possible? An infinite number of curves is possible. But the scientist draws only one. What is the probability of the scientist choosing the correct curve out of an infinite number of possibilities? The chance is one over infinity, or zero. Therefore, all scientific laws are false. They cannot possibly be true. As cited above, the statement of Karl Popper is correct: 'It can even be shown that all theories, including the best, have the same probability, namely zero.'

5. **All scientific laws describe ideal situations.** As Clark has said, 'At best, scientific law is a construction rather than a discovery, and the construction depends on factors never seen under a microscope, never weighed in a balance, never handled or manipulated.'⁹¹⁹ Clark uses the law of the pendulum as an example:

The law of the pendulum states that the period of the swing is proportional to the square root of the length. If, however, the weight of the bob is unevenly displaced around its center, the law will not hold. The law assumes that the bob is homogeneous, that the weight is symmetrically distributed along all axes, or more technically, that the mass is concentrated at a point. No such bob exists, and hence the law is not an accurate description of any tangible pendulum. Second, the law assumes that the pendulum swings by a tensionless string. There is no such string, so that the scientific law does not describe any real pendulum. And third, the law could be true only if the pendulum swung on an axis without friction. There is no such axis. It follows, therefore, that no visible pendulum accords with the mathematical formula and that the formula is not a description of any existing pendulum.⁹²⁰

⁹¹⁹ Gordon H. Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*, 57. Cf. 56-62; Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things*, 206-210, 227.

⁹²⁰ Gordon H. Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*, 57.

The fact that science does not discover truth has been recognized and acknowledged by some leading, non-Christian philosophers of science:

All scientific statements are hypotheses, or guesses, or conjectures, and the vast majority of these conjectures . . . have turned out to be false. Our attempts to see and to find the truth are not final, but open to improvement; . . . our knowledge, our doctrine, is conjectural; . . . it consists of guesses, of hypotheses, rather than of final and certain truths. . . . All theories, including the best, have the same probability, namely zero.⁹²¹

First, although in science we do our best to find the truth, we are conscious of the fact that we can never be sure whether we have got it. . . . [W]e know that our scientific theories always remain hypotheses. . . . [I]n science there is no ‘knowledge,’ in the sense in which Plato and Aristotle understood the word, in the sense which implies finality; in science, we never have sufficient reason for the belief that we have attained the truth. . . . Einstein declared that his theory was false: he said that it would be a better approximation to the truth than Newton’s, but he gave reasons why he would not, even if all predictions came out right, regard it as a true theory.⁹²²

Chaim Tschernowitz quotes Einstein in a conversation: “We know nothing about it at all. Our knowledge is but the knowledge of school children. . . . We shall know a little more than we do now. But the real nature of things—that we shall never know, never.”⁹²³

⁹²¹ Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Reputations* (Harper & Row, 1968), 151, 192; cited by John W. Robbins in “The Scientist as Evangelist,” *Trinity Review* (Jan-Feb 1986) (reprinted in *Against the World*, ed. John W. Robbins, 203) and in “Foreword,” Gordon H. Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*, ix-x.

⁹²² *Popper Selections*, edited by David Miller (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 90f, 121.

⁹²³ *Readers Digest*, Aug. 1972, 28; cited by Gordon H. Clark, *1 Corinthians* (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1991), 128.

It is helpful to remember that “There is no Science to which final appeal can be made; there are only scientists and their various theories.”⁹²⁴

Our discussion of science and worldviews demonstrates that,

The world of natural and historical fact with which science deals cannot be truly interpreted by anyone who is not a Christian. . . . Even the mere assumption that anything can intelligently be

⁹²⁴ Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things*, 227. To speak of science as a concrete entity is to commit the logical fallacy of hypostatization, in which abstract terms are treated as if they were concrete ones; frequently humanlike properties (e.g., intelligence, intention) are even ascribed to such abstract terms. See S. Morris Engel, *With Good Reason*, 109, 113. “Evolutionists often absurdly ascribe foresight, intent, and intelligent development to biological processes or creatures themselves. Thus a creature is said to have ‘adapted itself,’ ‘developed the ability,’ or ‘evolved a unique organ which allows . . .’” (Mark R. Rushdoony, “Evolutionary Faith,” in *Creation According to the Scriptures: A Presuppositional Defense of Literal, Six-Day Creation*, ed. P. Andrew Sandlin, 15).

It must be denied that such thing as science exists. No workable definition of ‘science’ is possible. If it be defined as a body of organized knowledge, the term can be applied to virtually every field. If it be defined as experimentally verifiable knowledge, then astronomy is excluded, as well as geology and other studies [e.g., paleontology, botany]. Just as there exists no religion in general, but many particular religions, so no science in general can be defined, but only particular sciences. Moreover, in approaching any particular science and any body of scientific thought, we must deny that we are confronted merely with a body of facts. The facts are set in the context of interpretations, and interpretations rest on pre-theoretical religious presuppositions. . . . We should say *scientists*, because we cannot abstract science from man’s thinking and project it into mental space as an independent entity (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*, 11, 75f).

asserted about the phenomenal world by itself presupposes its independence of God, and as such is in effect a denial of him.⁹²⁵

With regard to the scientific method, our discussion of science and worldviews demonstrates that,

The scientific method is in essence a religious method, an atheistic, humanistic methodology. . . . The scientific method for modern man presupposes that God cannot exist and that man's autonomous mind is the final arbiter of reality. In terms of this, freedom means the independence of man from God and from any God-given law and standard, so that law and morality are not God-given but are man-made and pragmatic and utilitarian.⁹²⁶

In sum, "No more deadly mythology has ever plagued mankind than the mythology of science. . . . According to the mythology of science, science can do all things and will do all things. Not only are all things possible with science, they are also planned for delivery."⁹²⁷

With regard to Biblical ethics, science must never be used to bind people's conscience by determining ethical rules.⁹²⁸

Value of science

Science has an important, but limited, function for the Christian. God created man as His steward over the earth (Gn 1:26-28). This stewardship (called the Dominion Covenant or Creation Mandate) provides the vocational basis for man's development of science and technology. In other words, science and technology are tools helping man subdue and fill the earth. Science is useful when it attempts to develop theories and build models to better explain the nature of

⁹²⁵ Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 113.

⁹²⁶ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*, 78f, 154.

⁹²⁷ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, 94.

⁹²⁸ Howard F. Vos, "The Biblical Doctrine of the Separated Life," http://www.the-highway.com/separated_Vos.html.

God's created order. Even untrue scientific theories can be useful (e.g., Newtonian and Einsteinian physics).⁹²⁹

Apologetic necessity

“Christian apologetics cannot be indifferent to a system of philosophy or of science which, by its presuppositions and implications, as well as by its open assertions, rejects the doctrine of the ontological Trinity, the doctrine of creation, the doctrine of the fall of man and of his redemption through Christ.”⁹³⁰

Presuppositions for Biblical science

Here is a summary of ten essential presuppositions for building a philosophy of science.

1. Epistemology. God's Word is truth; science is not truth. Where scientific assertions agree with the teaching of Scripture, they are true.
2. Creation. The infinite, tri-Personal God spoke the space-time universe (including its matter and energy⁹³¹) into existence, creating it out of nothing, in six, consecutive, contiguous, 24-hour days. God's creation was “very good” (Gn 1:31). As God's creation, the universe is purposeful, orderly, and personal⁹³²—being a product of God's rational mind.

⁹²⁹ The brilliant Christian philosopher-logician, Gordon H. Clark, demonstrates that “science is always false, but often useful.” He gives a humorous example of the usefulness of untruthful scientific theories with his recounting the treatment of milk fever in cows (*The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*, 112f).

⁹³⁰ Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 25.

⁹³¹ Henry B. Morris postulated that the Holy Spirit imparted energy into the universe through vibrations (Gn 1:2) that produced gravitational and electromagnetic energy (*The Genesis Account*, 52).

⁹³² John M. Frame, “Presuppositional Apologetics,” *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, 224. This does not imply animism. **Animism** is the belief that natural objects (e.g., plants, trees, rivers, stones), natural phenomena (e.g., thunderstorms, earthquakes), and the universe itself possess souls (i.e., conscious life and a discrete

3. Mankind, being created in God’s image, is God’s vice-regent to steward God’s earth for God’s glory.⁹³³ God’s image includes rationality⁹³⁴ and free moral agency (contra biological determinism, in which man’s brain is controlled by laws of biology, chemistry, and physics). Man has both a non-material component (i.e., a spirit or soul—contra material monism or materialism) and a material component (i.e., a physical body—contra spiritual monism) (Gn 2:7; Mt 10:28; 1 Cor 6:20). God assigned man the task of the Dominion Covenant (Gn 1:26–28; 9:1–7) (contra nature being divine). Science is a tool for obeying the Dominion Covenant.
4. Man’s Fall (Gn 3) and the resultant curse (Gn 2:17; 3:16–19, 23) introduced death, pain, and a cursed earth that is no longer normal (Gn 3:14, 17–19; Ro 8:20–22; Job 25:5).
5. Supernaturalism, not naturalism/uniformitarianism.
6. God’s providential control of all things (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3).
 - Regularity of the universe (Gn 1:14; 8:22; Jer 33:20; cf. 2 Pt 3:4) makes scientific research possible;
 - God’s miracles,⁹³⁵ covenantal blessings, and judicial curses (contra deism and uniformitarianism);

indwelling spirit). These spiritual forces reside in and control all the natural world.

⁹³³ “The image makes man God’s representative on earth . . . God’s vice-regent on earth . . . king over nature. He rules the world on God’s behalf” (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC [Waco, TX: Word, 1987], 30–33). Mankind “is God’s representative upon earth, given the task of dominion over the nonhuman creation . . . his representative and agent here on earth . . . embody[ing] ‘God’s lordship over the lower orders of creation’” (NIDOTTE, 4:644f; cf. TLOT, 3:1083).

⁹³⁴ Robert E. Fugate, *A Theology of Rationality and Logic*.

⁹³⁵ “A **miracle** (enacted by God) may be described as a visible, extraordinary work of God whereby He accomplishes His sovereign,

- Satan and his demons, operating under God’s sovereign, providential control, perform limited miracles.
7. Ethics. The Biblical God, Who is Truth, demands His image-bearers to be truthful (Ex 20:16). Thus, scientific studies should be truthful, not fraudulent—as is often the case (frequently because of the love of money, which is a root of all kinds of evil, 1 Tim 6:10).
 8. The cataclysmic global Flood (Gn 6–8) altered the earth’s atmosphere and its geology (e.g., forming the fossil record within a very short period of time).
 9. God is making all things new (Rv 21:5).⁹³⁶ The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ inaugurated the new creation.
 10. The Lord Jesus Christ is reigning at God the Father’s right hand, where He is presently putting all enemies under Christ’s feet (Ps 110; Ac 2:30–36; 1 Cor 15:20–28). Enemies include: diseases and bodily deformities (Ac 10:38; Lk 13:11, 16); pestilence; drought; polluted water (Ex 15:23–27; cf. 23:25); “those who destroy the earth” (Rv 11:18); etc. This eschatological fact has significant implications for believing scientists.

redemptive purposes in the realm of nature and human history, bearing witness to Himself (as redeemer and judge) and arousing people’s awe and wonder” (Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 78 n 2). Cf. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 355–372, 1027; Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and His Gifts in the New Testament Church and Today*, 272 n 31; John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 124–131 (“extraordinary manifestations of God’s covenant lordship”).

⁹³⁶ “The convert, as part of a community of faith, enters the cosmic drama of recreation that God inaugurated at the resurrection of Jesus Christ and will bring to completion at the Parousia” (J.R. Levison, “Creation and New Creation,” *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 189f).

Miracles are not “violations” of nature

Such a description is fallacious because it views nature as autonomous and sovereign. As Abraham Kuyper points out, “Every such representation is **deistic** at heart, and in fact denies the immanent and omnipresent omnipotence by which God supports the whole cosmos from moment to moment, and every order in that cosmos.”⁹³⁷

“Belief in miracles is set in the context of a world-view which regards the whole of creation as continually dependent upon the sustaining activity of God and subject to His sovereign will (cf. Col 1:16-17 [; Heb 1:3]).”⁹³⁸

God’s power, by which He works His miraculous, extraordinary acts, is the same power by which He providentially governs His universe. Louis Berkhof adds,

When a miracle is performed the laws of nature are not violated, but superseded at a particular point by a higher manifestation of the will of God. The forces of nature are not annihilated or suspended, but are only counteracted at a particular point by a force superior to the powers of nature.⁹³⁹

E.J. Carnell further explains the Christian view of nature:

The Christian defines nature as what God does with His creation, and a natural law as but mathematically exact description upon the part of man of how God has elected to order His creation. For the Christian there are no ‘absolute natural laws,’ but only the mind of God. From man’s point of view, the regularity of the universe is called ‘law,’ but from God’s point of view it is ‘will.’ Here the Christian world-view conflicts sharply with the scientific

⁹³⁷ Abraham Kuyper, *Principles of Sacred Theology*, 501.

⁹³⁸ M.H. Cressey, “Miracles,” NBD₃, 771. Cf. R. Martin-Achard, “Miracle” (OT), *A Companion to the Bible*, ed. J.-J. Von Allmen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 267f.

⁹³⁹ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 177. Cf. C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1947), 59-61; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1985), 408.

method. Almighty God, not absolute impersonal law, is the power behind all phenomena.⁹⁴⁰

“What the miracles prove is that it is not the world but the Lord that is God.”⁹⁴¹

⁹⁴⁰ E.J. Carnell, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, 251.

⁹⁴¹ Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977), 69.

A Biblical philosophy of education

We must apply the Biblical worldview principles we have learned to the realm of education, beginning with the epistemological foundation: the Bible is the criterion or standard of truth by which all other truth claims must be judged. The Bible also defines reality, and it is the source of ethics. The doctrine of Creation, with its accompanying doctrine of the historical Fall of man, (pillar two) defines man's origin, purpose, nature, and problem (which is fundamentally moral, not environmental, contra Skinnerian behaviorism that controls American schools); it also sets the parameters for the study of science, sociology, etc. Presuppositionalism (pillar five)—especially the principles of antithesis and no neutrality—must be applied to the area of education. This means that there is no such thing as religiously-neutral education. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17) (pillar seven) applies to education. With this Biblical worldview foundation, let's proceed to specific principles required for a Biblical philosophy of education.

1. God's Word alone defines what constitutes true education.
 - Parent-led teaching in a family context (Gn 18:19; Dt 4:9; 6:1-9, 20-25; 11:19-22; Ps 78:3-6; Pr 1:8-9; 2:1-2; 3:1, 21; 4:1-11, 20-21; 5:1; 6:20-22; 13:1; 15:5, 32; 19:27; 22:6; 23:22; 31:1; Eph 6:1-4);
 - Biblical curriculum/content;
 - Biblical goals: (1) The ultimate goal is to glorify God (1 Cor 10:31; Ro 11:36; 1 Pt 4:10-11; Rv 4:11) and to enjoy Him forever (Ps 73:25-28); (2) The immediate goal is to train and equip one's children to fulfill their God-given callings, utilizing their gifts for the strengthening of the family and Christ's church (1 Cor 12:7; 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26; Eph 4:12-16; 1 Pt 4:10-11), thereby promoting the Dominion Covenant/Cultural Mandate (Gn 1:26-28) through the messianic/mediatorial rule of King Jesus over all the earth, in every sphere of life and culture (Mt 28:18-20; Pss 2; 110; Ac

2:29–36; 10:36; 17:6–7; Col 1:18–20; 2 Cor 10:3–5; Eph 1:20–23; 1 Cor 15:23–28; Rv 1:5; 11:15; 19:16);

- Biblical standard: God’s infallible, epistemically-necessary, and sufficient Word, which is truth;
- Biblical method: relational discipleship/apprenticeship for all areas of life, which includes character formation in holiness⁹⁴² (Lk 6:39–41; Mk 3:14; Gn 18:19; Dt 4:9; 6:1–9, 20–25; 11:19–22; 31:12–13; 32:7, 46; Pr 1:8; 2:1–2; 3:1; 4:1–4, 7, 20; 6:20; 22:6; 31:1; Eph 4:6; and the entire book of Proverbs)—contra the Greek model of education, which merely involves parroting abstract, speculative, disjointed “facts”;
- Biblical motivations: love for God and for one’s neighbor (Mt 22:36–40; 1 Cor 13; Jn 14:15, 21, 31; 15:10–12, 17; 1 Jn 4:21; 5:3–4; 2 Cor 5:13); and the fear of the Lord (Dt 4:9–10; 6:2ff, 13, 24; 10:12; 31:12–13; Ps 111:10; cf. Dt 8:6; 10:12–13, 20; 13:4; Ps 19:9; Pr 1:7, 29; 2:5–7; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:26–27; 15:16, 23, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; Is 11:1–3).⁹⁴³

Any school that does not pass these six tests cannot provide a “good education”—as defined by God!

2. God delegated the realm of education of children to the family (Gn 18:19; Dt 4:9; 6:1–9, 20–25; 11:19–22; Ps 78:3–6; Pr 1:8f; 2:1f; 3:1, 21; 4:1–11, 20f; 5:1; 6:20–22; 13:1; 15:5, 32; 19:27; 22:6; 23:22; 31:1; Eph 6:1–4). God did not delegate the education of children to the civil government or to the church. Such education

⁹⁴² Biblical education “is education in holiness. . . . Holiness means difference. And their [ancient Jews’] whole educational system was directed to that end” (William Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World*, 14, 47). The root meaning of the pervasive Biblical term “holiness” is “separation,” i.e., ethical separation from sin and separation to God and His redemptive purposes.

⁹⁴³ This material is taken from Robert E. Fugate, *God’s Mandate for Biblical Education*.

is not within their Biblical jurisdictions.⁹⁴⁴ Thus, state schools or church schools cannot provide “good” education—as defined by God!

3. Christian education is Biblically mandated.

In *God’s Mandate for Biblical Education* I offer nine lines of argumentation to demonstrate that Christian education is Biblically mandated:

- Epistemological necessity of the Bible;
- Ethical necessity of the Bible and Christian character;
- Biblical antithesis necessitates Christian education;
- Unity and comprehensiveness of Christian worldview necessitates Christian education;
- The comprehensiveness of the Lordship of Christ necessitates Christian education;
- Covenant faithfulness necessitates Christian education;
- Extent of Creation Mandate and Great Commission necessitate Christian education;
- Biblical commands regarding protecting faith and morals necessitate Christian education;
- The Biblical jurisdiction assigned to the family necessitates Christian education.⁹⁴⁵

Government schools violate these nine principles.

4. “Classical Christian education” is antithetical to Biblical education.⁹⁴⁶

⁹⁴⁴ Robert E. Fugate, *God’s Mandate for Biblical Education*, 33–43.

⁹⁴⁵ Robert E. Fugate, *God’s Mandate for Biblical Education*, 44–62.

⁹⁴⁶ Robert E. Fugate, *God’s Mandate for Biblical Education*, 117–135.

A Biblical philosophy of civil government

We must apply the Biblical worldview principles we have learned to the realm of civil government, beginning with the epistemological foundation: the Bible is the criterion or standard of truth by which all other truth claims must be judged. The Bible also defines reality, and it is the source of ethics. The insufficiency of general revelation and the Biblical doctrine of total depravity are very significant in the realm of civil government. The uniqueness of the Biblical God (pillar one) radically affects the nature of law.⁹⁴⁷ The doctrine of Creation, with its accompanying doctrine of the historical Fall of man, (pillar two) defines man's origin, purpose, nature, and problem. Presuppositionalism (pillar five)—especially the principles of antithesis and no neutrality—must be applied to the area of civil government. This means that there is no such thing as religiously-neutral civil government. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17) (pillar seven) applies to civil government. Eschatology (pillar 8), with the inauguration of the messianic kingdom and the absolute Lordship of Jesus the Messiah, is also an essential pillar with regard to civil government. With this Biblical worldview background, let's proceed to specific principles required for a Biblical philosophy of civil government.⁹⁴⁸

1. There is one and only one ultimate Lawgiver and Judge, the triune God of the Bible, Yehowah (Ja 4:12; Gn 18:25; Is 33:22). He alone determines and defines good and evil, justice and injustice. He alone possesses sovereignty, and He is the ultimate source of all authority and rule (1 Ch 29:11-12; Pss 22:28; 47:2-3, 7-8;

⁹⁴⁷ Law “is the moral expression of a religion. . . . There are major differences between the law-systems of various religions, e.g., Shintoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, humanism, Mohammedanism, etc. and Christianity” (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: The Intent of the Law*, vol. 3 [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1999], 3:25).

⁹⁴⁸ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*.

95:3-5; 103:19; 145:11-13; Dn 2:21, 37; 4:17, 24-25, 32; 5:18-19, 21, 23, 26-28; Ac 17:26, 28; 1 Tim 6:15).⁹⁴⁹

2. Jesus Christ is “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rv 19:16; cf. 17:14; Ac 17:6-7; Ps 89:27), “the ruler of the kings of the earth” (Rv 1:5), and the “head over all things” (Eph 1:20-23). He possess all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18). He is “Lord of all” (Ac 10:36; Ps 2:10-12; 1 Tim 6:15; Rv 1:5; 11:15; 17:14; 19:15-6). God the Father is commanding all kings, rulers, and judges to bow in submissive obedience to His Son (Ps 2:10-12; Phil 2:9-11). The nations are the Son’s inheritance from His Father (Ps 2:8; cf. Rv 11:15). There can be no religious or political neutrality toward the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. God’s moral and civil law,⁹⁵⁰ as recorded in the Bible, are the ultimate and perfect standard for law and justice (Heb 2:2). Natural law and natural rights are hopelessly inadequate bases by which to govern society (see below).⁹⁵¹
 - The civil magistrate is to punish crimes (not sins), as they are defined by God’s written Word (see the heading “God reveals justice in the Bible (the source of law)” below).
4. God delegates authority to civil magistrates (Ro 13:1-7; 1 Pt 2:13-14; Tit 3:1), contra antinomian libertarianism.
5. Biblically, civil government is to be a covenantal institution.⁹⁵² The Bible rejects the humanistic view of the state as based merely upon a social contract (as taught by John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Jefferson, etc.).

⁹⁴⁹ Robert E. Fugate, *Justice and Sovereignty: Perfections of God Imaged by His People*.

⁹⁵⁰ Robert E. Fugate, *God’s Royal Law: Foundation of Moral Order*, 31-38ff.

⁹⁵¹ Robert E. Fugate, *A Brief History and Critique of Natural Law Theory: Is Natural Law Sufficient to Govern Society?*

⁹⁵² Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 56-58.

6. Family, church, and state each have their God-ordained jurisdictions that are not to be intruded upon or usurped by the other two.⁹⁵³ Children belong to their parents, not to the state. Education⁹⁵⁴ and welfare⁹⁵⁵ are outside the Biblical jurisdiction of the state.
7. Civil magistrates are to function as God's servants (Ro 13:4), administering His just law (not creating their own humanistic laws).
8. The two primary purposes of civil government are the administration of civil justice (as defined by God's written Word) and military self-defense (not offensive warmongering!).⁹⁵⁶
9. The most Biblical form of civil government is a decentralized, constitutional republic with separation of powers (not a monarchy or a democracy).⁹⁵⁷
10. Scripture gives numerous principles of jurisprudence.⁹⁵⁸ One is proportionality, i.e., the punishment must fit the crime (Ex 21:23-25 *lex talionis*); excessive punishment and inhumanity are disallowed (e.g., mutilation, torture⁹⁵⁹). Biblical penology generally involves:

⁹⁵³ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 19-26, 109-112.

⁹⁵⁴ Robert E. Fugate, *God's Mandate for Biblical Education*, 33-43.

⁹⁵⁵ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 47-51.

⁹⁵⁶ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 38-44, 51f.

⁹⁵⁷ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 58-62.

⁹⁵⁸ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 63-66.

⁹⁵⁹ Philip G. Kayser, "Torture: A Biblical Critique," <https://kaysercommentary.com/Booklets/Torture.md>.

- restitution and/or compensation for theft and damages (paid by the offending party to the victim); or
- capital punishment for divinely-defined capital crimes.⁹⁶⁰

Imprisonment is not a Biblically-approved punishment.⁹⁶¹

11. The one Biblically-directed form of taxation is the head tax, which consisted of one-half ounce of silver per adult male per year (Ex 30:11-16), contra confiscatory taxation (1 Sm 8:7-18).⁹⁶² The small annual head tax cannot fund a large government.
12. God's Word is against: globalism; empire building;⁹⁶³ warmongering (Hab 1:6; Ps 68:30); meddling in the affairs of other nations (Dt 2:5, 9, 19; 2 Ch 25:19; Pr 26:17); highly centralized governments; police/surveillance states; etc.
13. Tyrants (as defined by Scripture) should be opposed by the people, who are led by righteous lesser magistrates.⁹⁶⁴

⁹⁶⁰ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 38-40, 113-117.

⁹⁶¹ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 40f.

⁹⁶² Robert E. Fugate, *Toward a Theology of Taxation*.

⁹⁶³ Empires in the Bible that God opposed include: the Tower of Babel (Nimrod); Egypt; Assyria; Babylon; Persia; Greece; and Rome.

⁹⁶⁴ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations*, 79-92. Stephanus Junias Brutus the Celt, *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*, ed. George Garnett (1579; reprint: Cambridge, UK: Yale University Press, 1994). Matthew J. Trewhella, *The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates: A Proper Resistance to Tyranny and a Repudiation of Unlimited Obedience to Civil Government* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013).

Because there is such gross ignorance of these issues among Christians, we will offer a more detailed explanation of natural law, the source of law, and natural rights.

Quagmire of “natural law”

“The concept of natural law is one of the most confused ideas in the history of Western thought.”⁹⁶⁵ There are at least “twelve meanings of ‘nature’ and ten meanings of ‘law,’ which yields 120 possible combinations and almost as many definitions of the expression ‘natural law.’”⁹⁶⁶ For our purposes, we will define natural law as a theoretical “system of morality and law that is derived from nature (either the cosmos or human beings), and is universally known through unaided human reason, and is binding upon every human society.”⁹⁶⁷

The concept of natural law is rooted in 5th century B.C. pagan Greek philosophers.⁹⁶⁸ It entered the church most profoundly through Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), who syncretized Aristotle’s pagan philosophy with Christianity, thereby systematizing the philosophical and doctrinal dogma of Roman Catholicism. Philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), the father of the (misnamed) “Enlightenment” followed the Thomist theory of law and government. Locke was a rigorous proponent of the sovereignty of natural law (even more than his social contract). Natural law became the source of the theory of “natural rights,” i.e., rights that are inherent to man and in man—apart from God. The influence of Locke was pervasive among America’s founding fathers. Whenever Protestants refuse to look to the Bible to discover God’s wisdom and direction for the civil and economic

⁹⁶⁵ John W. Whitehead, *The Second American Revolution* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1982), 181.

⁹⁶⁶ Paul Friers and Chaim Perelman, “Law, Natural and Natural Rights,” *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Philip P. Wiener, 5 vols. (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973), 3:14.

⁹⁶⁷ Robert E. Fugate, *A Brief History and Critique of Natural Law Theory*, 2.

⁹⁶⁸ For a succinct history of natural law theory see Robert E. Fugate, *A Brief History and Critique of Natural Law Theory*, 4–11.

realms, they usually borrow the Roman Catholic version of natural law.

“All Christian natural law theory, if the truth be known, rests on two primary foundations: non-Christian Philosophy and the biblical doctrine of general revelation.”⁹⁶⁹ Non-Christian philosophy is diametrically opposed to the Biblical worldview. Furthermore, general revelation contains nothing that is not found in the Bible, and—since the Fall of man—general revelation can only be rightly interpreted through the lens of Scripture. Thus, even a Christianized version of natural law cannot provide the foundation for civil law. We must look to God’s inspired, infallible, sufficient, written Word alone, rejecting the foolishness of pagan political philosophers and recognizing the insufficiency of general revelation and natural law. Theologian and philosopher John Frame further elaborates:

God has never authorized any social institutions or activities to govern themselves without the use of his spoken and written words. [Meredith G.] Kline and others have claimed that God authorized that sort of society between Cain and the Mosaic Covenant, a society he describes as a “common grace” order, governed by natural revelation alone.⁹⁷⁰ The Mosaic Covenant began a different kind of society, a “holy” society, governed by God’s written words. But even during the administration of this

⁹⁶⁹ William O. Einwechter, “Natural Law vs. Biblical Law,” unpublished paper presented at the Witherspoon School of Law and Public Policy (July 25, 2005), 13.

⁹⁷⁰ The Book of Genesis records at least eight different instances in which God spoke with Abraham. It also records Him speaking with Adam and Eve, Cain, Enoch, Noah, Hagar, Abimelech, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, etc. from the Fall till the time of Moses. Thus, it is a total misrepresentation of Scripture to describe this period as governed by natural revelation since there was no written revelation. In addition, Genesis shows evidence of extensive pre-Mosaic laws regarding both the worship of God (including priests, altars, clean and unclean animals, tithing, etc.) and civil laws (restitution, murder, etc.). Many of these must have come from special revelation.

covenant, on Kline’s view, nations other than Israel were common grace societies. And when the New Covenant in Christ replaced the Mosaic, there was no longer any provision, even among God’s people, for Scripture to govern society. So all nations today are “common grace” nations, societies to be governed by natural revelation, not the Bible.

I do not believe, however, that Scripture itself ever makes any such distinction. **There is no record in Scripture of any nation or society divinely authorized to govern itself by natural revelation alone.** God’s arrangement with Cain (Gn 4:8–16) is by special revelation, God’s own words. Similarly, God’s covenants with Noah (Gn 8:20–9:17) and Abraham (12:1–3, 15, 17). God authorizes Noah’s family to establish law and order, including the penalty of bloodshed to those who shed blood (9:6). Noah therefore receives this authorization, not by natural revelation, but by supernatural. During the time of the Mosaic Covenant, God’s prophets address, not only Israel, but pagan nations as well, bringing God’s spoken words to them (for example Is 10–24) and demanding that they live up to God’s revealed standards. Given the insufficiencies of natural revelation noted above, this fact should not be surprising.⁹⁷¹

The Bible contains no commands or admonitions for men to obey natural law;⁹⁷² but the Bible is filled⁹⁷² with texts that warn man not to trust in his own reason and understanding, i.e., not to trust in natural law (Pr 3:5–7; 14:12; 16:25; Ps 81:11–12; Jer 7:23–24; 10:23; Is 5:20–21, 24b; cf. Jer 9:13–14; 18:12; 23:17). Furthermore, God repeatedly commands people to obey his written Word (e.g., Pr 2:1–9; Ps 119; Mt 28:19–20; Is 2:2–3; 8:20).

The Biblical doctrine of the Fall applies not only to man; it also applies to the created order. God cursed the earth (Gn 3:14, 17–19;

⁹⁷¹ John M. Frame, “Is Natural Revelation Sufficient to Govern Culture?” in *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 953; bold added.

⁹⁷² The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture precludes this observation from being an argument from silence.

Ro 8:20–22). Nature is no longer normal, but abnormal, or “unnatural.” Consequently, since the Fall, the revelation of God through nature is disfigured, displaying both cruelty and non-cruelty, beauty and the strong violently preying upon the weak.

There are many more problems with natural law theory,⁹⁷³ including the embarrassing fact that its proponents cannot recognize and agree upon what these supposedly self-evident natural laws are! Furthermore, natural law could not possibly be the basis for civil law because, as its adherents admit, it contains no penology, i.e., no defined punishments for specified crimes! Finally, natural law has a history of being used to promote tyranny (Greek philosophers, Roman Caesars, the Roman Catholic church-state, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and Hitler’s Nazism). “Abstract theories of ‘Natural Law’ can provide no such protections for the individual’s life, person, property, or liberty, nor for the family or church.”⁹⁷⁴ Neither can it furnish any objective criteria for civil disobedience or resistance to tyranny. We will conclude our brief comments on natural law with a quote from the brilliant Christian philosopher Gordon Clark:

It is instructive to note that political theorists who were untouched by the Christian revelation, almost without exception, advocate totalitarianism. If Plato was a communist, Aristotle was a fascist. Private parental education is forbidden because education has as its aim the production of citizens for the good of the state. The number of children a family may have is controlled by the government, and surplus children are to be fed to the wolves. And everybody must profess the state religion. [Jean-Jacques] Rousseau is equally totalitarian: “There is therefore a purely civil profession of faith of which the Sovereign should fix the articles.

⁹⁷³ There too many theological and logical problems with natural law theory to cover them in this paper. See Robert E. Fugate, *A Brief History and Critique of Natural Law Theory*.

⁹⁷⁴ Archie P. Jones, “Natural Law & Christian Resistance to Tyranny,” in *The Theology of Christian Resistance*, ed. Gary North (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School, 1983), 114.

. . . If anyone, after publicly recognizing these dogmas, behaves as if he does not believe them, let him be punished by death.” If individual liberties were as evident as Jefferson said, would not Rousseau have recognized them? If they could be learned by observing nature, would Aristotle have missed them? And in any case, would there not be a fairly widespread agreement on what in detail these laws are? Jefferson thought that all men are created equal; Aristotle believed that some are born to be slaves. Aquinas argued that all things to which man has a natural inclination are naturally apprehended by reason as being good; but Duns Scotus replied that this leaves no method for determining whether an inclination is natural or unnatural. . . . These brief considerations indicate that the theory of natural law is not a satisfactory theoretical defense of minority and individual rights. Human reason, that is, ordinary observation of nature, leads more easily to totalitarianism than to anything else other than anarchy. But an acceptance of God’s word justifies a limited government.⁹⁷⁵

God reveals justice in the Bible (the source of law)

Defining good and evil is the prerogative of God alone. (One cannot rightly interpret Romans 13 apart from this constantly-overlooked truth.) Law defines good and evil (i.e., morality). Thus, every law is enacted morality and is inherently religious (contra Libertarians). Thus, the source of law for any society is always the god of that society.⁹⁷⁶ The question is always, Whose morality will be enacted into law?

⁹⁷⁵ Gordon H. Clark, “Natural Law and Revelation,” *Christianity Today* (July 24, 1957); reprinted in Gordon H. Clark, *Essays on Ethics and Politics*, ed. John W. Robbins, 157–161; and in *Christian Statesman*, vol. 143 # 4 (July-August, 2000): 13–15. Cf. John A. Fielding, “Classical Natural Law,” *Christian Statesman* 147:2 (Mar-Apr 2004): 8, 5.

⁹⁷⁶ Law in every culture is religious in origin. . . . **In any culture the source of law is the god of that society.** . . . In any society, any change of law is an explicit or implicit change of religion. Nothing more clearly reveals, in fact, the religious change in a society than a legal

The tri-personal God of the Bible is the only ultimate Lawgiver and Judge (Ja 4:12; Gn 18:25; Is 33:22). He alone determines and defines good and evil, justice and injustice.⁹⁷⁷ Man, God’s finite creature, is to

revolution. . . . There can be no tolerance in a law-system for another religion” (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, 1:4f). “Not only is every church a religious institution, but every state or social order is a religious establishment. Every state is a law order, and every law order represents an enacted morality, with procedures for the enforcement of that morality. Every morality represents a form of theological order, i.e., is an aspect and expression of a religion. The church thus is not the only religious institution; the state also is a religious institution. More often than the church, the state has been the central religious institution of most civilizations through the centuries” (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Christianity and the State* [Vallecito, CA: Ross House, 1986], 7).

“We affirm that every law and every concept of civil government is the implementation of a group’s or individual’s religious and moral ideology. We deny that either law or civil government exist apart from religious and moral ideologies. We further deny that either law or civil government are [*sic*] amoral, or nonreligious. We affirm every civil government holds some single religious and moral ideology above other competing ideologies, and is thus partial to that reigning ideology (Gn 1:27 with Ro 1:18-22; Lv 18:2-4; Ps 115:2-8; Is 44:9-20; Hab 2:18-20; 2 Th 2:3-4). We deny that it is possible for all religious and moral principles to be represented equally by any civil government, or that civil government is able to function value-neutral” (Coalition on Revival, “Concerning Christians’ Civic Duty” [International Church Council, 2003], articles 8-9), reprinted in *Rebuilding Civilization on the Bible*, eds. Jay Grimstead and Eugene C. Clingman, 129; available at <https://www.churchcouncil.org/14-christiansrsquo-civic-duties.html>.

⁹⁷⁷ “The giver of law is the god of that society, whatever name he may be given. **The law-giver defines good and evil, right and wrong**, and he thereby ordains the course of that society” (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: The Intent of the Law*, 3:47).

“God’s law is the only definition of justice. . . . Nor does He recognize as law any law other than His own. . . . When God begins the Ten Commandments with the words, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods

be an ethic-receiver, i.e., to reflect ethically God's moral character as God's image-bearer. The moral law of God (summarized⁹⁷⁸ in the Ten Commandments, Ex 20:1-17) defines right and wrong. Thus, ethics are absolute (i.e., the same for all people in all places for all time) and objective, not relative (i.e., different for different individuals, cultures, historical periods) and subjective. Ethics are not personally, culturally, pragmatically or statistically determined (e.g., by the latest public opinion poll). Normative ethics (the "ought") cannot logically be derived from what "is."⁹⁷⁹

This has immense implications for legislators, judges, and other civil magistrates: they are not to create or enforce whatever laws seem good to them or to their constituents, or to legislate for the purpose of conserving traditional cultural practices or values; instead, they are to

before me' (Ex 20:3; Dt 5:7), He not only bans the worship of any other gods but also the acceptance of any other laws than His own" (ibid., 3:25, 29, 75).

⁹⁷⁸ "The moral law' is not restricted to the Ten Commandments; they are rather 'the summary' of the moral law (Westminster Larger Catechism, 98), the details of which illustrate what the Ten Commandments specifically mean" (Greg L. Bahnsen, in *God and Politics*, ed. Gary S. Smith, 24). **"The summary does not obliterate or abrogate the expression of which it is a summary"** (John Murray, *Principles of Conduct* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957], 192).

⁹⁷⁹ This logical fallacy is called the "naturalistic fallacy." It was denounced by philosopher David Hume (*A Treatise of Human Nature*, Bk III, pt. 1, sec. 1; cited by John Robbins, "Some Problems with Natural Law." *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 2:2 (winter 1975-76): 19).

"The theory of natural law commits a major logical blunder when it tries to deduce a normative conclusion from descriptive premises. No matter how carefully or how intricately one describes what men do, or what the provisions of nature are, or how natural inclinations function, it is a logical impossibility to conclude that this is or is not what men ought to do. The *is* never implies the *ought*. This criticism applies to all empirical theories" (Gordon H. Clark, "Fruits of the Reformation in Philosophy and Ethics," *Essays on Ethics and Politics*, ed. John W. Robbins, 102).

uphold and apply God’s unchanging revealed law (which is given in the Bible) to their contemporary situation. To choose to live under man’s laws rather than God’s law results in oppression and a broken judicial system (Hos 5:11 NKJV). When God’s law is not applied, obeyed, and enforced “justice never goes forth” but “perverse judgment proceeds” (Hab 1:4).

Humanistic law attempts to: (1) reform man by law; (2) control man through all-encompassing regulations—ostensibly to prevent crime and to keep people safe; and (3) redistribute man’s property, producing “equality” (of outcome) through socialistic taxation (such as inheritance taxes, graduated income taxes, property taxes, *ad infinitum*) and through regulations.⁹⁸⁰ Such humanistic law involves total control by a messianic state with the goal of creating a utopia on earth. In actuality, humanistic utopias are totalitarian hells on earth. In creating such humanistic laws, the state assumes for itself the divine attributes of sovereignty, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence (the latter by means of monitoring all electronic communications and by ubiquitous surveillance). Its planning imitates God’s predestination and providential control of all things. This is pure idolatry and blasphemy—and the God of the Bible will judge the guilty magistrates (whether Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, etc.)!

It is also imperative for civil magistrates to use Biblical definitions for terms such as “justice.” God particularly instructs us regarding justice in the Old Testament, where “every violation and disobedience received its just punishment” (Heb 2:2 NIV). To say that “every violation and disobedience received its just punishment” is to say that God’s infallible, sufficient, written Word defines and illustrates justice.

God’s law defines both sin (1 Jn 3:4) and crimes. Not all sins are crimes. Sins that God’s Word does not criminalize (e.g.,

⁹⁸⁰ Rousas J. Rushdoony, “Chalcedon Reports” #s 161–163 (January–March, 1979), in *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 1010–1016.

covetousness, selfishness, being unloving),⁹⁸¹ the state must not criminalize, for God has not given civil magistrates the authority to punish sins as such. **Biblical crimes are those sins to which God attached civil punishment** (e.g., stealing, murder).

Civil laws criminalizing what God has not criminalized are unjust (Is 10:1; 24:5; Pss 82:1–2; 94:20; Lk 18:6, 2, 4; 2 Th 2:3; Rv 13). A magistrate creating unjust laws is a “throne of destruction” “which devises mischief by decree” (Ps 94:20). Unjust judges are “an abomination to the Lord” (Pr 17:15). Indeed, God speaks a prophetic curse on unjust magistrates: “Woe to those who enact evil statutes and to those who constantly record unjust decisions” (Is 10:1; cf. 5:20). Thus, the Bible is diametrically opposed to “**legal positivism**,” the tyrannical doctrine asserting that there is no higher authority than the state, and law is whatever the state says it is—which is the legal theory taught in every law school in America!⁹⁸² The state is not to be the source of law!

Because God’s Word is a higher authority than man’s law:

- Civil magistrates, as well as all others living in the nation, are bound to obey it—and will be punished by God for violating His law-Word;

⁹⁸¹ “What is not forbidden politically either by direct command, biblical example, or may by good and necessary consequence be deduced from Scripture, is permitted politically, even when it may be immoral or contrary to God’s word in other respects” (Stephen C. Perks, *A Defence of the Christian State* [Taunton, England: Kuyper Foundation, 1998], 127).

⁹⁸² This is diametrically opposed to “**legal positivism**,” the doctrine asserting that there is no higher authority than the state, and law is whatever the state says it is. Positivism rejects any form of higher law. Justice is whatever the state does. Under legal positivism, man has no God-given rights (although “‘human rights’ and democracy have usually been the banner by which tyranny has come to power”). Positivism “is always the cornerstone of statism and tyranny” (Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Politics of Guilt and Pity*, 316–318).

- The people have a transcendent, infallible, unchanging standard by which to judge civil laws, court rulings, and the behavior of civil magistrates;
- The people are morally bound to disobey those civil laws in which obedience would require them to violate God's Word,⁹⁸³ since "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Ac 5:29).⁹⁸⁴ This principle also applies to lower civil magistrates, military personnel, and police officers nullifying and disobeying unjust laws and orders given by their superiors.

Natural rights?

The term "rights" is generally defined as "the set of liberties, claims, powers, privileges and immunities to which a person has a moral, legal or just claim."⁹⁸⁵

The anti-Biblical, Enlightenment-based philosophy of scientific naturalism⁹⁸⁶ was the foundation for the doctrine of "natural rights."

The notion of natural rights belongs especially to the eighteenth century when it was used as the grounds for the American Revolution, in the Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Revolution, in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789). It assumed, as an article of faith, that reality was mechanistic, machine-like, operating according to the laws of Newtonian physics. . . ."Nature" . . . was deified and made to replace the Bible or the church as the revealer of the truth.⁹⁸⁷

⁹⁸³ Robert E. Fugate, *Toward a Theology of Taxation*, 72-73.

⁹⁸⁴ For additional examples of God-endorsed civil disobedience see Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government*, 119-120.

⁹⁸⁵ Stanley J. Grenz and Jay T. Smith, eds., *Pocket Dictionary of Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2003), 104.

⁹⁸⁶ Robert E. Fugate, *Modernism and Postmodernism: Their History, Beliefs, Cultural Influence—and How to Refute Them*.

⁹⁸⁷ C.T. McIntire, "Natural Rights," *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, ed. Carl F.H. Henry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1973), 450. However, it should be noted that the American Declaration of

“The concept [of natural rights] is inextricably interlinked with natural law,”⁹⁸⁸ with all of its inherent theological and philosophical weaknesses (see above). Pagan political philosophers (e.g., John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Jefferson), as well as some Christians holding to natural law theory, adhere to a belief in natural, inalienable,⁹⁸⁹ universal, self-evident “human rights” that are knowable through man’s reason, totally apart from God’s revealed Word. But such a formulation of natural rights is humanistic and unbiblical to the core, as John Robbins explains:

If we had rights because we are men—if our rights were natural and inalienable—then God himself would have to respect them. But God is sovereign. He is free to do with his creatures as he sees fit. So we do not have natural rights. That is good, for natural and inalienable rights are logically incompatible with punishment of any sort. Fines, for example, violate the inalienable right to property. Imprisonment violates the inalienable right to liberty. Execution violates the inalienable right to life. The natural right theory is logically incoherent at its foundation. Natural rights are logically incompatible with justice. The Biblical idea is not natural rights, but imputed rights. Only imputed rights, not intrinsic rights—natural and inalienable rights—are compatible with liberty and justice. And those rights are imputed by God.⁹⁹⁰

Independence (perhaps in a syncretistical manner) rooted these inalienable rights in man’s “Creator.”

⁹⁸⁸ J.D. Healey, “Natural Rights,” *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics in Pastoral Theology*, eds. David J. Atkinson, et. al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 621.

⁹⁸⁹ The term “inalienable” (or “unalienable”) denotes incapable of being legally or justly alienated, surrendered, or transferred to another. The term “unalienable Rights” occurs in the United States Declaration of Independence (1776).

⁹⁹⁰ John W. Robbins, “What Is Christian Philosophy?” (Unicoi, TN: Trinity Foundation, 1994); available at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=218>.

The Bible does not directly address the subject of human rights. Instead, it emphasizes human **duties** as taught in God’s moral law. Duties and rights are correlative.⁹⁹¹

Consider the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17). The first two Commandments teach man’s duty to worship the one true God in the manner that God directs and demands. These commands imply that man has the right, and should have the freedom to worship the one true God as He directs. But man has no right to worship any other god or to worship God in unbiblical ways (e.g. using idols).

The Fourth Commandment states man’s duty to work six days and to keep God’s Sabbath holy. This duty presupposes that man possesses the freedom to do so. For example, God’s command to the pagan Pharaoh, “Let My people go,” was given so the Israelites could obey God’s command to keep His Sabbath holy and worship Him (Ex 5:1-3; 8:1, 8, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3). Furthermore, the statement to work six days implies man’s right to labor as God’s steward (Gn 1:26-28; 2:5, 15, 19f; Lk 19:13). Other Scriptures teach that man has the right to personally profit from his own labors (Ec 5:19; 1 Cor 9:7-14; 2 Tim 2:6; Lk 10:7; 1 Tim 5:17f; Mt 10:10; Pr 27:18). However, this right to work does not mean that people can demand employment from specific entrepreneurial business owners or from the state.

This same principle of duties implying limited rights is found in the second table of the Decalogue, which delineates man’s responsibilities to his fellow man. For example, the Sixth Commandment, “you shall not murder,” implies the right to life—within God’s prescribed law (which allows for self-defense, capital punishment for certain crimes, and just war). But, a murderer has forfeited his right to life (Gn 9:6; Ex 21:12, 14; Ro 13:4). Furthermore, man possesses no right to die, since his life belongs to God, not to himself.⁹⁹² The Eighth and Tenth Commandments

⁹⁹¹ Ronald H. Nash, “Rights,” *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 589.

⁹⁹² International Church Council Project, position paper # 22, “Concerning the Sanctity of Human Life” (2007); reprinted in

(forbidding theft and covetousness) imply that God gives to the family, as His steward, the right of private ownership of property and the liberty to use that property to God’s glory. But the right of private ownership of property does not mean that man has rights to equality of opportunity or to equality of economic outcome. Neither does man have rights to socialized welfare, government education, socialized medicine, etc.—all of which (a) are outside the Biblical jurisdiction of the civil government, and (b) involve covetous, coerced, socialistic redistribution of wealth through immoral government theft. Thus, a right to life or a right to own personal property means we have the right *against* having it taken or destroyed without Biblically-just cause. Rights are not guarantees that something will be *provided for us*, but guarantees that what is ours will not be unjustly *taken from us*. Rights are not positive, but negative.⁹⁹³

The Ninth Commandment (prohibiting bearing false witness) implies a right to truth in business, legal, and judicial matters.

The Fifth (honor parents), Seventh (adultery prohibited), and Tenth (covetousness prohibited) Commandments protect the God-given rights of the family.

Let us enumerate some of the key Biblical principles regarding human rights.

1. The triune God of the Bible (Who is Creator and Lord of heaven and earth) is the giver and defender of limited, imputed human “rights.” No human rights are natural, inalienable, or absolute. They come from the sovereign God who created and who owns everything. He defines and sets the parameters of all human

abbreviated form in *Rebuilding Civilization on the Bible*, eds. Jay Grimstead and Eugene C. Clingman, 191-201; available at <https://www.churchcouncil.org/22-the-sanctity-of-human-life.html>.

⁹⁹³ E. Calvin Beisner, “Social Justice: How Good Intentions Undermine Justice and Gospel” (Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, Concerned Women for America, and the Family Research Council, 2013), 15-18; available at <https://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF13E133.pdf>.

responsibilities and human rights—with regard to both the individual and human institutions.

2. The responsibilities and rights that the true God grants to human beings—who are His image-bearers (Gn 1:26-27; 9:6; Ja 3:9)—include basic rights of life, liberty, and private ownership of property.
3. Human rights do not derive from either the state or the church.
4. No social institution has absolute claim upon the life of any individual human being; thus citizens and resident aliens are not the property of the state.
5. Human rights are not an end in themselves; rather, they are a means to the end of aiding men in fulfilling their duties to God. Man’s “rights” are always subordinate to the duties he owes to the sovereign Creator and Ruler of the universe.
6. God places the responsibility, and delegates the authority to civil governments to protect basic human rights of life, liberty, and private ownership of property.⁹⁹⁴
7. Human rights are not the same as human wants (contra Thomas Paine).

Because of this Biblical foundation for basic human rights, it is no coincidence that the Magna Carta (1215), the U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776), the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution (1789), and many other historical documents establishing the rights of the individual versus the state have originated in nations influenced by Christianity.

Many anti-Biblical “rights” movements, such as the United Nations’ “rights of women” and “rights of the child” are extremely dangerous (indeed, Satanic!), being designed to overthrow God’s created order,

⁹⁹⁴ The family and the church also have a limited responsibility under God to protect basic human rights of life, liberty, and private ownership of property.

including the God-ordained institution of the family. Other anti-Christians—as diverse as Rousseau and Marxists—while clamoring about human “rights” mandate that the state is the expression of “the will of the people”—effectively destroying true liberty and replacing it with statist tyranny. Thus, great caution must be exercised when discussing human rights. The Biblical worldview shares no epistemological or ethical common ground with non-Biblical worldviews regarding human rights. The Bible and the Bible alone “is the charter upon which all human liberty depends.”⁹⁹⁵

In conclusion, human rights must be defined by, and founded upon the infallible, sufficient written Word of God, not upon man or man’s institutions.

Biblical qualifications for civil government officeholders⁹⁹⁶

Most Christians never consider looking to Scripture to learn God’s requirements for civil magistrates prior to voting. For most Christians, political party loyalty is far more important than Biblical standards. Yet, such a humanistic approach is certainly a violation of *sola Scriptura*.

⁹⁹⁵ John Gresham Machen, *God Transcendent*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse, 120. Cf. Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many*, 60f.

⁹⁹⁶ Adapted from Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government*, 67f.

Religious qualifications

(He has a personal relationship with the one, true, tri-personal⁹⁹⁷ God, i.e., he is a Christian.⁹⁹⁸)

1. Fears God/Yahweh (Ex 18:21; 2 Sm 23:3; 2 Ch 19:7, 9; Ps 2:10-12; cf. Lk 18:2, 6).
2. Trusts the Lord/Yahweh (Pss 2:10-12; 21:7; Is 31:1; 33:22).
3. Submits to the Lord Jesus Christ (Ps 2:10-12; cf. Mt 28:18; Ac 10:36).

Moralethical qualifications

4. Truth (Ex 18:21; Pr 16:10; 17:7; 20:28; 29:12, 14; Is 16:5; Zc 8:16).
5. Wisdom (Dt 1:13; 2 Ch 9:7; Pr 8:12-16; 20:8, 26; contrast Pr 28:16).

⁹⁹⁷ John B. Metzger, *The Tri-Unity of God Is Jewish* (St. Louis, MO: Cenveo-Plus Communications, 2005). Robert Morey, *The Trinity: Evidence and Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: World Publishing, 1996), 188-195. David L. Cooper, *The God of Israel* (Los Angeles, CA: Biblical Research Society, 1945), 24-97. Cf. Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 3-48.

⁹⁹⁸ “If civil rulers are required to be those that fear God, then it must logically follow that Christians must not put anyone into office if they do not fear God. This means that we cannot even vote for non-Christians who may share conservative, anti-abortion, free-market values with us” (Daniel F.N. Ritchie, *A Conquered Kingdom: Biblical Civil Government* [Saintfield, Northern Ireland: Reformed Worldview Books, 2008], 629). “In addition to being a Christian man . . . a civil ruler must be a baptized, communicant member of an orthodox [Trinitarian] Protestant church. . . . If he comes under church discipline, then he is automatically disqualified from office” (Ritchie, 633f; cf. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* [Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989], 70, 594).

6. Impartial (Lv 19:15; Dt 1:17; 16:19; 2 Ch 19:6-7; Pr 24:23).
7. Servant (Ro 13:4, 6).
8. Righteous/just (Dt 16:18-20; 33:21; 2 Sm 8:15; 23:3; 1 Ki 10:9; 2 Ch 9:8; Ps 45:7; Pr 8:15; 16:12; 17:15; 25:5; 29:2, 4, 27; Is 11:4-5; 16:5; 51:4; 56:1; Jer 21:12; 22:2-5; Ezk 18:11-13, 15-17; cf. Dt 24:17).
9. Keeps God's law (Dt 17:18-20; Jos 1:7-8; 1 Ch 28:7; Pr 28:4).
10. Hates dishonest gain/bribes (Dt 16:19; 27:25; 2 Ch 19:7; Pr 19:6; 17:23; contrast Pr 29:4; Mt 28:12; Ac 24:26).
11. Hates covetousness (Ex 18:21; Pr 28:16; Jer 22:17).
12. Integrity (1 Ki 3:6; 9:4-5; Pr 29:10).
13. Faithful (2 Ch 19:9; Pr 20:28; Is 1:26; 16:5).
14. Humble/teachable (Dt 17:18-20; Pr 25:12).
15. Courageous (Dt 1:17; Jos 1:6-7, 9; 1 Ch 22:13; 2 Ch 19:11).
16. Self-controlled and patient (Pr 25:28).
17. Not drunkard (Pr 31:4-5).

Family qualifications

18. Husband of one wife (Dt 17:17; Pr 31:23; cp. 1 Tim 3:2).

Practical qualifications

19. Able (Ex 18:21, 25) and knowledgeable (Dt 1:13).⁹⁹⁹

⁹⁹⁹ They must have proven themselves to be wise, able, and knowledgeable men of understanding in others areas of life prior to holding civil office (Daniel F.N. Ritchie, *A Conquered Kingdom: Biblical Civil Government*, 629). "They should have proved themselves in some form of enterprise. The implication is that they are not to be professional politicians" (Gary DeMar, *God and Government* [Atlanta, GA: American Vision, Inc., 2001], 1:95 [= 1:85 in the original 1982 edition; cf. p. 92 in the revised 2011 one-volume

20. Elders/mature leaders (Nu 11:24-25).

21. Uses good advisors (Pr 11:14; 25:5; 2 Sm 8:15-18 24:2-4; Ps 101:4-7; contrast 1 Ki 12:8-11ff).

Biological qualification

22. Male (Ex 18:21; Nu 11:24-25; Dt 1:13; 17:14-20; 2 Sm 23:3; cf. 1 Cor 11:3ff; Gn 2:18, 23; 3:16;¹⁰⁰⁰ Is 3:12;¹⁰⁰¹ Pr 31:23).¹⁰⁰²

edition)). A university degree and work experience with a political party are not adequate.

¹⁰⁰⁰ “You will want to control your husband” (Gn 3:16 NET). The same Hebrew word translated “control” is used with this meaning in Gn 4:7. See Susan T. Foh, “What is the Woman’s Desire?” WTJ 37 (1975): 376-83.

¹⁰⁰¹ Childish rulers who are ruled by women are a judgment from God (Ec 10:16; Is 3:4-5, 12). The Lord Jesus described the tetrarch Herod Philip as a vixen (female fox) (Lk 13:31-32), thereby acknowledging that Herod was dominated by his unlawful wife Herodias, the same woman who had demanded the head of John the Baptizer (Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, 391; [= p. 380 in the edition reissued by Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2002]). Earlier in His ministry Jesus had warned His disciples to “watch out, beware of . . . Herod” (Mk 8:15 ESV, NET).

¹⁰⁰² Robert E. Fugate, *Biblical Patriarchy: Male Headship in Family, Church, and State*. William O. Einwechter, “Should Christians Support a Woman for the Office of Civil Magistrate?” *Chalcedon Report* # 368 (March 1996), 20-22, available at: <http://darashpress.com/articles/should-christians-support-woman-office-civil-magistrate>. Einwechter, “The Palin Predicament Resolved,” available at <http://darashpress.com/articles/palin-predicament-resolved>.

A Biblical philosophy of economics

We must apply the Biblical worldview principles we have learned to the realm of economics, beginning with the epistemological foundation: the Bible is the criterion or standard of truth by which all other truth claims must be judged. The Bible also defines reality, and it is the source of ethics. The insufficiency of general revelation and the Biblical doctrine of total depravity are very significant in the realm of economics. The doctrine of Creation (pillar two) determines Who owns the earth and all it contains: the triune God. The doctrine of Creation, with its accompanying doctrine of the historical Fall of man, also defines man's origin, purpose, nature, and problem (which is fundamentally moral, not economic, contra Marxism). Presuppositionalism (pillar five)—especially the principles of antithesis and no neutrality—must be applied to the area of economics. This means that there is no such thing as religiously-neutral economic systems. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17) (pillar seven) applies to economics. With this Biblical worldview background, let's proceed to specific principles required for a Biblical philosophy of economics.

1. God created and owns everything (Gn 1-2; Ex 9:29; 19:5; Lv 25:23 [land]; Dt 10:14; 1 Ch 29:11f; Job 41:11; Ps 24:1 [the earth and all it contains]; 50:10-12 [animals]; Hg 2:8 [silver and gold]; 1 Cor 10:26, 28). God is the ultimate source of all wealth and prosperity (Dt 8:18; Pr 10:22).
2. Stewardship. God gave man the task of being His steward (i.e., delegated ruler) over the earth—including all it contains and all other living things (i.e., the dominion mandate, Gn 1:26-30; Ps 8:6-8; 1 Cor 6:3).¹⁰⁰³ A key principle of stewardship is that with the

¹⁰⁰³ God commanded man to “subdue” or conquer (*kabash*—subdue, subjugate, make subservient) the earth (Gn 1:28). Since before the Fall man's relationship with nature was not adversarial, the verb probably denotes: (as God's steward) harness the earth's potential and use its resources for your benefit and for God's glory. This would include: cultivating its fields, mining its mineral riches, using its trees for construction, and domesticating its animals. Nature is not divine.

responsibility of stewardship comes the authority and freedom to manage those resources that the master has entrusted to the steward (Mt 25:14-18, 27; Lk 19:13, 23; 16:11). Man is to glorify God through faithful stewardship.

3. Work. God worked (speaking anthropomorphically, Gn 2:2-3), and He ordained that man should work (Ex 20:9; Pr 13:11; 14:23; 28:19; Ac 20:34-35; 2 Th 3:10-12; 1 Th 4:11-12; Gal 6:5; Gn 3:17-19; etc.)—even prior to the Fall (Gn 1:28; 2:5, 15, 18-20). Work is a means of dominion.
4. Scarcity. The creation—including both man’s resources (physical, mental, emotional, etc.) and the earth’s resources—are finite. Since the Fall of man and God’s subsequent curse, nature productively has become painful (Gn 3:14-19). “Work implies scarcity. Left to itself, nature does not provide all man’s needs or wants. Instead, man must work, both to turn raw materials into finished goods, and to conserve the effects of his work so that he can build on them.”¹⁰⁰⁴
5. Personal profit. Man has the right to personally profit from his labors (Nu 18:21; Ec 5:19; 1 Cor 9:7-14; 2 Tim 2:6; cf. Jer 29:5), contra socialism.¹⁰⁰⁵ “The laborer is worthy of his wages” (Lk 10:7; 1 Tim 5:17-18; Mt 10:10; Ro 4:4; Pr 27:18). Laziness leads to

Of course, after the Fall and God’s subsequent curse, man’s relationship with nature became more painful (Gn 3:16-19). God will judge those who destroy His earth (Rv 11:18).

¹⁰⁰⁴ E. Calvin Beisner, *Prosperity and Poverty*, 30f. This scarcity is recognized in the very definition of economics. British economist Lionel Robbins gave the classic definition of economics: “Economics is the study of the use of scarce resources which have alternative uses.”

¹⁰⁰⁵ Under socialism “rewards are not related to effort and commercial risk-taking, but to party membership, bureaucratic status, political fiat and corruption” (Ronald H. Nash, *Poverty and Wealth: The Christian Debate Over Capitalism* [Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1986], 87).

poverty (Pr 6:6-11; 13:11; 24:30-34; etc.). Those who won't work don't eat (2 Th 3:10-12; Pr 16:26).

6. Voluntary division of labor. God gifts people differently in terms of their intellectual, creative, and physical abilities (Ex 35:30-35; 36:1-2; 1 Ki 5:6). In God's providence, people have different skills, capital, experiences, education, possessions, and opportunities. God also gives to people different interests and callings. These different gifts contribute to the vital economic principle of division of labor or voluntary specialization (cf. Ro 12:6-7; 1 Cor 12:12-27; 4:7).¹⁰⁰⁶ God places different demands of productivity on each of his stewards (Mt 25:14-15, 28-29; Lk 19:13, 16-19, 24-26). These demands vary according to the person's particular gifts and calling.
7. Sabbath. God made the Sabbath for man (Mk 2:27), giving him the moral command to rest on the seventh day after laboring for six days (Gn 2:2-3; Ex 20:8-11; 31:13-15; Dt 5:12; Is 58:13-14; Ezk 20:12).¹⁰⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰⁶ The Bible's description of the organization of the construction, maintenance, and service crews for the tabernacle and the temple, for serving in Solomon's house, as well as for military forces abundantly illustrate the principle of division of labor. So do the varied and numerous trades and occupations mentioned in Scripture (Herbert Lockyer, *All the Trades and Occupations of the Bible*).

¹⁰⁰⁷ The Sabbath was a creation ordinance (Gn 2:2-3; Ex 20:8-11). It did not begin with the Law of Moses (Ex 16:23-30), but is part of the unchanging moral law of God (Ex 20:8-11; Dt 5:12-15). The Sabbath is a covenant sign (Ex 31:13, 17; Ezk 20:12, 20) pointing to "the [covenant] Lord [Yahweh] who sanctifies you/them" (Ex 31:13; Ezk 20:12). Beginning with the resurrection of Christ, the Sabbath day was transferred from the seventh day of the week (Saturday) to the first day of the week (Sunday), which is called "the Lord's day" (Rv 1:10), or "the first-day Sabbath" (the literal translation of the Greek in Mt 28:1 // Mk 16:1-2 // Lk 24:1 // Jn 20:1; Ac 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; cf. Ac 13:42).

8. Private ownership of property. The principle of private ownership is part of the moral law of God; it is summarized in the Ten Commandments:

- “You shall not steal” (Ex 20:15; Dt 5:19).¹⁰⁰⁸
- “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that **belongs to your neighbor**” (Ex 20:17; Dt 5:21).

The right of private ownership is also taught by the Biblical laws of restitution for property offenses involving theft (Ex 22:1–17; Lv 6:5; Nu 5:7; Pr 6:30–31; Lk 19:8)¹⁰⁰⁹ and Biblical laws of compensation for other damages (Ex 21:19, 22, 26–27, 30, 32–36; 22:5–6, 14–17; Dt 22:19). In these laws the guilty party pays the victim who owned the property. (He does not pay society in general or the state.) Furthermore, creditors were not allowed to enter a borrower’s house to collect a debt (Dt 24:10–11).

¹⁰⁰⁸ The Bible defines what constitutes theft and what does not (cf. Dt 23:24–25; Mt 12:1; contrast Dt 24:19). Case laws regarding the illegal moving of boundary markers (Dt 19:14; 27:17; cf. Pr 23:10; Ho 5:10) and returning lost goods (Ex 23:4–5; Dt 22:1–3) are applications of the command not to steal another’s property.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Biblical law prescribes four different amounts of restitution to be paid to the victim for different cases of theft: 120% repayment is due if the thief voluntarily confesses and returns the stolen goods unharmed (Lv 6:1–5; Nu 5:7); 200% repayment is due in two cases: (a) the thief is caught immediately and the stolen goods are recovered (Ex 22:2–4, 7), or (b) a borrower is guilty of negligent breach of trust (Ex 22:9); 400% repayment is due if a thief steals a sheep and disposes of it (perhaps to cover his tracks; Ex 22:1; cf. 2 Sm 12:6; Lk 19:8)—since animals reproduce and they are used for food and clothing; 500% repayment is due if a thief steals an ox and disposes of it (Ex 22:1)—since oxen reproduce and are income-producing assets.

Property rights are human rights, i.e., the right of humans to own, control, use, rent, sell, give away, etc. their own property as they desire (as long as it does not violate God’s law).

According to the Bible, families—not the state or the church—are the primary owners of land, property, and businesses.

Theft and coveting are no less criminal when done by the state—whether by means of bullets (e.g., SWAT teams, civil asset forfeiture, unjust wars, etc.) or ballot boxes (e.g., unjust taxation, redistribution of wealth schemes, welfare, etc.)!

9. Free market economy (free enterprise)¹⁰¹⁰ with voluntary exchanges.

It is lawful for people to sell—or refuse to sell—their goods and services, to whomever they desire, at whatever prices (and interest rates) they desire¹⁰¹¹ (assuming they can find a willing and able buyer) (Gn 23:8-16; Ex 23:3-20; 2 Sa 24:21-24; 1 Ki 21:1-4; Pr 20:14; Ru 4:1-12; Jer 32:10-12; Mt 20:13-15;¹⁰¹² Ac 5:1, 4).

The free market economy is consistent with the Biblical view of the nature of man:

¹⁰¹⁰ As a national economic system, free enterprise has seldom existed in history. It was found primarily in Old Testament Israel (especially before and after the monarchy) and in early America—both of which operated under Biblical law. Biblical law prescribes a limited, decentralized civil government, maximizing human liberty.

¹⁰¹¹ This statement concerns crimes, not sins (e.g., racism). Furthermore, this statement applies to Biblically-legal goods and services. It would not include illegal goods (e.g., manufacturing and selling idols or occult objects) or illegal services (e.g.: a father selling his daughter into prostitution, Lv 19:29; hiring someone to steal or to murder; hiring a witch for divination or a sorcerer to curse one’s enemies; etc.).

¹⁰¹² For interesting comments on the implications of private ownership in Jesus’ parables, see Harold Lindsell, *Free Enterprise: A Judeo-Christian Defense* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1982), 58-63.

One of the more effective ways of mitigating the effects of human sin in society is dispersing and decentralizing power. The combination of a free market economy and limited constitutional government is the most effective means yet devised to impede the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a small number of people. . . . Private ownership of property is an important buffer against any exorbitant consolidation of power by government. . . . It [free market economy] recognizes the weaknesses of human nature and limitations of knowledge. No one can possibly know enough to manage a complex economy. No one should be trusted with this power. However, in order for socialism to work, it requires a class of omniscient planners to forecast the future, to set prices, and to control production.¹⁰¹³

The Biblical principles of private ownership of property and free market economy preclude all forms of socialism, such as:

- Fascism/corporatism (e.g., European mercantilism, Italian Fascism under Mussolini, German Nazism under Hitler);
- Marxism/Communism/Bolshevism/dialectical materialism (e.g., Soviet Union, China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Cuba);
- English Fabian socialism.¹⁰¹⁴

10. The civil government must support liberty, including free market economics:

¹⁰¹³ Ronald H. Nash, *Poverty and Wealth: The Christian Debate Over Capitalism*, 68, 82f. “Political theorists who were untouched by the Christian revelation, almost without exception, advocate totalitarianism. If Plato was a communist, Aristotle was a fascist . . .” (Gordon H. Clark, “Natural Law and Revelation,” in *Essays on Ethics and Politics*, ed. John W. Robbins, 158).

¹⁰¹⁴ For definitions and brief explanations of these terms see Percy L. Greaves, Jr., *Mises Made Easier: A Glossary for Ludwig von Mises’ Human Action* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Free Market Books, 1974).

- Guaranteeing private property rights (that even the state cannot violate);
- Enforcing just weights and measures (Lv 19:35–37; Dt 25:13–16; Pr 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23; Ezk 45:10–12; Ho 12:7; Am 8:5; Mc 6:11)—including hard money (which preclude inflating the currency);
- Enforcing legal contracts; punishing fraudulent claims (e.g., false advertising);
- Punishing coercion in exchanges of goods and services (blackmail, extortion, theft, closed-shop unions, cartels, monopolies, etc.) (Mc 2:2);
- Maintaining equality before the law—whether rich or poor, noble or peasant.¹⁰¹⁵

11. Money and banking. Biblical principles of money and banking include:

- No central banking system (e.g., the “FED”), including no state or federal charters for banks;
- Liberty to use any form of honest “money”—usually silver and gold, or some form of warehouse (e.g., bank) receipts or trade notes that are 100% backed by physical silver or gold on deposit; this means no government monopoly over money;
- No fractional reserve banking; instead, requiring 100% reserves at all times for all commercial banks; money must

¹⁰¹⁵ God’s law insists on the same standard for everyone: there is only “one standard,” “one law and one ordinance” (Lv 24:22; Nu 9:14; 15:15–16, 29–30; Dt 1:16–17). Foreigners must obey the same law of God (Ex 12:49). Laws and judicial rulings are to be impartial (Dt 1:17; 16:19; 2 Ch 19:6–7; Pr 24:23), not favoring either the rich or the poor (Ex 23:3, 6; Lv 19:15), thereby representing the impartial God (Dt 10:17). God’s standard applies to all civil magistrates, bureaucrats, every political party, all corporations, banks, etc.

not be based on debt; abolish all inflationary printing of money (which is theft). (See the heading below for further elaboration on money and banking.)

12. Tithing. God requires His people to give at least ten percent (i.e., the first tenth) of their increase to extend His kingdom (Gn 14:18-19; Lv 27:30-32; Mal 3:8-12; Mt 23:23; Heb 7:9-10). God's tithe is to be given voluntarily, cheerfully, and thankfully (2 Cor 9:6-11); it is not to be forcefully collected by the church or the state.
13. National covenantal blessings and curses. National blessings including prosperity result when a nation adheres to God's moral law. Conversely, God curses nations devoted to false religions, occultism, totalitarianism, bloodshed, sexual immorality and perversions (e.g., sodomy, pedophilia), etc. (Dt 28; Lv 26; cf. the messages of the Old Testament prophets to the nations).¹⁰¹⁶

¹⁰¹⁶ Historically, only those nations impacted by Protestant Christianity (or those cultures substantially influenced by them) have experienced civil liberty and free-market economics, with their byproduct of financial prosperity. "The poorest nations are those least Christian and most spiritist, animist, Buddhist, Confucianist, and Hindu—the worldviews most radically inconsistent with Christianity. . . . The most productive, and therefore, the wealthiest, nations tend to be Christian and primarily Protestant" (E. Calvin Beisner, *Prosperity and Poverty*, 197f). Roman Catholic theology and practice have consistently promoted centralized, totalitarian civil governments and socialistic economics (John W. Robbins, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church*). Cf. Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, 3-7, 13f (noting poverty in Roman Catholic Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Southern Ireland, and Latin America). Observe the contemporary economic and banking fiascos in the PIIGS nations (i.e., Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Spain). The majority religion in Greece is Greek Orthodox; the other four are historic Roman Catholic nations. However, because of apostasy, the United States and traditionally-Protestant European countries will experience God's covenantal judgments.

Money and banking

Many economic policies that are currently established by civil governments throughout the world are outside the scope of the state's Biblical jurisdiction. For example:

- Defining what constitutes money¹⁰¹⁷ and dictating which money its citizenry must use;
- Maintaining a monopoly over minting money;¹⁰¹⁸
- Issuing bank charters and establishing a centralized banking system;¹⁰¹⁹
- Fixing price controls—including interest rates (price controls are really people controls);
- Overseeing and controlling the nation's economy; and
- Licensing businesses and who may practice certain occupational professions.¹⁰²⁰

¹⁰¹⁷ Money “is simply the most marketable commodity. The market establishes this, not the coercive power of the State. . . . Money requires continuity of acceptance over time” (Gary North, *Honest Money* [Ft. Worth, TX: Dominion, 1986], 107f, 114).

¹⁰¹⁸ “The monopoly over money is perhaps the most dangerous of all strictly economic monopolies” (Gary North, *Honest Money*, 115).

¹⁰¹⁹ “All central banking is a government-licensed enforcement arrangement of a well-organized, well-funded cartel. As with all cartels, it operates at the expense of competitors who would otherwise offer better opportunities to the public. . . . The most articulate of these critics have been members of the Austrian School of economics, most notably Ludwig von Mises and Murray Rothbard. No school of academic opinion opposes central banking, other than the Austrians. . . . Central banking is today universal, excluding Andorra, Monte Carlo, and Panama” (Gary North, “Assessing What Ron Paul Has Accomplished,” <http://www.garynorth.com/public/5389.cfm>). One of the tenets of Marxism is centralization of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly (Karl Marx, *Communist Manifesto*).

¹⁰²⁰ Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government*, 51f.

All such practices greatly curtail personal liberty. A centralized monetary and banking system (which is, in actuality, a government-granted and government-enforced monopolistic **banking cartel**) goes hand-in-hand with a centralized civil government (rather than a Biblical, decentralized government).

Fractional reserve banking is inherently fraudulent, inflationary, and immoral. It is a fraud to assert that a sum of money can be maintained on deposit for instantaneous withdrawal by the depositor and simultaneously lent out to a borrower.¹⁰²¹ It is inflationary for banks to loan out 9 to 70 times more money than was deposited (fractional reserve banking), thereby violating the Biblical prohibition against multiple indebtedness. This increase in the money supply (inflation) causes the increase in the price of goods—which means every dollar a person owns becomes worth less and less. Inflation is theft by subterfuge.¹⁰²² Thus, fractional reserve banking violates (at least) the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Commandments (prohibiting theft, false witness, and covetousness). A manipulated, unstable currency is a flagrant violation of God's commands to maintain just weights and measures (Lv 19:35–37; Dt 25:13–16; Pr 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23; Ezk 45:10–12; Am 8:5; Mc 6:11).

Keynesian economics¹⁰²³ (governments must spend more money to create more wealth) is a debt-based economic system. It violates the

¹⁰²¹ By definition, a demand deposit account (such as most checking and savings accounts) is an account from which deposited funds can be withdrawn at any time without any notice to the depository institution.

¹⁰²² Only Biblical economics and Austrian economics are fundamentally opposed to inflation (which is theft). All other economic schools of thought want Goldilocks inflation/theft (i.e., not too much, not too little, but just right). Most consumers have the same economic strategy, so they can pay back their debts with inflated (less valuable) dollars.

¹⁰²³ Keynesian economics rests on two premises: (1) economic growth comes from deficit spending by the central government; (2) central

Biblical warning, “the borrower is the slave of the lender” (Pr 22:7b ESV). This warning does not only apply to covenant-keeping individuals, for one of God’s blessings to covenant-keeping nations is, “You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow” (Dt 28:12; contrast God’s curse upon covenant-breaking nations in 28:43-44). Debt-encouraging Keynesian economics also violates God’s command to “owe no one anything except to love one another” (Ro 13:8a). Keynesian economics is idolatrous, denying the finiteness of man and the scarcity of resources while deifying man (collectively organized as the state) into a god who creates wealth *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). Keynesianism is nothing more than a diabolical scheme to implement an enslaving, corporatist-fascist tyranny. Conversely, Jesus Christ came “to proclaim good news to the poor . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives . . . to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Lk 4:18; cf. 1:47-55, 68-75; Gal 5:1).

Implementing such Biblical economic principles would entail a program of:

- Repealing legal tender laws (which compel people to accept the State-dictated form of currency);¹⁰²⁴
- Immediately ending the civil government’s monopoly on minting gold and silver coins; ultimately ending the printing and minting of money by all American civil governments;

banks can create sufficient money to buy government IOUs at low, economically stimulative interest rates. To this is added traditional mercantilism: national wealth is attained by exporting more goods than are imported (Gary North, “Theft by Mercantilism: Old and New,” <http://www.lewrockwell.com/north/north923.html>).

Keynesian economics is taught in virtually all American and European universities. It is established monetary policy in the United States and Europe.

¹⁰²⁴ Government “certified money” → money creation → a monopoly of money creation → debasing the money → elitist private control over “government” money by central bankers (Gary North, *Honest Money*, 114).

- Ending the Federal Reserve central banking system (the “FED”), including all state and federal charters for banks;
- Ending fractional reserve banking (money must not be based on debt) and requiring 100% reserves at all times for all commercial banks;¹⁰²⁵
- Letting the competitive free market choose between competing monies;¹⁰²⁶
- Letting the competitive free market set interest rates;
- Phasing in a debt limit of seven years (Ex 23:10-11; Dt 15:12-15).

[The] United States have been saddled with a group of elite central bankers who, through inflationary monetary policies have:

¹⁰²⁵ Banks could offer choices to depositors, such as: (1) deposits that the bank cannot loan out; the depositor pays fees for bank services and receives no interest; (2) deposits that the bank can loan out, but are not available to the depositor on demand; these deposits would be for a specified period of time (e.g., 6 months, 12 months, etc.), at an agreed-upon rate of interest (a “loan my money, and I’ll do without it in the meantime” account). Thus, for every bank loan there must be a deposit of corresponding maturity. “Warehouse receipts must be backed 100% at all times by whatever is promised by the receipt,” which precludes multiple indebtedness. “Every bank and lending institution, including money-market funds, will come under this rule: no check-writing from accounts that have already loaned out the money.” See Gary North, *Honest Money*, 108-110, 114, 128f.

¹⁰²⁶ “Civil rulers cannot be trusted because they lie! Civil rulers especially cannot be trusted when it comes to money because they are the greatest debauchers of money throughout history! Historically, there is not one nation in the world that has not robbed its citizens of their accumulated wealth by debauching the currency!” (Tom Rose, “Asian Flu: Worldwide Inflation or Deflation?” *Christian Statesman* 142/2 [Mar-Apr 1999] 23f). That is why most truly free people will choose gold or silver coins or a currency backed by gold, rather than a fiat currency. “It is impossible to have mass inflation with a currency based on any metal. It costs too much to dig metal out of the ground” (Gary North, *Honest Money*, 116).

(1) debauched the currency; (2) created boom-bust cycles; (3) undermined and destroyed our gold-based monetary system; (4) helped finance federal deficits, thereby fostering the growth of socialism/fascism in America; (5) have been the vehicle for financing wars through credit creation (thereby making it increasingly easy for our political leaders to involve us in foreign wars), and (6) secretly manipulated the American people through a central banking system that the people neither understand nor recognize as being a dire threat to their liberty and self-responsibility before God.¹⁰²⁷

“Without fiat currency, there’s no big government. Without fiat currency, there’s no New World Order.”¹⁰²⁸ Without governments controlling money and credit they cannot wage needless and endless wars.

Immediate political strategies within the United States should include: (1) passing a law requiring annual full audits of the FED;¹⁰²⁹ (2) curtailing the power of the FED, which can begin at the state level.

Beginning reading

Gary North, *Honest Money: Biblical Principles of Money and Banking* (Ft. Worth: Dominion Press, 1986) available at <http://www.garynorth.com/HonestMoney.pdf>.

Hans F. Sennholz, *Economic Commandments* (Grove City, PA: Libertarian Press).

Murray N. Rothbard, *The Mystery of Banking* (<http://www.mises.org/mysteryofbanking/mysteryofbanking.pdf>)

¹⁰²⁷ Tom Rose, “The Many Faces of Tyranny and How to Establish Godly Rule (Part 2),” *Christian Statesman* 141/2 (March–April, 1998), 10.

¹⁰²⁸ Bob Chapman, *The International Forecaster* (September 17, 2011), 21.

¹⁰²⁹ These audits could be conducted by the Government Accounting Office, the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Treasury Department (Gary North, *Honest Money*, 126).

(an agnostic Jew, who was a leading Austrian economist, and who brilliantly dissected fractional reserve banking).

E. Calvin Beisner, *Prosperity and Poverty* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1988).

Books refuting “Christian” socialists

David Chilton, *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt Manipulators: A Biblical Response to Ronald J. Sider* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985); available at <http://www.freebooks.com/christian/productive-christians-age-guilt-manipulators>.

Joel McDurmon, *God vs. Socialism* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, 2009).

Many articles may be found in the *Trinity Review* archives of The Trinity Foundation, <http://trinityfoundation.org>.

A Biblical philosophy of counseling

We must apply the Biblical worldview principles we have learned to the realm of counseling, beginning with the epistemological foundation: the Bible is the criterion or standard of truth by which all other truth claims must be judged. The Bible also defines reality, and it is the source of absolute, universal, invariant ethics. The insufficiency of general revelation (contra integrationist counselors) and the Biblical doctrine of total depravity are of paramount importance in the realm of counseling. The Biblical doctrines of Creation and Fall (pillar two) define man's origin, purpose, nature, and problem (contra all secular psychologists); they also sets the parameters for the study of science, psychology, anthropology, sociology, etc. Presuppositionalism (pillar five)—especially the principles of antithesis and no neutrality—must be applied to the area of counseling. This means that there is no such thing as religiously-neutral counseling. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16–17) (pillar seven) applies to counseling. With this Biblical worldview foundation, let's proceed to specific principles required for a Biblical philosophy of counseling.

1. The gurus of psychology (e.g., Freud, Jung, Skinner, Maslow, Fromm, Rogers) were all anti-Biblical in their epistemological presuppositions, their ethics, and their psychological systems. Most were Christ-hating occultists; several were infatuated with dogmas from Eastern religions.¹⁰³⁰ To “integrate” their psychologies with Scriptures is sinful syncretism—although this sinful syncretism is precisely what is being practiced today in most American churches and taught in the vast majority of “Christian” universities and seminaries.
2. Almost all of the (unstated) presuppositions underlying the 400+ conflicting psychotherapies and 10,000+ conflicting

¹⁰³⁰ Robert E. Fugate, *Psycho-Heresy: “Christianizing” Pagan Psychologies*, 202–227.

psychotherapeutic techniques¹⁰³¹ blatantly contradict Scripture.¹⁰³² For example, the psychological dogmas and practices regarding self-love/self-esteem, codependency, and healing of memories are anti-Biblical.¹⁰³³

3. The Bible (not the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [DSM], published by the American Psychiatric Association) defines what constitutes “normal” beliefs, speech, and behavior. “Normal” describes what a person “ought” to believe and do, which can only be derived from the Bible (not from unbelievers’ depraved “wisdom of the world,” which is antithetical to God’s wisdom). (Furthermore, attempting to derive “ought” from “is” commits the naturalistic fallacy.¹⁰³⁴) Belief in

¹⁰³¹ Martin and Deidre Bobgan, *TheoPhostic Counseling: Divine Revelation? or Psycho Heresy?* (Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate, 1999), 28. Idem., *The End of “Christian Psychology”* (Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate, 1997), 55.

¹⁰³² Jay E. Adams, author of over 40 books on Biblical counseling, cites various examples of anti-Biblical presuppositions from Freud, Rogers, etc. in *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1970). For presuppositional critiques of psychology by sound theologian-philosophers, see Gordon H. Clark, Rousas J. Rushdoony, and Robert L. Reymond. “Virtually all psychology is based in thoroughly humanistic and anti-god philosophies” (Franklin E. Payne, *God Confronts Culture: The Almost Complete Book on Biblical and Christian Worldview**, 125).

¹⁰³³ Robert E. Fugate, *Psycho-Heresy: “Christianizing” Pagan Psychologies*, 228–286.

¹⁰³⁴ See our above discussion of worldviews under the heading “Internal critique within empiricism’s worldview” for an explanation of the naturalistic fallacy. In our rejection of natural law we noted, “The theory of natural law commits a major logical blunder when it tries to deduce a normative conclusion from descriptive premises. No matter how carefully or how intricately one describes what men do, or what the provisions of nature are, or how natural inclinations function, it is a logical impossibility to conclude that this is or is not what men ought to do. The *is* never implies the *ought*. This criticism applies to all empirical theories” (Gordon H. Clark, “Fruits of the

God, miracles, demons, or conspiracies does not constitute mental illness (contra the DSM-5).

4. It is imperative to define terms Biblically (e.g., guilt, healthy, unhealthy, help, emotions/feelings, etc.). “Christianized” psychology is notorious for redefining Biblical terms and concepts (e.g., heart, love, guilt, sin, forgiveness, conscience, etc.) using non-Biblical definitions. They also wrongly define some theological terms (e.g., general revelation). Anti-Lordship counselors deceptively redefine the heresy of salvation by works to include Biblical sanctification (which includes obedient works that flow from regeneration and justification).¹⁰³⁵
5. The medical model of counseling “mental illnesses” and neuroses is unbiblical.¹⁰³⁶ Contrary to the Biblical worldview, it assumes that man’s problem is metaphysical (i.e., psychological and social innate needs). Man can be saved by changing his environment. The Biblical model teaches that man’s fundamental problem is ethical (i.e., sin, which alienates people from God and from other people), not metaphysical.¹⁰³⁷
6. True guilt is a state of being culpable before God, due to our inherited sin nature (Ro 5:12-19) and our intentional and unintentional¹⁰³⁸ personal transgressions of God’s moral law.¹⁰³⁹

Reformation in Philosophy and Ethics,” *Essays on Ethics and Politics*, ed. John W. Robbins, 102).

¹⁰³⁵ Robert E. Fugate, *Psycho-Heresy: “Christianizing” Pagan Psychologies*, 132-180, 334-331.

¹⁰³⁶ Robert E. Fugate, *Psycho-Heresy: “Christianizing” Pagan Psychologies*, 308, 290 n 3, 294, 297f, 301f.

¹⁰³⁷ However, Biblical counseling is considerably broader than personal sins. It applies Biblical principles to hardships and suffering, being sinned against, temptations and trials, evil companions, enemies, cultural lies, personal finances, vocation, etc. It deals with the whole of human experience.

¹⁰³⁸ At least fourteen verses mention sinning unintentionally.

¹⁰³⁹ “Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature” (1 Jn 3:4) (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*,

False guilt is caused by violating manmade traditions, childhood teaching or some other human authority, thereby provoking a false sense of guilt.¹⁰⁴⁰ Freedom from true guilt is possible only on the basis of Jesus' substitutionary, propitiating,¹⁰⁴¹ and atoning death on the cross, which can be appropriated only by the regenerate believer, by means of confession of one's own sins, repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. The Biblical doctrine of personal accountability/responsibility¹⁰⁴² (Ro 1:18-2:16; Gn 4:7; Lv 26:14-15ff; Dt 30:9-10, 19-20; Jos 24:15; Ezk 18:20; cf. "if you . . ." statements throughout Scripture; the Biblical doctrine of hell) is essential for Biblical counseling (contra most schools of psychotherapy, which specialize in alleviating guilt through blame shifting).
8. Biblical counseling promotes personal sanctification, which involves believers crucifying/putting off the old nature/self and putting on the new (Gal 5:24; 2:20; Mt 16:24-25; Col 3:2, 5, 7-11; Eph 4:22-24; Ro 6; 8:13).
9. A believer—thoroughly equipped with God's inerrant, sufficient Word (2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12-13) and the illumination and leading of the omniscient Holy Spirit—is equipped to admonish/instruct/warn (i.e., to do "nouthetic counseling") (Ro 15:14 *νουθετέω*).¹⁰⁴³ Church leaders are also involved in

490). The Westminster Shorter Catechism succinctly defines sin: "Sin is any lack of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God" (1 Jn 3:4) (Q&A 14). It also notes that every person sins in "thought, word, and deed" (Q&A 82).

¹⁰⁴⁰ Franklin E. Payne, *Biblical/Medical Ethics* (Milford, MI: Mott Media, 1985), 163. Cf. Franklin E. Payne, *Biblical Healing for Modern Medicine*, 78.

¹⁰⁴¹ Biblically, the term propitiation denotes "the appeasement or turning away of God's wrath against sinners by means of an atoning sacrifice" (Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 348).

¹⁰⁴² Franklin E. Payne, *Biblical/Medical Ethics*, 170f.

¹⁰⁴³ Jay Adams coined the term "nouthetic counseling" from the Greek word *νουθετέω*, which means "to counsel about avoidance or

counseling. Conversely, the contemporary “priesthood” of psychotherapists (including those purporting to be Christians) seldom gives Biblical counsel; thus, its credentialed hirelings are incompetent to counsel.

10. Evangelism is the highest priority when counseling an unbeliever. Only the Holy Spirit can change a person’s heart through regeneration, thereby giving him or her the desire and the power to change their sinful behavior.

cessation of an improper course of conduct, admonish, warn, instruct” (BDAG, 679).

APPENDIX A: ARMINIANISM’S FIVE POINTS VS. CALVINISM

The following material originally appeared in David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *Romans: An Interpretative Outline* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1963), pp. 144-147. It was included in David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), pp. 16-19. It was subsequently included as an appendix in the 1991 printing of Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Phillipsburg, NJ: 1932), pp. 433-436. Permission to reproduce was granted in Boettner’s book.

THE “FIVE POINTS” OF ARMINIANISM	THE “FIVE POINTS” OF CALVINISM
<p>1. Free Will or Human Ability</p> <p>Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does not interfere with man’s freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man’s freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not</p>	<p>1. Total Inability or Total Depravity</p> <p>Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not—indeed he cannot—choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit’s assistance to bring a sinner to</p>

THE “FIVE POINTS” OF ARMINIANISM	THE “FIVE POINTS” OF CALVINISM
<p>enslaved to his sinful nature.¹⁰⁴⁴ The sinner has the power to either cooperate with God’s Spirit and be regenerated or resist God’s grace and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit’s assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man’s act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner’s gift to God; it is man’s contribution to salvation.</p>	<p>Christ—it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God’s gift of salvation—it is God’s gift to the sinner, not the sinner’s gift to God.</p>
<p>2. Conditional Election</p>	<p>2. Unconditional Election</p>

¹⁰⁴⁴ The term “**free will**” is not a Biblical term. It is also ambiguous. Most commonly, it denotes either: (1) the ability to choose all the moral options that a situation offers (freedom of indeterminacy; the power of contrary choice; libertarian freedom); or (2) **free moral agency** to choose what one wills to do (liberty of spontaneity; compatibilist freedom). Definition # 2 is Biblical. It comports (i.e., is compatible) with the Biblical doctrines of God’s sovereignty and human depravity. Definition # 1 is unbiblical. God does not have free will in the sense of the power of contrary choice—He can never choose to sin! Neither do saints in heaven or God’s elect angels have the power of contrary choice to be able to choose to sin. Satan, his angels, and those in hell cannot choose good. There is no passage of Scripture that can be construed to mean that the human will is independent of God’s sovereign, all-encompassing plan and of the rest of human personality. Arminians use the term “free will” in the sense of # 1, libertarian freedom. See Appendix B: Frame’s rebuttal of libertarian freedom.

<p align="center">THE “FIVE POINTS” OF ARMINIANISM</p>	<p align="center">THE “FIVE POINTS” OF CALVINISM</p>
<p>God’s choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call. He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election therefore was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do. The faith which God foresaw and upon which He based His choice was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) but resulted solely from man’s will. It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation. God chose those whom He knew would, of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner’s choice of Christ, not God’s choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation.</p>	<p>God’s choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God’s choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God’s choice of the sinner, not the sinner’s choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.</p>
<p>3. Universal Redemption or General Atonement</p> <p>Christ’s redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved</p>	<p>3. Limited Atonement or Particular Redemption</p> <p>Christ’s redeeming work was intended to save the elect only</p>

<p align="center">THE “FIVE POINTS” OF ARMINIANISM</p>	<p align="center">THE “FIVE POINTS” OF CALVINISM</p>
<p>but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe on Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone’s sins. Christ’s redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept it.</p>	<p>and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ’s redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, therefore guaranteeing their salvation.</p>
<p>4. The Holy Spirit Can be Effectually Resisted</p> <p>The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit’s call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man’s contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man’s free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ’s saving work. The Holy</p>	<p>4. Irresistible Grace or The Efficacious Call of the Spirit</p> <p>In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this</p>

<p align="center">THE “FIVE POINTS” OF ARMINIANISM</p>	<p align="center">THE “FIVE POINTS” OF CALVINISM</p>
<p>Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God’s grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.</p>	<p>special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man’s will, nor is He dependent upon man’s cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God’s grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.</p>
<p>5. Falling from Grace</p> <p>Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, etc.</p> <p>All Arminians have not been agreed on this point; some have held that believers are eternally secure in Christ—that once a sinner is regenerated, he can never be lost.</p>	<p>5. Perseverance of the Saints</p> <p>All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.</p>

The five points of Arminianism (known as the Remonstrance) were based on the teachings of Jacob Arminius (1560–1609). They were

declared heretical by the Synod of Dort (1619).¹⁰⁴⁵ The theology of Arminianism is virtually the identical to the theology of semi-Pelagianism, which taught that man’s will is only partially fallen; if man chooses to receive Christ, then God responds by giving him saving grace.¹⁰⁴⁶

John Frame gives a helpful reminder about the so-called five points of Calvinism (TULIP):

We should not look at the five points as a summary of the Reformed system of doctrine. At Dordt, the five topics were in effect selected by the Arminians, not the Calvinists. The five points are actually a summary of “what Arminians don’t like about Calvinism,” rather than a summary of Calvinism itself. They summarize, not Calvinism as such, but the controversial aspects of Calvinism. I suspect that had the synod been asked for an actual summary of the Reformed faith, they would have structured it rather differently—more like the Belgic and Westminster Confessions. Controversial points are not necessarily the most fundamental concerns of a system. In the case of the Reformed faith, the doctrinal system is far more than five points; it is a **comprehensive understanding of Scripture**, and

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation*, ed. James T. Dennison, 4:121-153.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Semi-Pelagianism was condemned as heretical at the Second Council of Orange in 529.

Pelagius (ca. 354–ca. 427) was a fifth-century, ascetic, British monk, whom Saint Augustine vigorously opposed in his writings (e.g., NPNF1, vol. 5). Full Pelagianism denied the Biblical doctrines of original sin and the transmission of Adam’s guilt to his posterity. Since man is essentially good (being unaffected by Adam’s sin), he is capable of doing what is necessary for salvation, by his own efforts, apart from Divine grace. Pelagianism was condemned as heretical at the Council of Carthage (418), a verdict reaffirmed at the ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431) and at the second Council of Orange (529).

thus **a comprehensive world-and-life view**. . . . The Reformed faith teaches the **comprehensive covenant Lordship of God**.¹⁰⁴⁷

¹⁰⁴⁷ John M. Frame, “Introduction to the Reformed Faith,” in *John Frame’s Selected Shorter Writings*, 1:86, 88 (bold added); downloadable at <https://frame-poythress.org/introduction-to-the-reformed-faith>.

APPENDIX B: FRAME'S REBUTTAL OF LIBERTARIAN FREEDOM

Reformed theologian and philosopher John Frame makes a devastating Biblical-theological critique of libertarian freedom.¹⁰⁴⁸

Here is a summary of the points he discusses:

1. The Biblical data about **God's sovereign control** over human decisions, even human sins, are incompatible with libertarian freedom. Scripture makes it clear that our choices are governed by God's eternal plan, even though we are fully responsible for them.
2. Scripture does not explicitly teach the existence of libertarian freedom. There is **no passage that can be construed to mean that the human will is independent of God's plan and of the rest of human personality.**¹⁰⁴⁹

¹⁰⁴⁸ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 131-145; cf. idem., *Systematic Theology*, 825-830.

In another work Frame abbreviates the Biblical evidence as follows: "Ex 34:24; Nu 23-24; Jdg 7:22; 1 Ki 13:1-3; Ezr 6:22; Jer 1:5; Dn 1:9. God also foreordains sinful actions (Ex 3:9; 4:21; 7:3; Dt 2:30; Jos 11:18-20; 1 Ki 12:15; Ps 105:24; Is 6:9-10; 63:17; Rv 17:17), including the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus (Lk 22:22; Jn 6:64, 70-71; 13:18-19; 17:12; Ac 2:23; 4:28; 13:27). Human actions begin in the heart (Mt 7:15-20; Lk 6:43-45), and the human heart is in God's hands (Ps 33:15; Pr 21:1). People's sinful hearts cannot please God (Ro 8:8). Their wills are not, therefore, indifferent to righteousness or sin. Faith, the human decision to believe in Christ, is a gift of God (Jn 6:37, 44, 65; Ac 13:48; 16:14). Those who believe are 'appointed to eternal life' (Ac 13:48). Plainly God's appointment implies that the choice is not indifferent" (John M. Frame, "Open Theism and Divine Foreknowledge," in *Bound Only Once: The Failure of Open Theism*, ed. Douglas Wilson (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2001), 86).

¹⁰⁴⁹ "The will of man is . . . rooted in our very nature, connected with our deepest instincts and emotions, and determined by our intellectual considerations and by our very character" (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 68).

3. **Scripture never grounds human responsibility/accountability in libertarian freedom** (or any other kind of freedom). God made us and owns us. God's authority (not our inability) is the necessary and sufficient ground of human responsibility.
4. Scripture does not indicate that God places any positive value on libertarian freedom—or even recognizes its existence. Conversely, Libertarians see it as one of man's highest attributes and the key to the problem of evil.
5. Scripture teaches that humans will have **no libertarian freedom to sin in heaven** (which is the consummate state of human existence).
6. **Scripture never judges anyone's conduct by reference to his libertarian freedom.** Libertarian freedom, or the lack thereof, is never the reason why someone is guilty or not.
7. **Scripture condemns some people for acts that clearly were not free in a libertarian sense** (e.g., Judas's betrayal of Jesus).
8. In civil courts, libertarian freedom is never assumed to be a condition of moral responsibility. No criminal could ever be convicted of any crime if the prosecutors must conclusively demonstrate that the accused was completely independent of any divine decree, natural cause, character, or motive.
9. Civil courts assume the opposite of libertarian freedom, that is, that the conduct of criminals arises from motives. If a man's action was completely independent of his character, desires, and motives, then in what sense is this action really his? Thus, rather than being the foundation of moral responsibility, libertarian freedom destroys it.
10. **Scripture contradicts the proposition that only uncaused decisions are morally responsible.** Scripture tells us that God often brings about the free actions, and even sinful actions, of human beings, without in the least diminishing their responsibility.

11. Scripture denies that we have the independence demanded by libertarian free will. We are **not independent of God**, for he controls free human actions. **Nor can we choose to act independently of our own character and desire** (Mt 7:15-20; Lk 6:43-45).
12. Libertarian freedom violates the Biblical teaching concerning the **unity of human personality** in the heart. Both man's fall and salvation through Christ impact the whole person.
13. If libertarian freedom were necessary for moral responsibility, then **neither God nor glorified saints in heaven would be morally responsible**, since they do not have the freedom to act against their holy character.
14. Libertarianism mistakenly teaches the principle that inability always limits responsibility.
15. **Libertarianism is inconsistent with God's foreordination of all things and with His knowledge of future events.**
16. Libertarians often make their view of autonomous human freedom a nonnegotiable, central truth or governing perspective, which functions as a grid through which all other doctrinal statements are filtered. Libertarian freedom thus takes on a kind of paradigmatic or presuppositional status that shipwrecks their entire theological system.
17. Philosophical defenses of libertarianism often appeal to intuition as the basis for believing in free will. However, an appeal to intuition can never be the basis for a universal negative (e.g., one's decisions have no cause). Additionally, one could not identify forces that constantly and irresistibly determine his thoughts and behavior.

18. If libertarianism is true, then God is not sovereignly bringing all things to pass (contra Ps 115:3; Eph 1:11; and even the meaning of Yahweh). But, apart from His Sovereignty, **God is not God!**¹⁰⁵⁰

Frame rightly concludes, “**Libertarianism is unscriptural, incoherent, and destructive of both divine sovereignty and human responsibility.**”¹⁰⁵¹

¹⁰⁵⁰ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 131–145; idem., *Systematic Theology*, 825–830.

¹⁰⁵¹ John M. Frame, *No Other God*, 141 (bold added).

APPENDIX C: BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR ISRAEL UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

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ABBREVIATIONS

Books and journals

AB Anchor Bible

ABD Anchor Bible Dictionary

ACW Ancient Christian Writers

Alf Henry Alford, Greek Testament

ANF Ante-Nicene Fathers

AOTC Apollos Old Testament Commentary

BAGDW. Bauer, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, F. Danker, A Greek-Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 2nd ed.

BCOTWP Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms

BDAGW. Bauer, F.W. Danker, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, A Greek-Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd ed.

BDB F. Brown, S.R. Driver, C.A. Briggs, Hebrew & English Lexicon of the Old Testament (1906)

BDT Baker's Dictionary of Theology, ed. E.F. Harrison

BECNT Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

BST The Bible Speaks Today

CBSC Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

CDCT Concise Dictionary of the Christian Tradition, eds. J.D. Douglas, W.A. Elwell, P. Toon

CE Catholic Encyclopedia (1907-1914)

CGTC Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary, ed. C.F.D. Moule

DCA Dictionary of Christian Antiquities

DCB Dictionary of Christian Biography

Denz Henry Denzinger, Sources of Catholic Dogma, trans. by R.J. Deferrari from Enchiridion Symbolorum, 30th ed.

- DDD Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible, ed. K. van der Toorn, *et al.*, 2nd ed.
- DHT Dictionary of Historical Theology, ed. Trevor A. Hart
- DJG₁ Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, eds. J.B. Green, S. McKnight, I.H. Marshall (1992)
- DJG₂ Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, 2nd ed., eds. J.B. Green, J.K. Brown, N. Perrin (2013)
- DLNT Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments, ed. R.P. Martin & P. Davids
- DNTB Dictionary of New Testament Background, eds. Craig A. Evans & Stanley E. Porter
- DOTHB Dictionary of Old Testament Historical Books, ed. B.T. Arnold & H.G.M. Williamson
- DOTP Dictionary of Old Testament Pentateuch, eds. T.D. Alexander & D.W. Baker
- DOTPr Dictionary of Old Testament Prophets, eds. M.J. Boda & J.G. McConville
- DOTWPW Dictionary of Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry & Writings, eds. T. Longman III & P. Enns
- DPCMD Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, eds. Stanley M. Burgess & Gary B. McGee
- DPL Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, eds. G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, & D. Reid
- EB Expositor's Bible, ed. W.R. Nicoll
- EBC₁ Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. F.E. Gaebelein (1979-1992)
- EBC₂ Expositor's Bible Commentary, rev., eds. T. Longman III & D.E. Garland
- EBi Encyclopedia Biblica, eds. T.K. Cheyne & J.S. Black
- EC₁ Encyclopedia of Christianity (National Foundation for Christian Education)
- EC₂ Encyclopedia of Christianity, eds. Erwin Fahlbusch, *et al.*, (Eerdmans)

- EDBT Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell
- EDNT Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, eds. H. Balz & G. Schneider
- EDT₁ Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Ellwell, 1st ed. (1984)
- EDT₂ Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Ellwell, 2nd ed. (2001)
- EDT₃ Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, eds. Daniel J. Treier and Walter A. Ellwell, 3rd ed. (2017)
- EEC Encyclopedia of Early Christianity, ed. Everett Ferguson
- EGT Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W.R. Nicoll
- EJ Encyclopaedia Judaica (1971-1972)
- ELC Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church, ed. Julius Bodensieck
- EAC Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity, ed. Angelo Di Berardino
- EP Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards
- ESV English Standard Version
- FC Fathers of the Church
- HALOT Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, eds. Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, J. J. Stamm
- HDAC James Hastings, ed., Dictionary of the Apostolic Church
- HDB James Hastings, ed., Dictionary of the Bible
- HDB, rev. James Hastings, ed., Dictionary of the Bible, rev. by Frederick C. Grant & H.H. Rowley, 1 vol.
- HDCG James Hastings, ed., Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels
- HECOT Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament, eds. John R. Kohlenberger III & James A. Swanson
- HERE James Hastings, ed., Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
- HJP₁ A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Emil Schurer (1885-1890)

- HJP₂** The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135), G. Vermes & F. Millar (1973–1987)
- HNTC** Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (= Black’s NT Commentaries)
- Holladay** A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament Based Upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, ed. William L. Holladay
- H-R** Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament
- H-S** Edgar Hennecke & Wilhelm Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha
- IBD** Illustrated Bible Dictionary, ed. J.D. Douglas
- ICC** International Critical Commentary
- IDB** Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, ed. G.A. Buttrick
- IDBSup** Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Supplemental volume, ed. K. Crim
- Interp** Interpretation
- ISBE₁** International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, ed. J. Orr (1939)
- ISBE₂** International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, ed. G.W. Bromiley, rev. (1979–1988)
- JB** Jerusalem Bible
- JBMW** Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood
- JE** Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. I. Singer (1901–1906)
- JETS** Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
- KD** Carl F. Keil & Franz Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament
- KJV** King James Version
- LN** Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains
- LSJ** H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, Greek-English Lexicon, 9th ed. with rev. suppl.
- LW** Luther’s Works, American ed., 1955–1986

LXX The Seventy = Septuagint
 MM James H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*
 MSt J. McClintock and J. Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*
 NAC New American Commentary
 NASB New American Standard Bible
 NBD₁ New Bible Dictionary, 1st ed. (1962)
 NBD₃ New Bible Dictionary, 3rd ed. (1996)
 NCB New Century Bible
 NCE New Catholic Encyclopedia, ed. W.J. McDonald, *et al.* (1967)
 NDBT New Dictionary of Biblical Theology, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, Goldworthy
 NDT New Dictionary of Theology, eds. S.B. Ferguson, D.F. Wright, J.I. Packer
 NEB New English Bible
 NET New English Translation
 NIBC New International Biblical Commentary
 NICOT New International Commentary Old Testament
 NICNT New International Commentary New Testament
 NIDB New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, eds. K.D. Sakenfeld, *et al.*
 NIDCC New International Dictionary of the Christian Church
 NIDNTT New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology
 NIDNTTE New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis, ed., Willem A. VanGemeren
 NIDPCM New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, ed. Stanley M. Burgess
 NIGTC New International Greek Testament Commentary
 NIV New International Version
 NIVAC New International Version Application Commentary
 NKJV New King James Version

- NPNF1 Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series
- NPNF2 Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series
- NRSV New Revised Standard Version
- NTC William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, New Testament Commentary
- NTCERK New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge
- ODCC Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 3rd ed. (1997)
- OED Oxford English Dictionary
- OEEC Oxford Encyclopedia of the Early Church, ed. Angelo Di Berardino
- OTL Old Testament Library
- OTP Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, ed. James H. Charlesworth
- PGL Patristic Greek Lexicon, ed. G.W.H. Lampe
- PNTC Pillar New Testament Commentary
- RSV Revised Standard Version
- RWP Archibald T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament
- SCC Philip Schaff, Creeds of Christendom
- SDB Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, eds. W. Smith, H.B. Hackett, E. Abbot, 4 vols.
- SHERK New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge
- TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. G. Kittel & G. Friedrich
- TDNT(abr) Theological Dictionary of the NT, abridged in 1 vol., ed. G. Bromiley
- TDOT Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, ed. G.J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren
- Thayer Joseph H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament
- THOTC Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary

TLNT Theological Lexicon of the New Testament, ed. Ceslas Spicq
 TLOT Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament, eds. Ernst Jenni
 & Claus Westermann
 TNTC Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
 TOTC Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
 TWOT Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, eds.
 R.L. Harris, G.L. Archer, B.K. Waltke
 WBC Word Biblical Commentary
 WCF Westminster Confess of Faith (1646)
 WDCH₂ New Westminster Dictionary of Church History, ed.
 Robert Benedetto, et. al
 WDCT Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology, eds.
 Alan Richardson & John Bowden
 WLC Westminster Larger Catechism
 WSC Westminster Shorter Catechism
 WTJ Westminster Theological Journal
 ZEB Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible, rev., eds. M.C.
 Tenney, M. Silva
 ZECNT Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the
 New Testament
 ZPEB Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, ed. M.C.
 Tenney

General abbreviations

b. born
 bk. book
 c. *circa*, about
 cf. *confer*, compare
 chap./s chapter/s
 d. died, date of death
 def. definition
 ed./s editor/s, edited by, edition/s
 e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example

esp. especially
ET English translation
et al. *et alii*, and others
etc. *et cetera*, and so forth
f. and the following one (verse, chapter, page, etc.)
ff. and the following ones
i.e. *id est*, that is
ibid. *ibidem*, in the same place
LXX Septuagint
n note
n.d. no date
n.p. no place
NT New Testament
OT Old Testament
p. page
par. paragraph
pl. plural
pp. pages
Q&A question and answer
repr. reprint
rev.revised
sec.section
suppl./s supplement/s
trans. translator, translated
v. verse
vol./s volume/s
vv. verses
// parallel
§ section/s

ADDITIONAL MONOGRAPHS AUTHORED BY DR. ROBERT FUGATE

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