

WHO KNEW?



BLAKE BIGGS

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**Exposing Doctrinal
Misconceptions**

By Blake Biggs

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publisher. First printing 2022.

ISBN: 979-888627463-9

PREFACE

This brief volume presented to every reader is a summary of the most important categories within historical, exegetical, and systematic theology. The intent is that this volume will be for mature Believers who are looking to advance their spiritual understanding with a deep and comprehensive view of the primary doctrines of the Christian faith.

The reason behind this particular writing is the hope of correcting many vague comprehensions of what are thought to be familiar subjects, but prove to be difficult to express and defend on an individual basis. Intended to be a valuable tool, this is not an exhaustive work on each subject. Each chapter is an intense glimpse at areas or sub-topics of doctrine that are most often insufficiently understood but receive little attention because the overall incomplete concepts are far more common and familiar than a true intimate understanding of each aspect presented.

Writing this work has been an arduous task of presenting depths of clear definition that are a challenge to many established presuppositions of meanings. Drawn from lexical definitions, the content demonstrates there is much more to each category of Christian doctrine than most modern readers are aware of. Every attempt has been made in this volume to clarify what each primary doctrine includes, and to define words in such a way that scripture is clear in translation on each major theological topic.

As a systematic theological writing, each chapter is ultimately better understood in light of all other chapters. One of the challenges with any systematic writing is that any topics must be presented in sequential order. The difficulty is always which topics come before and after others in the included chapters or sections. Therefore, the foundational early chapters are those considered to be necessary to those coming

afterward, not in sequence of importance but as a series of theology categories that each build upon the previous as presented.

The ultimate desired result is that this writing will subtly or substantially change many partially or erroneously held presuppositions about Christian doctrine. It is the goal of this author to prompt others to utilize a practical critical view of their own understanding while gaining comprehension from the lexical material included from scripture. This volume has been written that we might more deeply and personally know the one true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, both in intuitive spiritual knowledge and in experiential acquired knowledge from the divinely inspired text as individuals implement new and better understanding of God's Word and Ways.

It is with boldness that the author insists that the lexical nature of this work can change all foundational comprehension of every area of doctrine. This is because the entire content is presented with lexical clarity from the inspired Word of God through the fundamental lens of the original languages and their translation. That boldness is about the veracity of God's Word, not from any human disposition alone. By the Spirit of God, it is the inerrant and infallible Word of God which changes hearts and minds in repentance and renewal unto life everlasting. Each of the chapters in this writing can and will do that because the primary source is the Word itself... the Word Himself... Jesus Christ. And it is in His name that this work is submitted to the Body of Christ with a prayer for God's grace to accompany the reading of this publication. God bless you all.

Blake Biggs

FOREWORD

Blake Biggs is an anointed teacher of the Word. God has given him a unique teaching ministry firmly based upon the lexical definitions of the words in the original Biblical languages. The message has brought upheaval both individually and collectively by challenging our traditional understanding of basic Christian doctrine. Christians in general have believed many things that are not true. Many refuse the evidence of that reality in the Word of God because they are comfortable with where they are and who they are. One of the difficulties in the Post-Modern church is that of relying on sources other than the Word of God as uttered by the Holy Spirit. Instead, they rely on translations that foster a natural understanding and not the revelation of the Spirit of God.

In this book You learn that the most important part of our spiritual experience is our Ontology (who we are). Ontology is the study of ontos, or being and becoming. We must become genuine something before we do anything. Many do before they become, and that does not work well in God's divine economy. We must become Christians before we do anything. Doing comes out of our becoming and knowing, not the other way around.

John 1:12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." The King James Bible says He gave us the power to become the sons (teknon, children) of God. That word for power in Greek is exousia. It is the delegated authority out of the pre-creational essence of God Himself. These terms are critical to our epistemics (what we know) and that may be the most important part of this book. It defines from God's perspective through the Word of God what is His expectation of His creation and what was His intent from the beginning. Most of us have no understanding of the grammatical or lexical meanings of the words as delivered to

us as the “Word of God, The Holy Bible” in English, let alone Greek or Hebrew. This you have in your hand will outline the importance of those things and the knowledge that is available to those who seek to know the truth.

Peter Schneider

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter 1: Incommunicable Attributes of God | 3 |
| Chapter 2: Ontology | 21 |
| Chapter 3: Epistemology | 29 |
| Chapter 4: Economy and Methodology | 37 |
| Chapter 5: Greek Anarthrous Nouns | 43 |
| Chapter 6: Hamartiology | 53 |
| Chapter 7: Ponerology | 61 |
| Chapter 8: Thanatology | 69 |
| Chapter 9: Repentance | 75 |
| Chapter 10: Conversion | 81 |
| Chapter 11: Confession / Profession | 85 |
| Chapter 12: Forgiveness / Remission | 91 |
| Chapter 13: Law and Gospel | 97 |
| Conclusion | 103 |

INTRODUCTION

A preemptive explanation is in order for readers of this publication. One of the decisions that has to be made about any writing of this type is whether or not to embed scripture for every reference and whether or not to provide footnotes. This volume does not do so, and for specific reasons.

The primary reason there are not embedded verses of scripture included is that the content itself is lexical in nature. This means the word-meanings from the inspired text are the main form of writing within this work. It also means that there would be a voluminous number of scripture references in virtually every paragraph, making reading difficult and interrupting the purpose of the lexical writing style itself.

Instead, it is to be understood that each sentence in each paragraph is a compiled paraphrase of both concordance and commentary content regarding the language components of lexicography and grammatical forms (from Greek in particular). There are not clusters of scripture references because they are all strongly implied by the lexical style.

A lexical style simply means the entire publication is written in dictionary form that is adapted to be conversational in teaching within the writing. This is a compendium of what words explicitly mean relative to each particular sub-topic in the overall systematic of theology. Terms are defined and explained within the body of text for each section. Therefore, the terms used reflect the entire scope of meaning of each word that can be found throughout the inspired text.

For instance, sin is *hamartia* in Greek. So rather than note every location of that word throughout scripture, the word itself is addressed in a macro sense that applies to every appearance of the term in scripture. This helps develop an overarching understanding of systematic doctrine and how

integrated each sub-topic of doctrine is with each other sub-topic. All Christian doctrine both stands alone and depends upon all other doctrine. Any of the Word is all of the Word. Jesus Christ Himself is the Word, and all scripture is about Him.

The author intends for this lexical style to be a teaching component of the publication. This writing is nothing but concordance-type and commentary-style narration and definition of all that is within the divinely inspired text we know as the Holy Scriptures. Please apply all definitions and delineations of terms to every place they appear in the text of your Bibles.

INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

The primary and introductory consideration for all Theology must begin with all the aspects of who and what God is and does. The very meaning of the term “theology” is “the study of God”, so the default beginning for addressing anything and everything relative to Theology is to begin with God’s attributes.

God has both communicable and incommunicable attributes. Communicable means God is able to convey and imbue particular attributes to and/or within those in His creation, while incommunicable means God does not convey and imbue particular attributes to those in His creation. The incommunicable attributes of God are those which God alone possesses, demonstrates, or expresses; and this is because He is “other” and higher and greater than all of His creation.

Love, for example, is a communicable attribute of God. God is love. And God can and does convey and imbue those in His creation with love. In fact, there are several types of love that man may be, have, and express; but God is *agape*, and that love is a very specific thing. But even as a very specific thing, God may give man love as an inward ontology to have (and an economy to be able to demonstrate outwardly) toward others.

Other attributes of God are incommunicable, and are therefore impossible for creation to be or have, or to demonstrate or exhibit in any manner. Infinity, for instance, is one of God’s attributes that cannot be conveyed to or upon His creation. Man cannot be infinite. As a point of fact, nothing in creation has infinity as an attribute. All creation is quantifiable and measurable, unlike God. It is God’s uncreated state of being that determines His incommunicable

attributes, and that they are unattainable by, and unconveyable to, created beings.

Neither man nor beast can be non-spatial (immensity), unchangeable (immutability), non-passionate (impassibility), non-material (immateriality), indivisible (simplicity), nor non-contingent (necessity). Likewise, the animate beings within creation are not self-existent (aseity), multi-omni (all powerful, present, knowing, wise, or good) or self-subsistent in any degree (God's auto/per se - from Self - attributes).

Man is limitable, while God is illimitable. Man is destructible, though God is indestructible. Man, as part of the created, is not necessary; God, as uncreated, is absolutely and objectively necessary. Man is comprehensible, God is incomprehensible.

The purpose in outlining and defining such things is to make clear distinction and demarcation between God and all else. God alone is God, and God's incommunicable attributes are His alone. And even God's communicable attributes are His benevolent sharing of Himself to provide vital attributes that must be present in creation for there to be any functionality of creation according to divine order.

That which is from God alone is what determines objective standards for all of creation. God's communicable attributes are conveyed to man particularly for an ontology that sets mankind apart from all other living beings such as the beasts and the fowl. Not only is man sentient and capable of rational reason and intelligent thought with communication, but man is also given qualitative existence in the image of God by having certain of God's communicable attributes.

ETERNITY

Some of God's incommunicable attributes require more study, definition, and explanation than others. Eternity is one of those, contrary to what most would think. Eternity is God's

timelessness, not God's endless duration of time in both the "past" and "future". Eternity has no past and future, which are both time-based terms. "Eternity past" and "eternity future" are invalid terms, though those terms are used somewhat frequently.

Eternity is God's self-existence apart from time, which is created. Time is an abstract concept based upon created heavenly bodies and their kinematics (movements) in space relative to each other, such as revolving and orbiting bodies in particular locations in close spatial proximity. God is not subject to time, but pervades it. He is "no-when" while being "every-when", for He is a presence that permeates creation but is not created; and He has presence that transcends time and space while including it. God is the limitation for creation; creation is not a limitation for Him.

Therefore, eternity is definitely not to be understood as merely endless durative time in "both directions" known as the past and the future. God's eternity means He has no boundaries related to anything regarding the past or the future. He is not limited to working within time, even for our own lifespans. God's activity in our lives does not depend upon time and its circumstances or occurrences. But His activity in our lives also includes consideration and accommodation for every circumstance or situation or occurrence in our lives. He has a "master view of and participation in" all of creation that cannot be confined to chronology or spatiality.

Since time and space do not confine or contain or constrain God, He acts independently of time and space for all things within time and space. God does not have to be punctual in the human and earthly sense. His eternity means He has an attribute that encompasses anything and everything that could happen within creation.

This also means God did not have to do everything “before” creation, because there is no before for God (just as there is no after for God). God’s actions are from His eternal Self, and do not depend upon facets of creation to be activity. God’s foreknowledge and predestination, for example, are not according to time as we know it. Language is creation-based and attempts to convey things in time terms for our understanding of linearity and sequentiality, etc. But “fore-“ and “pre-“ reflect a “before” that simply does not exist for God as it does for man and for creation. We are bound by time and space but God is not, even for the same circumstances in life. God is not constrained by time, though being able to eternally provide divine coordination between His eternal activities and all temporal parameters for activity in creation for everything.

God does not pop in and out of time in men’s lives; neither does He just pre-determine everything in advance for all men’s lives. God is able to be both beyond creation and within creation in a manner that supersedes time and space. Time and space are not suspended by His activities. His activity is somehow interwoven within the properties of time and space without having to have been merely a deterministic past that carries out a life of realities with no interactive means from or by God. Creation is not merely a clock wound up by God to run down according to specific or general pre-planned agendas and schedules by its Designer and Creator.

God circumvents time and space while being the cause of authentic reality within time and space. He alone is eternal. Eternity is His incommunicable attribute alone. Eternity is not endless duration of time. Endless duration of time is something less, and is entirely relative to creation rather than God as the Uncreated.

What is most often confused for eternity is aeviternity, which is “everlastingness”. Aeviternity is a term that refers to endless duration of time, but only from the point of created reality

forward into the future (there is no everlasting past). It is a time-based term bridging the reality of time in creation with the time in the future beyond the current form of creation relative to the promise of the new heaven and the new earth. Aeviternity refers to time, though it also refers to whatever change in form that is applicable to chronology when life on this earth is over following final judgment.

We do not know what form of time will be prevalent in the new heaven and the new earth, just as we do not know what form of time was prevalent from the original creation to the fall of man and lapse of the cosmos in the Edenic event described in Genesis 3. We have no reason to believe that chronology in its current form was “time” before the fall/lapse any more than we have any reason to think we can know what form of chronology is in heaven or will be in the new creation after final judgment.

INFINITY

Briefly mentioned above, infinity is God’s non-quantifiability or non-measurability. By no means and in no manner or by any metric can God be quantified or measured. He is beyond the finite, which is the perimeter and boundary of creation for its existence. Nothing relative to creation is infinite, no matter how immense or durative it may seem or be. Facets of creation may be intangible, particularly inter-relationally to tangible facets; but nothing in creation is infinite without being quantifiable or measurable.

IMMENSITY

In direct contrast to what the term may seem to mean initially, immensity is the opposite of how large something is. Immensity refers to the non-spatiality of God. God is beyond both time and space, so He is non-spatial. He does not require space to exist, nor does He displace anything by or because of His Self-existence. Just as He transcends time, God transcends space. He is “no-where” while being “every-

where”. His existence is not determined by the parameters of creation, which are all determined by time and space. He is “other” in this category, just as He is “other” in all other categories that pertain to creation. God is not confined to a place, nor is He prohibited from being in any place or all places. Spatiality is something that served Him, not the inverse. He permeates space as He does time.

IMMUTABILITY

God’s immutability is sometimes misrepresented, likely (but not always) from unintentional misunderstanding. Immutability means God does not change. This does not mean He does not change courses of action at times to accomplish whatever He determines to accomplish in creation. It means His ontology does not and cannot change. He will not ever be unloving. He will not ever be anything that belies His incommunicable and/or communicable attributes. He is absolutely static in His character and conduct. He is ever righteous and always holy. He is the standard bearer and the consummate standard keeper. His intent and action are always according to His character and attributes. Nothing about who or what He is ever changes, and in fact cannot change. God is relentlessly, consistently, absolutely, and objectively a never-changing surety of all things pertaining to Himself and His Self-Conscious Self-Existence. Nothing escapes His multi-omni awareness and power and goodness; and nothing escapes His static absolute nature or can cause Him to be or do something apart from who and what He is. The non-eternal and non-infinite cannot even so much as budge the eternal and infinite God.

IMPASSIBILITY

With impassibility, we come to probably the most misunderstood of all of God’s incommunicable attributes. God’s impassibility means He is not affected by things apart from Himself or outside Himself. Impassibility indicates that God does not have passionate responses to things that would

require Him to be a time-based part of creation. His impassibility means God is not stirred or moved by temporal things that could or would attempt to change Him or His Word or His ways. It does not mean He cannot be approached with an appeal or a concern. It means man cannot live validly thinking he made God do or think or feel things.

God has emotions. We see this clearly throughout scripture. He feels deeply and with greatly passionate emotions. But we do not make God feel these things. God has an eternal disposition toward all things; and each aspect of this disposition includes a range of thought and emotion that are consistently in accord with everything else about who and what He is as God. He is not stirred to anger because we made Him mad by an action we exhibited. God is eternally angered with righteous indignation and wrath against particular things. No man can cause God to be angry. God is impassible and cannot be “made” to feel or think or do anything. He Self-determines and Self-accomplishes all things. He is all-powerful and all-knowing. There is nothing beyond His awareness and understanding that He does not already have a response for according to His incommunicable and communicable attributes.

We do not make God sad or mad or happy or joyful. God is eternally all of those things according to His own nature and attributes alone. God does not deviate from who and what He is to react or respond to anyone or anything. He thinks, speaks, and acts according to Himself and all that being Himself entails. In no way nor by any means is God a puppet on strings. Neither the host of hell nor any beings in the inhabited cosmos are capable of provoking God beyond the nature of His own impassibility. This does not mean He is stoic and uncaring and unloving or uninvolved. It means He is sovereign over anything and anyone that would ever attempt to determine God’s demeanor or activity. Neither the positive nor negative emotions of God are evoked or provoked

by man or creation. Though not aloof, God is beyond being caused to demonstrate or exhibit any passion or behavior. He is entirely Self-determined in every aspect of His disposition and displacement of thought, emotion, desire, and activity.

IMMATERIALITY

God's immateriality is mostly readily understandable. The challenge comes in knowing some of His other incommunicable attributes and how they are interactive with His immateriality. One such thing is God's eternity. God is not merely in heaven as an immaterial entity somehow sitting on a perceived material throne as a cloud with a semi-clear face. God created all things, including the heavenly realm and the earthly realm. Heaven is not eternal, it is everlasting (aeviternal); and God has not always been present in heaven since heaven has not always existed.

The primary point to God's immateriality is that He is not a greater or bigger version of a man, and that immaterial reality of existence is superordinate to material reality. The immaterial is the primary reality, while the material is the secondary reality. This is true of God versus creation, and it is true of the immaterial and material aspects of creation. The natural is not more real than the supernatural; the inverse is true. That which is beyond the natural is more real than that which is merely within the natural. The best part is that God has created man as both immaterial and material; but the key Christian understanding and functionality is primarily about the immaterial while being secondarily about the material. The first man Adam was a living soul; the second/last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

This point affects things like the English term "literal", which is most often used to reflect absolute existence, but primary and substantial existence is determined by the immaterial being the foundation for the material. Without God (who is Spirit), there would be no materiality (or immateriality) of

creation. God is “literally” the greatest and highest reality of existence. Man’s wisdom would declare that the scientific method is the highest measure of reality, which is not only false but impossible. God’s existence is required for all things to have any form of existence. Even the imaginary is dependent upon God because some aspect of true reality is what gives basis for the imagined and the imaginary.

SIMPLICITY

God’s incommunicable attribute of simplicity is partially understood easily, but often misunderstood in its depth, breadth, and height of its true scope of meaning. Simplicity is not a lack of complexity or a sense of being basic and uncomplicated. Each of the following major aspects contribute to defining Simplicity as one of the Incommunicable Attributes of God.

• Non-Compositional

First, God is not comprised of constituent parts. He is not an aggregate of multiple things or beings. He is not a hybrid comprised of parts that can be inserted or extracted from each other, nor is He the whole of a combined sum. God is neither randomly nor intricately assembled. God is not a combination or compilation of any number of individual or divisible things.

• Non-Compounded

Second, God is not a compound. He is not multiple melded or joined things that have either individual reality or no reality unless combined. God is not an unfinished entity that needs or requires other things or entities to complete Him. He stands alone without segregation or separation of any kind by any means.

• Irreducible

Third, God is not reducible. He cannot be pared or trimmed down to less than who and what He is as the simplified whole that is Himself. He has nothing that can be removed or added

that would either make Him to be God or to not be God, or to be anything different than who and what He innately and simply is as God. He cannot be minimized or maximized in any manner. Nothing can be taken away from Him and nothing can be added to Him.

- **Indestructible**

Fourth, God is not destructible. He cannot be partially or completely destroyed. God cannot be annihilated. God cannot be eradicated. God cannot be eliminated. God cannot be omitted. No aspect of God can be removed or deleted in any way nor by any increment. There is no partiality to God, so there is no destructible portion of God in whole or in part.

- **Illimitable**

Fifth, God is not limitable. By no criteria can limitation be externally placed upon God. God will not act against His nature and attributes, but this is in no way a limitation since His state of being defines the true reality of existence. Imaginary scenarios have no reality and are therefore excluded for their laughable silliness. Imaginary circumstances in no way relate to the reality of God and Him being illimitable. An arbitrary and ridiculous hypothetical situation concocted in the feeble mind of man can in no manner be considered a limitation for God. God being illimitable is not subject to any speculation or superimposition of pointless ideas by man. For God, there is no barrier, boundary, obstacle, hindrance, intervention, or circumvention that could limit Him. Nothing external to God can limit Him; and nothing internal to God would limit Him according to His character and conduct as the foundation for His activities. God is “eternal act”, so nothing temporal can limit His eternal economies of action.

- **Incomprehensible**

Sixth, God cannot be fully comprehended; and the extent to which He is comprehensible to man is because He has

revealed Himself by, in, from, and through His Word (both the Son Himself and the written record of scripture by inerrant and infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit and human authorship). God's incomprehensibility in no way means man cannot know God within the bounds of the doctrines of the Christian faith. His incomprehensibility means that no one can know God apart from His own revelatory activities to man of Himself; and that even Believers cannot comprehend Him as an event of accomplished aspiration and human endeavor. God's incomprehensibility is not an unknowability that precludes human access altogether. Rather, the incomprehensibility of God is rather a conditional pursuit that requires spiritual life and enlightenment from God Himself; and that in no way will everything about God be able to be revealed to man within creation and this physical life. Our everlasting existence beyond this life will include ever-more coming to comprehend God whom we cannot apprehend for ourselves.

NECESSITY

God's incommunicable attribute of necessity is His total lack of contingency, which is the absolute that God depends upon nothing and no one else for His existence. He alone is the only necessity for Himself as the Uncreated and for the entirety of all that is within creation. He used no tool/s or implement/s, tangible or intangible, to create anything. He required no help or assistance from anything or anyone to be Himself or to create all else. Nothing and no one else is necessary or required for God's Self-Conscious Self-Existence or for anything or anyone in creation. There are no other gods necessary for God's existence, nor are any other gods required for anything regarding God's activities. The Son and Holy Spirit are included in/as the one God. "They" are "Him" as one *ousia*. The one "what-ness" of God's *ousia* is the only necessity, and there is no other besides Him or beyond Him. God exists and acts by no contingency upon or with or because

of any outside agency or entity of any kind. He is the only preeminence that exists.

ASEITY

God's aseity indicates that He exists only by and from Himself. Not only is there no necessity for anything or anyone else to exist for Him to exist, but His Self-existence means nothing exists apart from Him which He did not create and whose creation owes its sole cause to His Self-Existence. And God's Self-Existence is from and with his Self-Conscious reality as the only existence. His *hypostasis* ("who-ness") is the seat of His Self-Consciousness which determines His *ousia* ("what-ness") as the seat of His own wealth of Self-Existence. In this manner, His aseity is inclusive of both His Self-Consciousness and His Self-Existence, for they are both aspects of each other in indivisibility.

UNITY

Unity is God's incommunicable attribute indicating that the whole of God is a pure Oneness with no divergence or deviance or diversity or division. Unity is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in total and complete inseparability while retaining discernability between them in both internal and external functionality. God's unity is the only authentic unity. Man cannot have unity apart from participating in God's unity; so any pursuit of man for unity on earth can only be by means of God's nature and man's participation in it through the salvific blessing of such fellowship. Outside of God is no unity. Unions may be made apart from God, but unity itself is unapproachable and unattainable without God's ontological reality of existence at the core of the uniting.

RELATIBILITY

As an incommunicable attribute of God, relatibility refers to God being the exclusive source of any meaningful relation. Since the *hypostasis* is the foundation of objective reality of existence, only God as an *hypostasis* provides the foundation

for all created hypostases to have relatability. God alone is the reason man can have any relation with God. Man is not reciprocal and provides nothing. Even the things within man that are functional for relating to God are within man by the creation of God alone and therefore come from Him alone. This means, in the negative sense, that if someone says they cannot relate to God then they do not know God. God provides access to His relatability in salvation when man is in fellowship by having been baptized into Christ and believing in the Son according to the Gospel by the Word and Spirit.

THE MULTI-AUTO (FROM SELF) ATTRIBUTES

Greek uses the prefix “auto” for whatever comes from self. Automatic means a machine operates by itself, whatever task it does. An automatic transmission shifts gears for itself. An automatic car wash washes and rinses a car itself. Any automatic device does this. The Latin for “from self” is “per se”, which is how one of these attributes has historically been labeled, but they have been labeled here with the Greek prefix for uniformity.

- **Autoconscioidity** refers to God’s incommunicable attribute of being Self-Conscious, and is closely related to Him being Self-Existent. His Self-Consciousness is the foundation for all thought and action pertaining to creation and its coming into existence by the Divine Creative Utterance. All other consciousness depends upon God’s own.

- **Autophainoidity** refers to God’s Self-Shining as His appearance that has real presence. It is not just a symbolic or reflective presence, but it is His real appearance, face, or personal presence. The glory and brightness of God’s presence is such that no man can look on Him and live. This does not pertain to the Son, whom God sent to be the “face” and personal presence that we may everlastingly look upon.

- **Autosatisity** refers to God’s Self-Sufficiency, meaning He is in need of nothing or no one else for all He is and does. This applies more to His work and deeds rather than just to His existence or being. It encompasses all that He does/has done/will do (though those are all time-based terms of expression).

THE MULTI-OMNI ATTRIBUTES

Omni is a Latin prefix, and has historically been used for these particular incommunicable attributes of God. Three are commonly referenced, while two are generally seldom referenced. Omni simply means “all” followed by whatever the word is that is attached to the prefix.

- **Omnipotence** is a reference to God being all-powerful, meaning there is nothing beyond His power to will and to do. This does not mean God will do all things. There are many things God has constrained Himself not to do because such would violate His character and attributes. But the reason He does not do certain things is not because He “cannot” do them in an outright sense of impossibility. Things which are beyond authentic reality are among the things God refrains from doing, just as He refrains from doing anything contrary to His nature.

- **Omnipresence** is a reference to God being everywhere present, and is considered to be understood as simultaneous. Elsewhere, you will see that time and space are referenced together, and that is the case here. Omnipresence indicates that God is everywhere while being unconstrained to be any specific or particular place. God is not confined or constrained to be anywhere though He is everywhere. God is not constituted to be equal with or subordinate to creation. He pervades space entirely while not being limited to it in any manner. Further, God does not “go” from one place to another. He is not serially present in spatiality just as He is not intermittently present in chronology.

• **Omniscience** is a reference to God’s all-awareness and all-knowingness, and is considered to include all plausible potentialities and possible probabilities as well as whatever is true and real in existence. In this sense, God is aware of all outcomes or contingencies that could ever arise within creation. Nothing is beyond His awareness and knowledge on any level; and nothing within creation can obscure or diminish or dilute His awareness and knowledge from the greatest to the least of any and all things. As an aside, God does not have to “count” to know “how many” of anything there are. God does not have to engage in any discovery or exploration or experimentation or enlightenment processes to have clear and complete and exact and explicit and concise knowledge of absolutely everything without exception.

• **Omnisapience** is a reference to God’s all-wise attribute. Differing from knowledge, wisdom is both a reflection of His Self-awareness and creation awareness. Wisdom (*sophia*) is the ability to conduct oneself with regard to one’s relationship with God, while prudence (*phronesis*) is a subset of wisdom, and is the ability to conduct oneself with regard to one’s relationship with others and with all situations and circumstances. This means there is no comparison or contrast between that which man does or imagines and that which God wisely and prudently extolls to man on man’s behalf according to God’s perfect wisdom. There is nothing about man and man’s ways or about the world and the world’s ways that escapes God’s ability to conduct Himself according to both His own attributes and all that is in the world that either agrees with God’s standards or disagrees with God’s standards. Nothing can stand against God’s wisdom, just as nothing can stand against God’s knowledge and power and presence and love.

• **Omnibenevolence** is a reference to God’s all-good as His nature. He is the standard for goodness, and as such all else must be measured by this standard. God’s omni-benevolence

includes the fact that man deserves nothing whatsoever except suffering, hardship, death, punishment, and complete separation from God. Therefore, salvation itself is the primary omni-benevolence of God by demonstrating His love, long-suffering, patience, meekness, forgiveness, and restoration to man with faith and hope, grace and mercy, and the great love wherewith He hath loved us. Even His judgment is merciful, though few comprehend that. The sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. None of this is because of us or our goodness or anything about us that is redeemable. We are redeemable because God determined to create us as redeemable and then to redeem us for no reason that has anything to do with anything benevolent or good in us or about us. It is His benevolence alone that is benevolent. We have none to give or receive apart from Him.

GOD'S INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| ETERNITY | Non-Temporality |
| INFINITY | Non-Quantifiability |
| IMMENSITY | Non-Spatiality |
| IMMUTABILITY | Unchangeability |
| IMPASSIBILITY | Non-Passionability |
| IMMATERIALITY | Non-Materiality |
| SIMPLICITY | Indivisibility |
| NECESSITY | Non-Contingency |
| ASEITY | Self-Existent |
| UNITY | Non-Disparity |
| RELATABILITY | Non-Solitudinarity |
| AUTOCONSCIOITY | Self-Consciousness |
| AUTOPHAINOITY | Self-Shining/Presence |
| AUTOSATISITY | Self-Sufficiency |
| OMNIPOTENCE | All-Powerful |
| OMNIPRESENCE | All-Present |
| OMNISCIENCE | All-Knowing |
| OMNISAPIENCE | All-Wise |
| OMNIBENEVOLENCE | All-Good |

– Chapter 2 –

ONTOLOGY

Many words in the English language are very common in regular usage while others are not. For most people, ontology would fall in the latter category. It is most often considered an unfamiliar term, and unless engaging in theological or philosophical reading and study it is not a word that comes up in everyone's daily vocabulary. When addressing existence in a formal sense, though, ontology becomes one of the primary and pivotal terms to study and utilize.

For many reasons, in the modern western world there is a far more prevalent emphasis on doing (economy) than upon being (ontology). Action is easily apparent, and presumed to be both more valuable and more readily evaluated than being. Therefore, how one discharges one's life in action is the perspective from which the western world perceives reality and determines value and worth.

Being is ontology; ontology is the foundation for doing (economy). This is because living things do according to who and what they are as beings. Doing cannot be undertaken by a non-existent thing. Something or someone must be to do. In simple grammatical terms, a noun is necessary for there to be a verb. Doing requires a doer; and all doers will do. Even the most passive and inactive or involuntary form of doing requires being for the doing to exist.

Ontology comes from *ontos* (that which is really and truly or indeed reality) and *ology* (the study of). *Ontos* is the present participle of *eimi*, to be. *Ontos* is "am-ness". "I am" is an ontological statement indicating being and existence that is real and true.

In Koine Greek (the common language of the people during the time of inspiration for the inspired NT text), the idea of *ontos* as introduced above is found represented in the term *hypostasis*. It is this word that holds one of the greatest levels of significance in both the Greek language and in literature as a whole referring to man personally.

God's ontology is Spirit as an *hypostasis*. *Hypostasis* is from hypo (under) and *histemi* (to stand). This term refers to the underlying foundational objective reality of existence, and applies to God and all things that are real or true in creation. Some hypostases are animate, while others are inanimate; but all hypostases have real and true existence and reality. A rock and a man are both hypostases, but only one of those is animate (man, of course).

Hypostasis is most often rendered in English as substance, meaning the sub-standing reality of existence which underlies all else regarding any particular thing. God is an *hypostasis*, and His own real and true reality of existence is the form in which He created all things in the cosmos. Therefore, man and all other living things that are real and true are an *hypostasis*. Reality and existence are hypostatic. Creation is comprised of substance, both animate and inanimate. Reality is determined by being an *hypostasis*, whatever the object is in creation. The fact that an *hypostasis* underlies all other aspects of being means that the principle aspect of a being is the reality of existence as an *hypostasis*. There are other aspects of a being, but they are all supported by the underlying foundation of the being which is the *hypostasis*; and the quality of all else is determined by that which underlies it all. This makes the qualities of God and the qualities of man primary and preeminent in importance, because all qualities of the *hypostasis* determine all qualities of that which the *hypostasis* underlies.

For man (who is not self-existent or self-sufficient as God is by His incommunicable attributes), reality of existence as a being is determined by being underlied by the *hypostasis* of Him who created man. Originally, God's own *hypostasis* underlied Adam's *hypostasis* (and Eve's, by extension of her immediate creation from Adam rather than from dust or by procreation).

According to original divine order, Adam was created with his spirit prevailing in internal operation. He functioned exactly as God intended and created him with the spiritual life of constant communion with God. As a living soul, Adam "had" a soul because he "was" a soul (the soul being distinct from the spirit but inseparable from it as the two joined intangible aspects of man).

But when spiritual death and sin occurred in the Edenic event, Adam's *hypostasis* was dysfunctionalized; and a secondary aspect of man's constitution became the insufficient and invalid substitute foundation for man's internal and external functionality. As man's spirit died within him, it was buried within man's immateriality as man became more driven by flesh in his remaining physical life.

Man's soul became immediately ascendant within man to function differently than designed by God. The soul displaced the spirit in preeminent operation because man's spirit could no longer commune constantly with God for primary internal functionality. By this internal inversion of human spirit and soul, man is thus in dire need of resurrection from spiritual death for the inner man to operate appropriately. The prominent point of this summary is to note that man's need for resurrection should not be ignored while emphasizing man's need to be set free from sin.

The *hypostasis* is the "who-ness" which underlies the "what-ness" of God and man. The "what-ness" refers to the *ousia*, or

the wealth of essential existence. These terms are very close in meaning because they are interrelated and inter-functional, and both are intangible and immaterial aspects of man rather than the body. *Hypostasis* and *ousia* are more closely related to the concept of spirit and soul, but that is an oversimplification. But the primary understanding is to know that the *hypostasis* underlies the *ousia* as the foundation of reality and existence. In short, the *ousia* is the essence, referring to our humanity as the “what” which we understand as our essential manner or wealth of existing. For this, the foundational sub-standing is the *hypostasis* of the individual as our substantial manner of existing. These comprise man’s substance and essence, as defined.

Hypostasis (substance) and *ousia* (essence) are an important understanding for many reasons, even though this process can take time and a lot of acclimation to things that are at odds with what one may already perceive. But the important consideration is knowing how language and scripture utilize words and what they actually mean.

Substance and Essence are the core of how and why man was originally created in the Imago Dei (Image of God). Though God is divinity and man is humanity, the constitution of man is a direct reflection and complete embodiment of God’s non-constituted reality that is intrinsically divinity. Man is the full and complete representation of God in original creation, and with the latent capacity and capability to partake of God’s divine nature for all that man lacks in his own limited created nature.

Some worthwhile effort can be poured into understanding the *hypostasis* as the “who-ness” and the *ousia* as the “what-ness” of both God and man. At the core of our existence (and indeed determining it) is the fact that we are an individual person as a “who” and we are an individual human as a “what”. The personal reality is primary, while the human reality is

secondary. We are human because we are an individual person. This is opposite to what most presume, which is largely based upon Darwinian Theory and evolutionary influences upon our thought.

In the animal kingdom, for instance, there is only a herd of zebras because there are individual zebras. We have reality of existence because God created us each as individual persons; and all these created persons comprise the human race collectively because of their shared material and immaterial constitution. (This is one of several primary reasons why Collectivism is an antichrist system of thought, et cetera.) The same is true of the animal kingdom, wherein there are species because there are individual animals that have shared material and immaterial constitution.

The Nature of every Essence is what determines its outward and physical aspects. We are human, for instance, because it is our nature to walk upright and bipedally with certain limbs and certain musculoskeletal features. This means the nature (*physis*) is both primarily immaterial and secondarily material. The term “physical” comes from this term. But the physical is not merely tangible as materiality. All materiality is determined by immateriality as qualities of existence prescribed by the *hypostasis* and the corresponding *ousia* with its *physis*.

Though this seems, and actually is, very complicated, it can be comprehended over a period of time with great detail and intricacy of understanding. The foundation is to recognize that the immaterial is superordinate to the material. The intangible is primary to the tangible. The Substance and Essence are foundational to the Bodily. This is indeed why man is a living soul who is embodied. Man is not merely a “what”, but is a “who”; and both the “who” and “what” are each and together much more than merely walking bipeds of skin, bone, tissue, and blood. There is far more to our existence and

reality than the organic outward assembled parts. “Who” and “what” we are is more significant than bodily assemblage or attributes and abilities.

Our focus should be upon the inward man, not the outward man. And the quality of our substance and essence of existence can either be determined by our own self-attributes or by God’s attributes and His grace and mercy and faith and hope and love because we are hypostatically translated into Christ. This joining of our *hypostasis* to the *hypostasis* of our Lord is the foundation for our reality of existence as one who is born again. This joining to Christ is our being born from above. It is our translation into Christ. It is our being seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Though there are quite literally volumes to teach on this topic, our ontology is the primary form of our reality and existence. The immaterial aspects of our constitution are our true and real self. Who we are in Christ is authentically who we are; not who we are in this world and by any/all other standards.

From this foundational truth, we must know that our being is primary to our doing, and all of our doing must come from this quality of being that is our hypostatic reality in Christ. “That which is not of faith is sin.” This passage explicitly points to the quality of the source of the action, not merely that activity has occurred. Any doing apart from faith, even allegedly “good works”, is sin. There is an entire lifetime of activity we can expend our energies doing that could all be sin, even though appearing to be decent and good things. But if faith is not the source of the action, the qualities of the action only meet the needs of the one being served rather than the one demonstrating the service.

A lost person devoid of Christ can bake desserts and make meals and give shelter and warmth to anyone who is needy. But all of those can be activities undertaken apart from faith.

It is hard for the average person to conceive that an entire lifetime of seeming humanitarian efforts could all be sin. But that is the truth, and it is affecting millions today who have no awareness that this is the truth.

The greatest comfort imaginable is that God Himself is the source of changing our ontology, so we can know that He alone is the One from whom our being is derived. Not just in the original creation as part of eventual procreation, but our individual self-life of reality and true existence. Only God can hypostatically translate us into Christ, and He does so by the *hypostasis* of faith directly from His own *hypostasis*. By, in, and through the Son, the Father gives us all things that pertain unto life and godliness; and He does so by giving us the foundational objective reality of existence that we can have in Christ alone. And He has given us His Holy Spirit of promise as the earnest of the inheritance, for which we are joint heirs with Christ. There is no greater gift for God to give than to give us His Son and the attendant ontology that only the Son has and can give. No amount of our striving and doing will lead to our apprehension of God's ontology as found for us only in our Lord. And He gives it to us freely. To be. And then to know and do and walk.

EPISTEMOLOGY

For those who are not Seminararians (or Philosophers, as a secular comparison), Epistemology is an often neglected or avoided area of study and awareness. It is a vast and significant area of study to undertake scrutinizing the hows and whys of the operation of the mind, including the connections between external influences and the resulting thinking and thoughts from such things. Examining such influences and other similar contributing factors for the many and varied things that affect every aspect of the content of our thoughts is why it is valuable to engage in the field of Epistemology. Our thoughts and their direct and indirect sources and influences need to be examined to determine quality and veracity.

Epistemology is a word comprised of *epi* (the prefix meaning upon) and *histemi* (to stand), along with *ology* (the study of). Human epistemics (the rare noun that is used to address all aspects of human thought and its influences and processes) are that which stand upon whatever underlies human existence at its core. From looking at the previous section about ontology, we can know that the foundation underlying the “hows” and “whys” and “whats” of human thought is the *hypostasis*, which is man’s ontology.

Since ontology is the foundation for epistemology, we can know that the primary reality is our being rather than our knowing; but that our knowing can have the same source as our being, which is the very substance of God. And contrary to this, any other source for our epistemological functionality is improper and insufficient for our epistemology to have the same reality of existence as our ontological reality as an *hypostasis*.

Objective reality of existence comes to us from God via our *hypostasis* being joined to the *hypostasis* of Christ. Therefore, we can and must know all things according to the Word and Spirit rather than from other sources. But the vast array of other sources of informative influence are nearly endless, and are very persuasive once they have been given preeminence in our hearts and minds over reality and truth as given by God alone through faith and grace.

The difficulty with corrupted human epistemics is that the only way to analyze and assess human epistemics is through the epistemics themselves. So it follows that if the means and manner of human epistemics have become affected by diverse influences and sources of informative passive and active coercion, then it becomes an almost insurmountable task to be able to objectively evaluate any particular portion of one's own epistemological content and functionality.

How can a corrupt mind examine a corrupt mind? How can a compromised mind evaluate its own condition and all it contains and produces as concepts and principles of operation and functionality? What could be more difficult a task than using one's own insufficient mind to determine all the areas of insufficiency within itself? What could be more potentially futile and fraught with nothing but error? It is indeed to be considered as among the very most difficult things in this world, and impossible for non-believers beyond a certain rudimentary point.

This is where an understanding of repentance is vital. In an upcoming chapter, the topic and full meaning of repentance will be addressed at length, but for now it needs to be briefly understood for the purpose of examining epistemology and the hope that we have of having our minds accessible to evaluation according to the Word and Spirit.

Repentance is first and foremost a noun. Though often, or only, considered to be a verb, repentance must be understood for what it primarily is. Repentance is *metanoia*, from *meta* (with, in a specific sense; and also with the connotation of a change of condition) and a grammatical form of *nous* (mind, which is more than merely the thinking “organ”, but is the seat of all moral evaluation within man).

Repentance is the changed condition and state of being of the human mind, being given access to intuitive spiritual knowledge by being born from above and communing with God. This is an issue of access, not acquisition; so it is a relational portion of our standing in Christ rather than something that is accumulated by experience. We grow in the degree and measure to which repentance becomes more and more prevalent as our changed cognitive reality of existence, but it is not because we have to climb a certain ladder of human experience. God changes the condition of our mind initially, and then subsequently continues changing the state of being of our mind to be perpetually more and more according to His Word and Spirit rather than our fleshly limitations and inclinations that ensnare and degrade us.

Thus, the influences upon our epistemics are multiple and cumulative, and are generally very subtly and manipulatively coercive to human cognition. There are ideologies and worldviews of all kinds, and an endless variety of “isms” and “ologies” that conflict with reality, even if only in part. None of these represent truth, while only God’s Word and Spirit depict and convey truth. And being raised in a church setting does not mean a lack of vulnerability or exposure to literally thousands of sources of epistemological corruptions of every gradient from minimal to extremes.

The summary of all this is that the Christian life is given for repentance; but that only begins with confession of sin and its results in our lives. The continued responsibility of Believers

is to perpetually have significant change in the condition and state of being of our minds. When the negatives of sin begin to fade, then there are endless positives that are included in the life of repentance. As our mind becomes more and more substantially (hypostatically) changed at its core, we are much more able to live far beyond the mere considerations of sin and its ravages upon our lives. We become increasingly free to come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; to the perfect (complete and mature) man. We become perpetually more freed from the power of sin, even though never free from its presence until after the final judgment.

Our lives are to be spent being and becoming more like Christ in ontology, rather than merely engaging in endless self-effort of deeds that are very often not even of faith. We begin to know more and more the rest that is in Christ, and that our labors to enter therein result in the fruit of the Spirit and life and peace. Repentance is an ultimate state of being for our mind and its condition, not just repeated heart-felt acts of sorrow for sin committed. Repentance is to take us beyond sin in our epistemological functionality. Our epistemics are to be made free from this life and its entrapments of desires. Our minds can be more and more fixed upon God by His Word and Spirit within us. We partake of the divine nature so that His grace is administered for us to enter into His rest that is in Christ.

The process of this happening in us and to us has to begin with an “offloading”. This is a divestiture of all we think we know. It begins with examining every possibility for corruption and prayerfully evaluating all that we think and believe by the objective standards of God rather than whatever source or system or informational means we have utilized that is not the Word and Spirit of God. Often this is a set of ideologies that are not necessarily bad in a sense of man’s standards or the best of the world’s standards; but still are not according to God’s standards as the source of their being in our hearts and minds.

Corrupted epistemics come from so many places in culture and society, it is a long-term daunting task to begin identifying and isolating them from actual truth. The differences are often slight, at least at first consideration and evaluation. Many things “seem” right, just because they are familiar and are not openly and outright moral sin as we have always known it. Just because it is not murder or thievery, that does not mean it is not sin and a corrupted ideology of life suggested and perpetuated by fleshly reasoning and desires or worldly and demonic manipulations.

Most often, off-loading corruptions in the mind requires relentless and continual teaching and vigilance on a monumental scale. Once a series of corrupting patterns and influences is outlined, it helps to begin recognizing other similar things; and soon one begins to see these subtleties nearly everywhere in all aspects of human life and interaction. Every voice is a potential negative influence against the truth of God. It is no wonder the spoken word is utilized in this fallen world as the primary means of corruption in human hearts and minds. God’s Word is the only creative force, and brought everything into existence and is the means of our salvation by the Son who IS the Word.

How and why we think every facet of all that we think is far more susceptible to corrupting influences than we are ever able to admit unless and until we have spent time coming apart from it all by Word and Spirit through Law and Gospel. Our informative should be language and literature relative to the Christian faith, not cultural and societal sources. It is God who informs and performs within us according to both Law and Gospel. We should look only to Him and His Word for absolute truth.

The entirety of each chapter in this limited publication is to establish one’s epistemological foundation and enable a

change in condition and state of being for the mind of man. These sections with their content are supposed to change how and what you think. The concepts outlined in each section are designed to inform with truth so that God can and will perform His miraculous salvation in us. All this written material is to give rise to truth supplanting untruth in all hearts and minds who read and discern its purpose and content.

Epistemology is so foundational to our functionality in every way because it is directly built upon our ontology as a state of being. Being precedes and underlies knowing. And knowing precedes action or the establishment of valid patterns and pathways to walk through life. Having corrupted hows and whys to human thought within the human mind is the ultimate dysfunctionality, deviation, and disorder in creation next to being completely lost without Christ. The Christian without a substantially changed mind will live a life of untruth and impenitence that can unfortunately be little different than the lives of those who are unbelievers.

Cognitive Dissonance, Confirmation Bias, Dunning-Kruger Effect, and several other major labels/titles outline the human cognitive struggle for truth against denial, deceit, and every manner of dilution, diversion, pollution, and perversion available from the nearly endless sources of corruption in this world. It is imperative to begin pushing past one's cognitive restrictions and limitations and begin knowing the degree to which all "hows" and "whys" of one's cognitive functions have produced so many erroneous "how/why" components in our thought processes. Only the Word and Spirit can do this, and it is an aspect of our repentance for our minds to have their condition and state of being changed by the power of God. To refuse is stubbornness (at best) or rebellion (at worst). The former is as iniquity and idolatry, and the latter is as witchcraft.

Everyone's epistemological functionality is severely compromised and in grievous error that needs correction and deliverance from many forms of cumulative corruption from this world, our own flesh, and from the enemy of our souls which is the entire host of hell. More than evangelism or any other precept in scripture, repentance as the changed condition of our minds is the primary focus of the Christian faith, and our most arduous and ardently difficult process of being and becoming all that God has given to and for us. It is not easy to admit that most every how and why in our minds is wrong to some extent, whether great or small. But it is a necessary beginning for the ultimate promise of coming to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That is a high calling, and a high calling comes with a price to pay. But the result is the mind of Christ and partaking of the divine nature to be free from sin and death to the greatest extent possible in this life; and then completely free from it for all everlasting with Christ.

ECONOMY & METHODOLOGY

ECONOMY

In addressing each category or section of theology, the previous topics of Ontology and Epistemology are among the most difficult to comprehend both initially and subsequently over time. Being able to consider one's own being and knowing characteristics is something that requires considering the image in which man was made. The *Imago Dei* (the Image of God) is the foundation for man's constitution and functionality, and it is thus required to have some comprehension of God (as revealed in His Word) to begin comprehending human existence and self-conscious awareness.

In contrast to Ontology and Epistemology, the facets of Economy and Methodology are relatively more simple to comprehend. Economy comes from the Greek word *oikonomia*, which most directly means "administration of a house or of property, whether it is one's own or someone else's". *Oikonomia* comes from *oikos* (house) and *nemo* (to administer). It is a word that depicts all our "doing" as contrasted with being and knowing, but for which is required proper being and knowing. Economy is the discharge of our existence and knowledge thereof as engaging in every simple action we undertake. As a created being, our existing and knowing will most often result in external acting as we administrate that which is around us in our lives. Each and every action is economic.

In reflecting on what Economy means, it is helpful to further know that man was created as a steward to fulfill God's administration according to original divine purpose. In the Edenic Fall and the lapse of the cosmos into spiritual death

and sin, man's stewardship and ability to administrate the house created for him was compromised to the point of abrogation. This is why there is need for a Savior who can both restore the stewardship of God's creative purposes and restore man to a position of stewardship. This is also how faith and the works therefrom are to be considered. Man's Ontology and Epistemology are restored so that man may be and know what is necessary to administrate the house with each and every action man undertakes. Without salvation from the Father by/in/through the Son, man could never be resurrected into restoration to be able to steward God's creation.

Oikonomia is the word often rendered as "dispensation" in English for some theological systems to insist there are several or many dispensations as the means of God administrating or governing His house that is creation. But we have only two dispensations in this context. The Father administrated the house directly and indirectly at creation and delegated the stewardship to man, who failed, and God remained in the role of governing the house.

When the Word was Incarnate, He came to the age of lawful human inheritance pertaining to the flesh (referring to human custom in Jewish culture). Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension determined Jesus Christ took His place in administration to govern the house (the household of faith that is the betrothed Bride of Christ).

All things were given into His hands. The Son has inherited all that is the Father's, including governing the house that is creation until the final judgment. And all judgment has been given into His hand as well.

What this means for us is that we are ruling and reigning with Christ in His kingdom now during this earth age. We are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. In Him, we live and move

and have our being. We are joint heirs with Christ. Therefore, our economy (all our action) should be of faith, and for the furthering of the kingdom of God in this life. And since we must have a basic awareness of our Ontology as an aspect of our Epistemology, we must know these things for them to be action resulting from our being and knowing as proper doing.

The most common verb in Greek as a pure action word is *poieo*, which appears throughout scripture as the depiction of all our actions. *Poieo* comes from the base word meaning quality, and is an adamantly emphatic grammatical form demanding to know the quality of the source of the action. Therefore, it is not of primary importance merely that we take action, rather it is vital that any and all action comes from the quality of the source for our existence and cognition, which is God Himself by the faith and grace He gives.

It is never enough to merely engage in seeming good works, whether from the source of the Mosaic Law or from the source of ourselves. All administration of the kingdom of God must be done by and from faith as its source. The quality of the source of every action that scripture is perpetually referencing is faith itself. Any and all actions that have their primary source as the Law or as our flesh will be dead works devoid of faith. No matter how benevolent the alleged good work is, if its source is not faith then the source is sin.

The greatest summary for Economy is that all demonstrated activity must be either from faith as its source or from sin as its source. Only the former will be adequate for us to be stewards with Christ in governing the house.

METHODOLOGY

Having dealt with the previous three facets, it is essential to understand that being, knowing, and doing have a final associated facet. Methodology comes from the Greek word compound of *meta* and *hodos*. *Meta* is a prefix that takes on

additional meaning when added to another word, just as do all Greek prefixes and suffixes. *Meta* means amidst in the sense of accompaniment such as companionship or fellowship. There is a word for more intimate togetherness, but *meta* is more commonly used to express conjunction or union. *Meta* is the prefix included in the Greek word for repentance (*metanoia*) that indicates the state or condition of mind which accompanies the doing of anything, or with which one acts.

Meta is joined by *hodos*, which means way or path in the sense of being the road on which one travels. *Hodos* is the manner of life or action, the custom as the manner or method of obtaining something. It often is used to signify the directions of God and His providence and removal of impediments. It is the way God has established as the means of properly pursuing orderly and technical processes and principles in the handling of any certain subject or matter.

Though repentance is more fully addressed in a later chapter, it is important to introduce the basics of its meaning here. Methodology is contrasted to simple Economy in that it employs God's objective standard in all actions as a pathway in which to walk rather than merely each individual step of action along that pathway. Methodology is the consistently developed manner in which one walks the pathway of all acting and resulting actions according to our delegated authority in discharging God's righteousness within the world.

When Jesus declared He was the way, the truth, and the life, He was referring to *hodos* when saying "the way". The pathway we are to walk in this life is comprised of learning Christ and walking in His ways relative to every situation and circumstance. And doing this by faith with God's grace divinely influencing our hearts is walking in love and

obedience according to how Christ walked in His earthly life as Messiah.

The central focus of addressing Ontology, Epistemology, Economy, and Methodology is to see the essential foundation and components to ultimately walking the pathway that is the life we have been given in Christ. If we do not understand some basics about our existence and some crucial “hows” and “whys” of what we must or must not think, then the quality of the source of our actions is not going to be faith and will therefore be sin (even as allegedly good or benevolent works). And putting together each economic step of doing from the proper source makes all doing proper as the pathway we walk in Christ.

Methodology is then the solidification of all that produces it in the first three components (Ontology, Epistemology, Economy), and becomes the means of perpetually maintaining the functionality of all four aspects together.



The pathway of the Word Incarnate leads inexorably on to and back to Ontology. This completes the circle of these four components whereby our established way and path will always lead to Christ as the foundation for our Ontology. Our doing and path-walking reinforces all we are and know once it has been established in companionship and fellowship with Christ. This is why repentance is so far-reaching as the means of us living in full agreement with God and His objective righteous standards for both inward character and outward

conduct. We become established in His ways and we step aside from that path less and less as we gain understanding and agreement in all things with God according to who and what Christ is and did (and does within us).

The sequence and continuous cycle of Ontology, Epistemology, Economy, and Methodology is given for us to have complete functionality in Christ in all things. As we recognize Him as the foundation for our existence, then our knowledge grows both intuitively and experientially as we know Him more and do all He has given for us to do as we walk the pathway He trod while in the likeness of sinful flesh as Theanthropos.

The danger is to always start in the middle (for instance, with Economy) without consideration of our foundation for existence and to do according to what we wrongly presume we know. And this becomes especially problematic when those repeated actions become the way or path we walk, rather than the pathway that Christ established according to the righteousness of God. We walk and faint not. Our being and knowing must be foundational to all doing so that we may walk and never fail. Jesus is not only the truth and the life. He is the way. And the way is mentioned first in the biblical declaration.

GREEK ANARTHROUS NOUNS

As possibly the most centrally crucial understanding in theology overall, a basic comprehension of Greek nouns is likely the most illuminating of all areas of grammatical exploration for meaning and application. There's an in-built futility and irony about this fact, which is that any realization of the importance of this comprehensive process comes as part OF that process. The scale and scope of how important it is to begin engaging in this pursuit is that it is not and cannot be known prior to undertaking attempts to comprehend it. No one is going to engage in a competition or activity they are not even aware of.

It is impossible for someone to know what they do not know. It is even more so when having to address how and why someone does not know what they think they know, not merely the fact that they do not know. We are so limited by the missing “what” that we cannot even begin to consider any “how” or “why” contributing to that missing “what”. And if unenlightened, someone cannot and will not be able to think or know anything about what they do not think or know.

The primary reason that a noun construct is so important is because all other grammatical parts of thought and speech depend upon the noun to even be necessary or have purpose and function. Yes, we think in language, so the parts of speech are first the parts of thought for us. And it is at the thought level that many linguistic nuances and details have to be dealt with for understanding and consideration of truth and reality.

Nouns are persons, places, or things; therefore all nouns at their base are things. Without nouns there are no things to do anything, leaving a complete void of acting and actions. All

adjectives require nouns as that is what they are modifying. Likewise, all adverbs require verbs to modify, and verbs are dependent upon nouns. Pronouns are noun forms and thus require nouns as the primary part of language. Participles and gerunds and other more obscure grammatical parts are also dependent upon nouns.

By this deduction, we know that the primary central focus of language is nouns. If nouns have a certain form or lack thereof, then it affects language directly and our thought processes indirectly. Even more pertinent, if nouns in a certain language include an immense scale of meaning and that scale is reduced by something missing from a noun form in another language, then meaning is lost and not represented properly and thoroughly by words in the second language. The same is true in the inverse. Compatibility of noun structures between languages affects thought and speech dramatically when dealing with languages and representing meaning in its many varied nuances.

This subject involves translation principles and processes, and the primary language is called the donor language while the secondary language is called the receptor language. When an original language is translated into a successive language, both languages will have certain obstacles to expressing meaning. The primary obstacle will generally be the mutual abilities of the donor nouns and receptor nouns to process and present meaning in each language uniformly and sufficiently.

Languages are divided into two major categories according to how they are structured and the manner in which they convey meaning. These two categories are referred to as high-context and low-context. High-context languages have a dense structure that means each part of speech carries a high level of context, and that is the primary way in which meaning is represented and conveyed. Low-context languages have a less

dense structure that means phrases and concepts carry most meaning, and that is the primary way meaning is depicted.

High-context languages depend heavily upon word meanings and an understanding of the semantic range for words. Semantic range is the scope or breadth of meaning for a word, and high-context languages tend to have greater breadth of meaning. Low-context languages depend heavily upon word usage in phrases and have little emphasis on individual word meaning on the scale of high-context languages.

In English, for instance, many will speak of love in reference to a very wide variety of people and things. The object of the love is the greatest determination of what kind of love is meant in any particular sentence. Loving a favorite food is different than loving a family pet. Loving a family member is different than loving a favorite hobby. But a low-context language will derive meaning from the content of each phrase rather than the dimensions of meaning in the semantic range of any particular word. In this example, love is a very fluid concept applied to many things; and those things are named in the sentence so that the meaning is clear.

In Greek or Latin, though, when one of the words for love appears it already carries a high degree of meaning even without a designated object. The words in high-context languages already have an innate high level of specific meaning that is not like low-context languages and their phrase-derived word meanings that provide clarity apart from the actual lexical meaning. This is why so few English speakers can accurately and consistently repeat definitions for words. Low-context languages do not primarily and directly convey meaning through individual words alone, but in phrases with words that connect the word groups as a whole concept.

This creates a difference in perception when attempting to address precise word meaning and usage in translation. If the

donor and receptor languages have different noun structures that have different abilities to convey meaning, then the language with the greatest ability to define meaning will be incompatible with any word from the language with the lesser ability of its forms and parts. Such is the case with high-context and low-context languages in particular.

Greek is the God-chosen original language for the written record of the New Testament in its earliest forms. These are called the autographs. So the precedent for meaning has been set by the Holy Spirit who breathed this truth into those who would be its human authorship and scribesmanship. The Greek words and their scale and scope of meaning are preeminent because their source chose this means to convey His truth to and for human understanding in the holy scriptures. Apart from this truth, the Bible is merely a book like any other literary work.

When considering Greek and its word-meanings, the first consideration is that Greek is a high-context language with very dense meaning in every word and part of speech. Grammar is more complex in Greek. Lexical meaning is much more intense in Greek. And Greek is capable of a far greater manner of expression than lesser-context languages as a whole. English in particular is one of the lowest-context languages in human history, so it is always going to be a generally greater challenge for English speakers to access and apply the same amount of representative meaning from any particular words in translation relative to Greek. This means English speakers have to work harder at going beyond the structural limitation of their own native language when dealing with texts that are translated from higher-context languages like Greek.

The unfortunate fallout of this truth is that most English speakers shun learning anything about the original biblical languages and insist that it is unnecessary or unfruitful.

Whether it is a form of cognitive dissonance or just unwillingness to learn or some degree of laziness, this criticism is the furthest thing from the truth and has crippled the English-speaking church in ignorance and division. To limit the understanding of basic word meanings and parts of speech is to limit one's own understanding. Scripture says that in all our getting we are to get understanding; but that is too often the widespread precept that is ignored when it comes to learning beyond the natural scale and scope of one's native tongue. And it is an issue of thought, not just speech; because thought and speech are cohesively two aspects of the same foundation that is intelligence and expression. And intelligible thought and speech is the primary manner in which man is originally in the image of God.

This extensive diatribe is to introduce one of the most difficult things there is to embrace when it comes to the human condition and human thought and reason. Language so patterns our thoughts that it takes great desire and effort to include anything that is not within the framework of our own native language and its abilities as the platform for our understanding and expression. In other words, we simply do not want to know anything about what we think we already know. And this is especially true of addressing "how" and "why" we think "what" we think about everything. We are reluctant to address the source of our thought.

Since all action in our lives is to be about the quality of the source of the action, then it is vital that we set aside our slothful and selfish tendencies to confine our considerations to only the familiar accommodations of the context-level in our native languages. The more difference there is between language context level, the more effort is required to comprehend what the donor language is saying in fullness and completeness of translation into the receptor language. Therefore, English speakers can be the most reluctant to have their means of thinking expanded and changed to

accommodate higher-context language patterns of thought for meaning and application.

With all of that said, Greek has a primary default form for all of its nouns, and another form that can be added to narrow the scope of meaning for these nouns in their intrinsic form. All Greek nouns refer to the most expansive application of the word possible and with all its scope of meaning intact. English, on the other hand, only uses words in a narrow range of meaning depending upon each phrase and its other content. Greek works from the greatest density of meaning to the lowest density of meaning based upon each word contained in any context. English works from the lowest density of meaning to no higher density of meaning than is absolutely necessary to be compatible with the rest of any given phrase or sentence.

Greek words carry all of their semantic range of meaning into any phrase or sentence while English words carry only a very limited portion of their semantic range into any phrase or sentence. As an example, nobody is ever wondering which flavor of ice cream one loves when one says they love their mother or father. Likewise, there's never any thought given to how much one might love a certain sport or activity when one expresses that they love their family pet.

In Greek when the word love is present, then every consideration of its range of meaning is included and must be particularized in some manner to narrow the scope or scale of the meaning. While the grammatical form that particularizes the noun in this manner is called the definite article, the default form of Greek nouns is anarthrous. Anarthrous is from a (no/not) and arthrous (segmented). Anarthrous nouns are unsegmented, meaning every qualitative characteristic and functional activity of the noun is included in the word meaning.

English has definite and indefinite articles, but they're barely significant in their usage. The English definite article is merely "this" or "that" particular thing, whereas the indefinite article is "an" or "a" thing in general. "A" table versus "this/the" table. English articles define very little other than to make the simple determination of which table.

The Greek word for table automatically includes every kind and form and size and shape of table and all their usages and applications. Greek begins with the macro meaning and works toward the micro meaning with as little exclusion as possible. English works from the micro meaning and works toward the macro meaning with as little inclusion as possible. Greek is always trying to say exponentially more in each word while English is trying to say merely what is being said at that time and little else. There is literally an intention of language to express things, and Greek and English are at the opposite ends of the scale for this. English is expedient while Greek is extensive. Greek always gives more while English always gives the little required within the local phrase.

The primary inclusion of Greek anarthrous nouns is that they always represent qualities and characteristics while also always representing latent functional activity. As an example again, Greek would represent a table designed for eating with the inclusion of all the table "does". Table does not have a verb form. Tables are static and inanimate objects. So a table does not accomplish the act of "tabling". There's no such verb as "tabling". But the anarthrous noun form refers to all the things a table "does" by design as a part of its "tableness". A dining table holds up serving platters and bowls and plates and flatware with food and beverages of all kinds. None of this is the table in action that requires a verb. But the table most definitely is doing quite a few things by design as being a table. It is an ontological state of every table to "do" whatever it was designed to "do". But again, a table does not engage in a verb

for its internal functional activity by design. A table just does what a table does by nature and state of being.

English has no way of thinking or speaking of innate internal functional activity with a simple grammatical form as a part of speech. Such things can be expressed in English, but it requires a volume of words and a bending of the mind to accommodate new information and functionality. English never speaks of nouns in this manner because it does not have the anarthrous form as its default. Instead, things are divided mostly into this/that/the or a/an categories for nominal expression and comprehension. No thought is given beyond that because there's no linguistic structure to frame such constructs. But Greek speakers think in an anarthrous manner about everything. So the disparity between how deep, broad, and wide one thinks is highly dependent upon language itself. This is why so many do not or will not break out of their default linguistic understanding. It requires lots of energy and effort put into reasoning, and that is not how most want to apply themselves.

Greek anarthrous nouns are crucial to understanding what scripture says in all its minutiae and nuances. And it begins with the fact that English thought and speech processes tend to automatically convert nouns into verbs for easier immediate understanding. This leads to having false concepts that become an extensive and passive false belief system without being aware of it in the least.

For instance, faith is a noun. Faith is not believING. That is the verb. Faith is a thing given by God, and by specific means. Faith comes out of the message of the Gospel, and the message comes by means of the Word (Rhema) of God. This is not believING, even though every noun engages in the verb. What it means is that faith does the believing, therefore we have the thing that believes so we believe. But it is not us that believes.

It is faith as the thing that does the believing and we have that thing.

A good example is a cell phone. We often say we are going to call someone. But we do not have any cellular circuitry as hardware or the software compatible with a carrier's system so that we can call. We must have a cell phone that is the thing that does the calling. Therefore, we are calling; but it is only because we have the thing that does the calling. We utilize the thing given to us so that the thing that does the acting for us can accomplish the action. Nouns verb. Things do. Phones call. People use phones to call. People use faith to believe because faith is the confident and assured persuasion that produces believing and all that is done by and through faith in action as the verb.

In like manner to faith itself, no one is going to call someone any distance away without using a cell phone. So just as a cell phone is required for calling, faith is required for believing. We utilize what we have been given for its appropriate purpose, but it remains that faith is given out of the message of the Gospel by means of the Word of God. This means that any source of words can be the means of any message; and any message will have some form of faith come out of it. The difference in Greek terms is that faith is articular (particularizing via the definite article) as "the" faith coming out of the "the" message by means of the Word. Any other word produces "a" message and "a" faith that is not the particular faith that comes from God. So false faith is rampant. Just because something is believed does not mean it is true. And just because something is said does not mean it is the true message. Only God's Word produces the true message out of which comes the true faith. Many have heard another voice and another message, even if it contains many of the same terms as the true message. This makes Greek anarthrous nouns even more critical so that we can know every qualitative characteristic and functional activity of every noun that is

doing all these things they individually do according to divine design.

In several of the following chapters, it will become increasingly clear how important Greek anarthrous nouns are for explicit meaning. Hamartiology and Ponerology specifically highlight the need for far greater understanding of noun forms in Greek compared to how we think in English relative to these topics.

HAMARTIOLOGY

As with most areas of doctrine within any systematic study of theology by topic, Hamartiology (Sin-ology, or the study of sin) is widely misunderstood and misrepresented in the modern western church-at-large. The same partial or incorrect understanding is prevalent throughout Protestant denominations based upon specific tendencies for miscommunication and mistranslation of scripture. There are also hidden difficulties from scripture's transitions from Greek to Latin, and also on into English.

Latin particularly presents most terms relative to a paradigm of action rather than of ontology (the state of being). Greek has one primary structure and several secondary grammatical structures that lend to the mental conceptual process of transforming nouns into verbs in a practical sense of comprehension and application. English is limited in how it can “receive” words and meanings from other languages that require more than a word-for-word exchange of terms (with their accompanying parallel definitions). Much of this has been covered in the previous chapter on Greek Anarthrous Nouns.

The Greek word for sin is *hamartia* (G266) and is an anarthrous noun, to which can be added the definite article. Without the definite article, the default meaning of all Greek nouns is referring to the qualitative characteristics and functional (internal) activity. The noun is never about the external activity (the doing), or the resulting post-action completed act (the thing done). All references to sin are to the state of being and condition of man, or to a specific aspect of that state/condition as the source of any activity or resulting actions in particular.

Hamartia comes from *a-* (no/not) and *meros* (share, part, place). Thus it is a privation and negation of *meros* as “the missing share, part, place” within man. *Hamartia* is to be accurately understood as a “somethinglessness” (like a void, chasm, or hole) rather than the manner in which most nouns are a “something”. It is not a stand-alone “something” as is most often thought, like a cancerous tumor is added to healthy tissue, etc. *Hamartia* is explicitly referring to a complete lack of something, not the presence of something. And this is relative to the internal qualitative characteristics and functional activity of all the inner faculties of one’s being, spiritually and mentally.

Further, *hamartia* is a term used since ancient times for archers. It refers to the archer’s inability to hit a target. But much more precisely, it refers to the archer’s “archerlessness” [as his fatal character flaw]. *Hamartia* is the state of being of an archer relative to everything involved in hitting targets. So *hamartia* is applicable whether the archer is actually wielding a bow or not. *Hamartia* applies to an archer at all times. It is a term that indicates what is missing from him as an archer, not something that is present.

In this manner, *hamartia* is not about the action of merely shooting arrows from a bow. *Hamartia* is about the archer as the source of the action, and whether that archer is capable of wielding a bow, aiming it, and shooting it at a target. The term is all-encompassing, and is both relevant and relative to the archer’s capabilities. *Hamartia* renders an archer as incapable of aiming for and hitting any target; and this applies to the archer regardless of his posture or activity. An archer must not necessarily be engaged in shooting arrows with his bow for the term to be applied. In fact, that is the central point of using the term for an archer.

In ancient literature, *hamartia* was the “fatal flaw” of the hero character that hindered him. For example, Oedipus (from the ancient Greek tragedy) was a wholly moral man apart from the fact that he murdered his father and married his mother, not knowing who either of them were when he committed the acts. Apart from these things, Oedipus was a great and benevolent king. But this still does not eliminate the fact that his patricide and incest were the foundation for him becoming the legal king. This horrific flaw cannot be set aside, regardless of how great and moral of a king he was during his reign. This angst caused him to blind himself, and his queen (his mother) committed suicide. This internal flaw was something that was somehow missing from Oedipus, not something that was present within him.

Hamartia is in reference to the innate inability of an archer to wield his bow, aim for a target, and shoot at the target. For man in relation to how God has employed the term in the inspired text of scripture, the “target” is God’s standards as determined by His own righteousness and character. *Hamartia* then means that having sin as a state of being and condition, man cannot wield the sword, aim for the target, or effectively shoot and hit the target of God’s righteous standards. And these standards are both internal (character) and external (conduct), with an emphasis on the internal quality being what determines the internal activity for external activity.

This “missing share, part, or place” is what man lost in the Edenic event of disobedience. It is predicated upon the onset of spiritual death and the accompanying lapse of the entire cosmos when man fell from his original place, which had been designated by the creative utterance of God according to divine order. Man was originally righteous and spiritually alive. When the spiritual aspect of death came (the cessation of constant communion with God having given way to communion with the serpent), then the original share, part,

and place man was given “went missing”. Man originally had righteousness according to the standards of God. It was the process of interaction with the serpent that brought the spiritual death that also included attendant sin as the state of being and condition of man.

This is often referred to as “original sin” and the early church father Augustine is credited with outlining it in Latin terms, but it is most often wrongly understood as being merely based upon Adam’s individual action in the garden. Rather, it should rightly be understood as “lack of original righteousness” because of the spiritual death-induced sin condition that was conveyed to Adam in his newly fallen state of lack. The inheritance of sin as a condition is NOT because of Adam’s actING or resulting actIONS, but because of the source OF those actions once spiritual death brought about a “fallen” internal human nature because spiritual life was no longer present. (Spiritual life is *zoé*, which is constant communion with God; and is the highest blessedness of the creature.)

The clarification presented in this chapter is necessary because of how English speakers perceive and express nouns as verbs, since translation from Greek presents difficulties in retaining word meanings in English. It also means that sins as the resulting individual acts are mistaken for scripture referring to the sin state-of-being and condition as the source OF any and all such actions from acting.

The progression of grammatical forms is: *hamartia* (noun), *hamartano* (verb), and then *hamartema* (resulting noun). The beginning point is always the noun, out of which comes the verb which establishes the finished actions as the nouns accomplished. Ex: Premeditating the act of stealing an item, stealing the item, and the stolen item. Scripture uses the verb *hamartano* to refer to acting, and it is relative to *hamartia* as its source. Every noun produces action as a verb which brings about resulting acts. The completed acts are then the things

(nouns) on the post-action side of the verb. The sequence is noun-verb-noun.

The terms for these in Greek are very telling because of their frequency of appearance in scripture. *Hamartia* is the noun as the initiating source of action. It is the state-of-being from which all acting comes forth in verb form as the actING. *Hamartano* is the verb indicating actING that we know as sinnING, and which produces a resulting act that we recognize as finished actION. *Hamartema* is any act resulting from the verb, and is the completed act of any individual sin.

One of the strong indicators of these distinctions is the fact that *hamartema* is the term for any resulting individual act of sin, and *hamartema* is only utilized 4 times in the entire New Testament text. This means scripture is seldom addressing the sinS that are committed, but is primarily addressing the sin that is the source of all acting and actions.

The Greek article added to the singular term sin is almost exclusively referring to the particular aspect of the sin condition that is the source which produced the acting and resulting act of sin. So even when indicating individual sins' causal source, scripture is always referring to man's state-of-being and condition as one with sin in his nature and in his members. This refers to that which is missing in man to be his own source of sinlessness and/or righteousness. There is none good but God. Man is not, and cannot be, good in and of himself as the source. Man MUST have God's righteousness imputed to him in Christ or man is helpless and hopeless in his innate condition of spiritual death and sin.

Besides Hamartiology, there are two other associated fundamental areas of theology that are crucial to theological understanding. These are Ponerology (the study of evil) and Thanatology (the study of death). Few things, apart from God Himself, are more misunderstood than these three areas of

theology. Ponerology and Thanatology will be covered in the following two chapters.

The crucial take-away from this Hamartiology chapter is to recognize that sin is not merely (or even mostly) the resulting acts that man commits. Sin is man's state-of-being and condition, and it is the result of the Edenic fall that accompanied spiritual death (see Thanatology). Therefore, trying to fix one's life by merely changing outward behavior will accomplish nothing toward salvation for man. Man's inward character is still void of God's righteousness, even with modified behavior. This does not mean there is not any benefit for man to modify behavior apart from justification by faith and grace, it just means the benefits are in this life only, and are not salvific for everlasting life apart from redemption and justification in Christ alone.

That which is not of faith is sin. This means that anything not done out of faith is done out of sin, and that includes any and all of the allegedly "good" works everyone does that are presumed to be good according to man's standard. But the primary action word in Greek (*poieo*) is a strong interrogative form taken from a base that means quality. Therefore, every action is determined according to the quality of the source of the action; not merely that there was action. If it is not a work of faith then it is a work that comes from the sin condition of man, and that includes ANY allegedly benevolent or philanthropic work that benefits others. They will receive the benefit, but the one acting apart from authentic faith will not benefit relative to salvation.

The sad truth is that a majority of professing Believers are living lives of alleged "good" works that are not of faith, but are from their own faithlessness in attempting to modulate outward behavior to produce works that are somehow perceived as being salvific because they are considered to be good things to do in this world. But the quality of the source

of the action is most often the same as heinous acts of sin. It is not the outward action alone that determines that a work is “good” or not. If an outward action is not produced by faith as the inward character, then the quality of the source of that action is sin just like any act or work that is considered to be “not good”.

The works of faith are distinct from the works of the flesh and the works of the law. Works of faith are faith in action as faith saves; the works of the flesh and the works of the law are dead works. The danger is always in presuming to understand Hamartiology and going about to establish one’s own righteousness by whatever means according to modified behavior and an emulation of God’s standards. This is in contradistinction to God imputing righteousness in salvation and being the source of all action in our lives by faith.

PONEROLOGY

Like its interrelated companion theology category Hamartiology, Ponerology is almost universally misunderstood and misrepresented even at the level of academia by scholars. This is for the same reason as the majority of theological error, which is the miscomprehension and misapplication of vital key words and their meanings.

Ponerology is the study of evil, which is the Greek word *poneros*. But the foundational problem is that the Hebrew word for evil, *ra'a*, is what is so grossly misunderstood and misused.

Dualism is the culprit in misinforming widespread understanding on this topic. “Good” and evil” are depicted in Dualism as being separate competing things that are in a literal “race to the finish line” for an end-of-the-world victory. Nothing could be further from the truth of what “evil” is relative to “good”.

In Hebrew, the word utilized for “good” is *tov*; and its companion opposite depicting “evil” is *ra'a*. But unlike in Dualism, they are not distinct competing entities at all. *Tov* has an overarching general meaning that refers to complete appropriate functionality relative to divine order in creation. So when God declared things to be *tov* (“good”), it meant that those things had a state of being as absolutely functional according to design. But function can be compromised or modified for lesser functionality. This is called “privation” or “negation”, and is the negative for the positive that is *tov*.

Therefore, it must be noted that *ra'a*, by definition, is strictly the privation or negation of *tov*. It has no other application,

and is only relative to *tov*. *Ra'a* is exclusively a gradient of “un-“ or “non-“ corresponding to *tov*. So, like *hamartia*, *ra'a* is a “something” in the same manner that a void or a hole is a “something”. *Ra'a* is the degree to which functionality has been lessened or removed from *tov*, and relates to nothing else. The two words are bound to each other in this manner, and *ra'a* is NOT a stand-alone entity as in Dualism.

Another English translated term for *ra'a* is calamity. Under the broad semantic scope of what *ra'a* can mean are many other words used in translation as well. In adjective form, *ra'a* refers to inferior quality. Moral deficiency, mischief, misfortune, adversity, unpleasantness, and calamity all demonstrate an assembled meaning that is abstract. These all indicate the inability to come up to good standards. The verb means to spoil by breaking to pieces, to make something useless. It means to dash into fragments or shatter, or to destroy or to shake violently. In the moral realm it denotes any attitude which rejects God's authority or any activity which is contrary to God's will.

“Good” can only overcome “evil” by restoring lost or missing functionality according to divine design and order in creation. So it cannot be a Dualistic application for two separate and competing things at all. *Ra'a* is equivalent to a dimmer control on a light, which can be set to any level. It is not like a standard on/off light switch. The resulting light output can thus include any increments from extreme brightness to extreme dimness. This means that “evil” is anything less than the fully-functional original prior to the negation or privation that caused it to be less functional. The dimmer switch analogy equates lower and lower settings of brightness to more and more evil.

In this manner, evil is the result of something that happened, not an original pairing of something with good as an opposing thing. It is not a “race” between two separate created things.

Evil is that which has been removed by whatever degree from the original good that God created. An example would be an internal complex clock movement with all its intricate mechanical parts. If something from outside the clock and its workings were added to disrupt its internal functionality, the clock would then have some measure of dysfunction.

Another analogy would be a wrench thrown into the gears of any large piece of industrial machinery, like a sorter, packer, or shredder, etc. Evil is equivalent to when an outside event disrupts the ongoing events of such a machine's complete overall operation, resulting in subtraction of function from the addition of the wrench within the machinery's moving parts. The reduced operation can be very slight or complete failure, or anything in between. Evil is that which results when original functionality has been diminished by any degree from what God created.

The primary thing to understand immediately and preeminently about *ra'a* is that it is uniquely and exclusively subtraction (of function or operation) by addition (of an external factor, force, or object) that results in a modified lessening or cessation of an established proper working order. *Ra'a* requires that something external to original divine order must be added to subtract functionality. In this sense, the cosmos is to be understood as not being created in a fragile state susceptible to privation and negation of its core foundations of functionality. For evil to exist or occur, it was required that something from outside of earthly creation be indirectly introduced within the cosmos that was never a part of the original direct creation of God. The source of this evil was in the heart of the serpent in the heavenly realm, in whom evil was conceived by his own inner devices (concepts) against God directly. Vile jealousy and pride were the addition in Satan that subtracted his innate angelic functionality, and was introduced into the earthly creation during the temptation and transgression of man.

It was the Edenic occurrence of spiritual death and sin that introduced evil into the cosmos; and this happened by the deception and lies of the serpent. It is this Genesis 3 occasion that introduced the privation and negation to functionality that can be called *ra'a* relative to *tov*. Being created in the image of God, Adam left his first estate and thus lapsed into a fallen state and thereby affected the entirety of creation's functionality by that engagement. The central fixture of the inhabited cosmos (for it is man who was the inhabitant, and in God's image) had compromised the delicately perfect functionality of both himself AND the world which was given to him as his delegated dominion.

And just like with Hamartiology, the primary concern is NOT sin itself, but with spiritual death and the need for resurrection to spiritual life along with the restoration of man to a deathless state. Sin was and is attendant to spiritual death, and the wages for it is (physical) death. This is why Thanatology (the study of *thanatos*, death) is also a companion theological field to both Hamartiology and Ponerology. All three of these areas of theology are grossly mis-engaged and misapplied in the modern western church-at-large.

Thanatology will be addressed in the following chapter, but suffice it here to say that death is NOT annihilation, eradication, elimination, termination, or extinction. Without properly understanding death relative to spiritual life (*zoé*) and not merely physical life (*bios*), the trifecta of Hamartiology, Ponerology, and Thanatology are seldom understood for what they are and mean by modern English-speaking Believers.

The primary understanding of evil must be that it is NOT a stand-alone entity or force that is a separate and distinct opposing entity or force to good. Evil is the degree of lack in

functionality that would otherwise be good. It is the privation or negation of functionality in accordance with divine order. Any lessening or deviation in functionality is evil, up to and including complete dysfunction at the edge of complete destruction.

An automotive example might be helpful. A new car that comes off the assembly line and has been tested and inspected, and thus certified, is completely functional. Every component has been assembled and triple-checked, and the car is driven from the manufacturing assembly line to wherever it is parked to await shipping. At this point, the car is *tov*, meaning it is fully functional according to design and assembly. For this car, anything as small as a burned-out interior light bulb is *ra'a*, dysfunction in comparison to full functionality. But the most extreme accident in which the car is virtually destroyed is also *ra'a*. It is a gradient from the least possible to most possible dysfunction pertaining to original complete and authentic functionality by design. Both the burned-out light bulb and the total wreckage of these examples are *ra'a*. So *ra'a* is not one single thing, just as it is not a stand-alone thing compared to *tov*.

From this, it should be immediately understood that even the slightest things in our lives that are not according to God's design for man are evil. Evil includes when even the most miniscule lessening of God's righteous standards is present within man. The threshold for evil is not some arbitrary determination of the heinous from the merely bad. Evil commences with any increment of dysfunction that is a deviation from absolutely complete functionality in regard to God's standards and implemented design for creation.

The gradient for evil can be appropriately summarized from bad to worse with terms like dysfunction, deviation, and disorder. The former to the latter is the gradient of worsening of functionality. In live teaching, I often refer to this as the

“un-“ing and “non-“ing of functionality. Dysfunction is the smaller range of departure from divine functionality, with deviation and disorder being categories that are each greater on a spectrum or continuum of quantity and/or quality of departure from original design by God.

As Ponerology is understood, along with Hamartiology and Thanatology, Believers should be enlightened that even the slightest diversion from God’s perfect and complete functional creation is evil. It is only in this proper context that passages like Isaiah 45:7 can be understood. God creates evil. Not because He directly created/creates horrific things as stand-alone opposing things to good. God’s creative act is utilized to work in and through any form or manner or degree of dysfunction that is now in the world because of spiritual death and sin. It does NOT mean that God is evil and the direct cause and source of evil. It means that there is no gradient of dysfunction, deviance, and disorder that God cannot work by, in, and through in the overarching process of His restoration of the complete functionality of His divine order in all things and in our lives. He will cause or allow any level of the already-present dysfunction of the world to be utilized in our lives for our ultimate good.

God is not the author of confusion, nor is God the direct cause and source for evil. But everything that is absolutely functional has the potential for dysfunction. If and when this potentiality occurs, whatever is malfunctioning must ultimately be fixed. God is the only one who is able to mend what is broken in man and in the cosmos. He is the only Creator. The only thing anyone else could do is contribute something that altered functionality for a time to whatever degree. Only His redeeming salvation in Christ could re-functionalize that which deviated from His original design in creation. God alone can save man, and in Christ has done so. He is the only one who can re-functionalize that which He created that had something added for subtracted functionality (relative to divine design and purpose). God alone is the only

possible source for the salvation of the cosmos and for man. Only He who originally constituted the creation is capable of reconstituting the creation.

So as with all other areas of theology, Ponerology is Christological and points to the Son as the only hope for mankind in this lost and dying world. Christ alone is our only hope for salvation for only He can finish the work that saves man, and has already done so. It is always vital for the major areas of theological study to be Christocentric, and focused primarily upon God as the solution in salvation. Evil has been banished in Christ. In Christ alone is the entire cosmos ultimately re-functionalized according to divine order.

THANATOLOGY

Having already introduced and addressed the key theological areas of Hamartiology and Ponerology, it is necessary to also consider Thanatology alongside both of these. Thanatology is the study of death (*thanatos*). And *thanatos* must be considered strictly in the sense of comparison and contrast to life; for death was not created, but is the eventuality of a lack of life as a state of being. Therefore, death cannot be defined without first defining life. And life must be defined by first realizing there are multiple words for life.

The two primary Greek words for life are *zoé* and *bios*. *Zoé* is man's state of constant communion with God, and is the highest blessedness of the creature. This is spiritual life. *Bios* is the life of the earthly and material aspect of man relative to the dust of the ground. This contrasts to spiritual life as the immaterial aspect of man relative to the life-giving breath of God. This life originally occurred in Eden, and man was delegated to be the instrument of procreation as mediate creation.

Immediate creation is God directly creating Adam from the dust of the ground and breathing life into his nostrils to become a living soul. Immediate creation is also God causing a deep sleep to come upon Adam and directly forming woman from Adam's rib. Mediate creation represents the life-from-life process of procreation as delegated to man in man's original functionality according to divine order. This is the central concept of God being a "seed" God. God has put life in life so that life may secondarily produce more life after its own kind according to whatever forms of life were created.

God is not perpetually busy with constant immediate creation of every form of life on the earth. He has placed life within all life to be capable of procreation. Plants, animals, and man all have life within them; and all are (in normative functionality apart from the lapse of creation) able to procreate relative to their original design. The key understanding is that God is not perpetually toiling to bring forth life directly and immediately from His own continuing works. God has placed life within all life to reproduce according to its kind.

What this also means, apart from merely the physical form of life known as biological life (*bios*), is that God has endowed man particularly with spiritual life. He originally and immediately did this in creating Adam. And Adam was originally in a state of being that could not physically die. So this is why understanding both spiritual death and physical death is crucial to understanding not only Thanatology, but to understanding Hamartiology, Ponerology, and the remaining doctrines of the faith in all areas of theology.

Zoé is spiritual life. This life is considered to be the highest blessedness of the creature, and is from a source which is beyond materiality - God Himself. *Bios* is the life of the body and its source is the dust of the ground. The former corresponds to God's breath as its origin. The latter corresponds to the earth as its origin. These are two differing origins for the two aspects of man: the immaterial/intangible and the material/tangible. This clearly means there are two considerations for life, and they're distinct (though inseparable).

Since spiritual life corresponds to God as the source, it is the first principal (not principle) of creation. Since biological life corresponds to the earth as the source, it is the second principal (again, not principle). Spiritual life is primary. Biological life is secondary (this is the specific meaning of principal versus principle). Without the breath of God, man

would not be animate. The material aspect of man's constitution is merely dust. The immaterial aspect of man's constitution is directly from God's Spirit. This, like virtually every other theological truth, is in contradistinction to the hierarchies of man and secular studies.

The importance of this immaterial/material understanding regarding man's constitution is that God is the primary source of man's life. The earth is merely the secondary source of man's life; and the earth was also God's creation. This means the cosmos is not the primary consideration for the study of origins and causes (Etiology), and that God is the uncaused cause of all creation as Sole Creator. This is at odds with Scientific Cosmogony and Cosmology, etc. The wisdom of this world must first eliminate God and THEN explain everything from another point of origin and cause. And that is the spirit of antichrist.

But we can understand truth and life because we have the giver of life; and God is the first principal of life. He is the cause. His life is the source of all life. Without God, there would be no life. Life is derived from God alone. Life would not be possible without God. The expanse of creation could not have come into being by any other means than God's Word and God's Breath.

This vital emphasis is to counteract the erroneous tendency to consider only biological life as life; or that biological life is the primary or greatest form and aspect of life. But it is *zoé* that is the highest form of blessedness for the creature; and it is not merely existence as a biological form. *Zoé* refers to constant communion with God. Constant intangible connectivity to God by the Spirit via the spirit that was breathed into man for him to become a living soul (and thus "have" a soul).

This means that the most vital understanding of Genesis 3 in the Edenic event is that Adam and Eve had *zoé* life; and in that

zoé, they had constant communion with God, and in this they had the highest blessedness of the creature. Blessed refers to state of being, not of having something external to themselves to meet their biological needs. This is spiritual well-being in its highest state, the next closest thing to divinity itself without being ontologically divine as God alone is.

From this state, the original man and woman deviated; and in communicating with the serpent, they departed from this constant communion with God. In that day, they surely died. Spiritual death was initiated, and their constant communion with God was abrogated. This is what brought immediately attendant *hamartia*. *Hamartia*, the sin condition as the missing share/part/place, is the resulting state of being that “went missing” because their communication with the serpent forfeited their constant communion with God. The wages of sin is death, referring to the physical death that would ultimately ensue. Spiritual death (abrogation of constant communion with God) brought with it sin (the state of being and condition), and sin guaranteed physical death. Spiritual death leads to sin leading to physical death. This is all cause and effect, and that which ushered in evil within the cosmos.

With this lexical understanding, it should be far simpler to comprehend that man’s primary need is resurrection unto spiritual life. Sinlessness is only the secondary need, because sin was caused as the state of being of man because of spiritual death; and physical death will eventually occur as the price for sin that was/is attendant to spiritual death.

All mankind is conceived in spiritual death, though with biological life. And the only solution for this is the redemption of mankind by the death and resurrection of Christ alone. Man cannot revive himself from this death, and thus cannot ensure his life beyond this physical life. Only the death AND resurrection of Christ can and has resurrected us unto life in Christ.

A lack of understanding regarding Thanatology, paired with the same ignorance of Hamartiology and Ponerology, is what leaves many with layers of various false beliefs and doctrines. It is crucial that we understand sin as a state-of-being noun before it is a verb of acting with resulting acts. And it is crucial to understand evil exclusively as the privation and negation of that which is completely functional according to divine order in creation. Combining that comprehension with an understanding of Thanatology means we do not have to be confused about spiritual death and physical death, or about how death relates to sin and evil. These three areas of theology are pertinent to understanding Soteriology (the study of salvation) and what we are saved FROM and TO. We are saved from spiritual death and sin, and saved unto spiritual life in Christ with the assured promise that sin and evil will be banished from us and the creation for all everlasting.

Without an accurate lexical and functional understanding of these three areas of theology, most Believers and non-believers alike have developed concepts of these things in their minds that are most often opposite to what they are and mean. As with all things in the Christian faith, we are responsible for the delegated authority we have been given; and we have all available wisdom and prudence promised from God, along with the finished work of Christ (into which we enter and rest). We cannot afford to be ignorant of these primary areas of theological comprehension and application, and be susceptible to alternative understandings and teachings that are prevalent throughout the modern church-at-large.

REPENTANCE

One of the primary recurring corrections for modern understanding is that Greek translated into English results in most readers conceptually converting nouns into verbs. This is because of a difference in grammatical forms that causes any word-for-word English representation of Greek terms to emphasize the inevitable action that comes from nouns as verbs rather than easily comprehending the nouns on a stand-alone basis.

Possibly the most prolific example of this is with the English word repentance, because it conceptually and colloquially serves as the word for both the noun (*metanoia*) and the verb (*metanoeo*) when it is never the verb. “Things do” is the simplest way to understand the noun/verb distinction. There is no action if there is no thing producing that action. All action requires that there is a noun accomplishing any action that occurs. “Nouns verb.” This means the primary consideration is not the acting and action, but that which is doing the acting with resulting action.

Nowhere is this more significant for theological understanding than with repentance, for most have a default comprehension of repentance as it being exclusively the verb as something we must do relative to sin. Though that is true, it is the noun (*metanoia*) that is not understood, focusing only upon the verb (*metanoeo*) of repentING rather than upon what repentance means as the noun that does that repenting. This leads to a misunderstanding of many things in all areas of theological study.

Greek is an agglutinative language, meaning it forms words from a compounding of other words together into one new

word. This most often includes prefixes and suffixes that each carry significant stand-alone meaning to any word to which they are added. And one of the most common of these types of “compounding” is the addition of prefixes that are also stand-alone prepositions.

This is the case with *metanoia* and *metanoeo* (repentance, the noun and verb respectively). *Meta* is a preposition that means “with”, and most often indicates a change in condition for whatever word it is attached to in agglutination (the compounding referred to above). *Noia* and *noeo* are the necessary differing noun and verb forms of *nous*, which is the Greek word for mind (but not merely the mind as a vague reference to a thought-producer, but as the center for moral reflection and of all that a self-conscious human is in the image of God). *Nous* is the perceptive elemental faculty of man’s intellect, and has vast capability as the foundation of all that man was originally created to be according to the Image of God (Latin - *Imago Dei*). The *nous* is the seat of everything relative to a self-aware living soul as God created us.

When *meta-* is compounded with *nous* as *metanoia*, it indicates a changed condition and state-of-being of the mind at the fundamental level of the quality and characteristics of our intellectual comprehension of all things. The “with” of *meta* reflects the fact that God, by His grace and mercy, gives us a corrected mind that is joined to His own so that we might know His standards of righteousness for both inward character and outward conduct in all things. This change of condition and state-of-being is the “thing” (noun) we did not have and God is granting to us. It is the gift of us receiving a mind that is renewed according to revelatory spiritual understanding by being resurrected unto spiritual life in Christ and restored communion that was lost in the Adamic event in Eden.

The reason it is so vital to recognize and understand the noun/verb distinction for repentance is that it is the granted changed condition and state-of-being of the human mind that enables us to have the mind of Christ in all things, both internally and externally regarding thought and intent with accompanying acting and actions. This highlights that we can do things with either a wrong motive or a right motive. We can often produce identical or similar actions depending on whether our mind is truly represented in those actions or we are doing them for less-genuine reasons. *Metanoia* (repentance, the noun) gives us the necessary inward change of condition for the mind that we can think, speak, and do that which is according to God's heart and mind.

The extended significance of *metanoia* is that the *nous* (mind) is also in-reaching relative to the subconscious as well as the conscious, so the change in condition and state-of-being that *metanoia* encompasses includes even the deep and unknown aspects of our sub-conscious that eludes our own recognition or comprehension. This subconscious is what is referred to intangibly when scripture refers to the "heart" of man. It represents that which is deep within man relative to being the "seat" or source of self-consciousness. The heart is what is referred to as "desperately wicked and deceitful, and no man can know it" in scripture, so the change of condition for this aspect of man's mind (*nous*) is crucial relative to salvation. The mind must be changed according to its condition at the heart level, not merely as someone nominally responding to information to think slightly different or better thoughts.

Metanoia is far-reaching in its scope of meaning, including even the source of thoughts and intents, and not just the thoughts and intents themselves. The significance is that the human mind is so debased and corrupted at its core that God changing its entire condition and its foundational state-of-being is the only hope for man's salvation from his wretched heart and mind. And God does this by bringing man's mind

amidst His own as the “with” of *meta-* that is compounded with *noia* in the noun. This “thing” of repentance is the heart and mind change that is the only hope of man ever looking beyond himself for truth and life and peace. Without God bringing man’s mind amidst His own, man cannot and will not ever be able to have any other condition or state-of-being than whatever comes from within himself from his wretched heart.

The valuable indicator, then, is that we must begin understanding the importance of repentance as a noun before considering it as a verb. Any “thing” is going to act according to its condition and state-of-being. Animals are an example of this, as are inanimate objects. Things function as what they are at their core of being. Things “do” according to what they “are”. So a change of condition at the state-of-being level means repentance (the noun) must be the thing we are granted by God and receive from Him. For our hearts and minds to be “with” His is something only He can do. We cannot “do” our way to having our minds “with” (*meta-*) God’s mind. Our hearts can only be knit to God’s by His act alone. We cannot repent our way to having God’s mind by the things we do. We demonstrate outwardly the changed condition of our heart and mind by what we do in repentING (the verb). Repentance (noun) becomes repentING (verb). This is what is meant by the simple statement, “nouns verb”. The noun is that which does the verb. Repentance repents. The changed condition demonstrates changed action.

The similarity here is depicted well by the parallel understanding of the Greek words for hearing (*akoe* and *akouo*, noun and verb). Hearing is often used as a noun, and is translated as “report” or “message”, because it most accurately is the thing heard. This will, of course, include the faculty of hearing; but the clear emphasis is to be understood as NOT the passive action of the auditory processes, but of the sound itself. Hearing is not attentive listening as an initiative act by the hearer. It is the inclusion of receiving auditory

input, but the importance is the thing heard. During a fireworks display, the explosions are the things heard. So the noun is not referring to the intentional act of us processing the auditory sound, but is referring to the explosions as the things heard. *Akoe* is the noun, hearing. This is not the verb, hearing. The verb is the resulting act of the noun relative to the thing heard. Hearing, as a noun, is about the message or report, not about the act of engaging in receiving sound.

So, according to this comparison, repentance (the noun) is not primarily about what we do to accomplish an action. Repentance (*metanoia*) is the thing given to us by God, which is the gift of changing the condition and state-of-being of our heart and mind by bringing it amidst His own mind. This is the “with” of *meta*, and is the only way our heart and mind could ever perceive or conceive God’s manner of thinking from His own heart and mind. Without this “thing” that is repentance, our heart and mind would forever be corrupt beyond recovery. There is absolutely nothing man can do to change the condition of his heart and mind or its state-of-being. The mind has its “seat” in the spirit of man; therefore we must be spiritually resurrected from within by God’s action alone. We cannot resurrect ourselves, nor can we change anything about the core faculty of our mind.

The lapsed condition of man’s mind is tied directly to the spiritual death of man in the Garden. This death passed upon all men (Romans 5). It is this spiritual death that is the abrogation and cessation of constant communion with God. Spiritual life (*zoé*) is the resurrection unto that constant communion, and is referred to as “the highest blessedness of the creature”. This only occurs by God’s acting upon man’s heart and mind to change its state-of-being from death to life in the Spirit. Man cannot act upon his own heart to change this condition of the mind. It requires the “with” of *meta* for the human *nous*, which only God can provide. And God provides His own mind for our repentance. He does this by

resurrecting us unto spiritual life. This is us being born again, which is being born from above. We cannot birth ourselves into this resurrection life.

Repentance (*metanoia*, the noun) is the changed condition and state-of-being of the heart and mind of man. This is our mind being brought into action as God has delegated and designed for man to think. RepentING (*metanoeo*, the verb) is the resulting action that we bring forth from what God has done in us by giving us the noun that is repentance. This should be our focus, and not upon what we think and say and do as the verb, as though we accomplish something that contributes to the change that God alone makes at the core of our ontology (being). The economy (action) that we bring forth from our repentance (the noun) is the verb of repenting, and that is the acknowledgement of the distinction between our selves as the source and God as the source relative to any and all thoughts and actions.

We must repent as an act (the verb). But that authentic repenting will be ONLY because God gave us the heart and mind condition to be able to do so. We could never validly repent if God did not give us that which is the source of our repenting, and that is the changed condition of our heart and mind in union with His own. The outward activity of our conduct does not determine the condition of our heart and mind. It is the inward character that does so. Repentance (the noun) is necessary for repenting (the verb). Without the former, the latter is just man's futile attempt at changing outward expression and behavior with no internal fundamental change. God and His mind are the necessary foundation for our repentance. Repentance is the noun that will perform the repenting which is the verb.

CONVERSION

In parallel with repentance (the noun) that was previously addressed, conversion is an inseparable and integral understanding that is crucial to contrast with repentance itself. Repentance (both the noun and the resulting verb) includes the turning away from other thought and action. This is solely facilitated by God's mind being that which man's mind is brought amidst and have its fundamental condition changed. This is the "with" aspect for the heart and mind's changed condition and state-of-being (see the previous chapter on Repentance). Without God bringing man's mind amidst His own in this manner, man could never have valid moral reflection for any objective standard of character and behavior.`

While repentance (noun and verb combined, as they should be understood) refers to the turning from previous thought and action, "being converted" (*epistrepho*) refers to the accompanying "turning toward" that is always implicit in any "turning away". One cannot turn away from something without turning toward something else. More accurately and practically for this topic, one cannot turn toward something without turning away from something else.

The "hidden" indication here is that repentance can often be discerned by whether there is also an accompanying turning toward something different than before. In this case, the sinful dispositions of thought and deed that repentance includes are that which one is turned away from while the holiness and righteous of God is that which one is turned toward. It is impossible for true change in man to come by merely outward conduct as behavior modification. If the source of action in man's heart is evil or corrupt, then action

will ultimately be evil and corrupt. Behavior modification is a poor substitute for change by God at the core of one's being, the heart and mind. Seldom does any kind of behavior modification produce lasting change.

Therefore, very often the evidence of repentance is if someone turns TO the things of God rather than merely appearing to turn FROM the things of this world and of the flesh and its inclinations. Being converted is the "bookend" to repentance. One will turn to certain things when one turns from other things. Desires change. Actions change. But it is all because there was an initial turning FROM that results also in a turning TO that is being converted paired with repentance.

Very often, repentance is only understood nominally as a verb, and is commonly defined as "turning around" or "going the other way". Actually, those general definitions more aptly apply to *epistrepho*. *Epistrepho* means to revert or return, also meaning "to bend, to twist, to change". So *epistrepho* will be a key indicator that there has been inward change that is repentance. Being converted will be the bend and twist of change that is applied toward the things of God and of faith in general. It will be the implementation of inward desires and motivations that reflect what God has done in one's heart and mind. These will, at least gradually if not substantially, be different results of action than anything prior to repentance. And conversion will be the continued trajectory of one's heart and mind, just as repentance began that foundation of change at the ontological (being, not merely doing) level.

Being converted is not merely behavior modification by one's own initiative. *Epistrepho* is the inevitable reversion to the things of spiritual life, from which man originally strayed in the Edenic scenario. It is the return to things that have never been before, but for which God made us both inwardly and outwardly. So repentance and conversion will be continuous in regards to every situation and circumstance in life. We will

always be turning away from and turning toward things relative to whether they are the heart and mind of God.

Like *metanoia* (repentance), *epistrepho* is also an agglutinative. Epi is a prefix meaning “upon”, and indicating motion towards. *Strepho* means “to twist”. *Epistrepho* is to turn towards something, and depicts a constancy of motion to return to that which was before (the divine order without spiritual death and sin). The combination of repentance and conversion cannot be overstated. We must not merely turn from our old condition, but must also turn toward that which God ideally has for us according to His imputed righteousness in Christ. We have been given all things that pertain unto life and godliness, so we are able to walk therein by repentance and conversion.

Repentance without conversion is impossible. It is not possible to turn from something without turning to something else. And in this case, the repentance is our changed ontology (being), not merely certain economies of action that we can produce on our own. When looking at conversion, we see that we are drawn to things we have not been drawn to previously. We are able to think and say and do things that we have never before been able to accomplish or engage in. Too often, repentance is emphasized with no real understanding of the accompanying conversion that is often overlooked for what it is. It is not a matter of “being better” and “doing better”. Conversion is the genuine turning toward the things of God that man cannot indulge in apart from repentance and conversion.

An impenitent and unconverted person may be able to attend church or do other outwardly good things, but there is no fullness or joy in these things that are rooted in God’s goodness and life and love. And this is most often the corresponding criteria to determine if something is of faith or sin. That which is from the changed condition of repentance

and the returning to God's standards for righteousness is of faith. That which merely emulates true repentance is not of faith and is sin, instead being the empty good works of the law or works of the flesh. The ultimate acting and resulting actions are not what determines the quality of the deed. The quality of the deed is determined by whether or not it was done out of faith by someone who is penitent and converted, and is directed by God and His Word and Spirit to do that thing in that moment for the reason God intends and ordains.

Anyone can bake a pie or do many outwardly kind and good deeds for others. But only those things which have their source in faith by the penitent and converted can be done by faith. Those without faith can never accomplish any "good" work by their own hands according to the law or to the flesh. And only that which is done by the penitent and converted will stand as a work of faith. Seemingly good works are considered Coram Mundo (before men) but are not good Coram Deo (before God).

Repentance without conversion is not even like one shoe missing from a matched pair. If the left shoe is missing, there is still a right shoe. But in the case of repentance and conversion, if one is missing the other will also be missing. Where there is repentance, there will be conversion; and where there is conversion, there must necessarily be repentance. This will not be determined by merely what is done, but by the source of the thought and action.

Scripture is clear: "repent AND be converted." Both are aspects of the same overall thing in turning FROM and turning TO. Both repentance and conversion are integral aspects of resurrection life. The authentic Believer will both turn from his old ways AND turn toward new ways. And these new ways will be the old ways of God before the onset of spiritual death and sin.

CONFESSION / PROFESSION

Confession is directly tied to repentance and conversion. While repentance and conversion refer to a turning away and turning toward, respectively, confession refers to an aspect of the outward processes that accompany repentance (both the noun and the verb).

The Greek word *homolegeo* is translated as both confession and profession. *Homo* is the prefix indicating “same”; and *legeo* is a form of *lego*, which is the verb “to speak”. Human speech is intellect being expressed, so *legeo* indicates thoughtful speech as compared to animals merely making sounds. *Lego* (the base of *legeo*) is much more than unintelligible sounds.

Lego reflects the intelligent verbal process of speaking, and *homo-* refers to speaking the same as God about one’s sin and/or sins. *Homolegeo* is also used in reference to agreement in forth-telling according to the promises of scripture. This means confession and profession are part of a broad range of meaning in *homolegeo*, requiring multiple English words to convey the subtleties of either distinct meaning.

As agreement with God about one’s sin or sins, *homolegeo* innately indicates both the thought and speech on the matter. Confession is an expression that reflects the authentic condition of the heart in mindful accord with God’s own mind. As such, it is the accompanying result of repentance as a noun referring to the changed condition and state-of-being of man’s mind and heart at the conscious and sub-conscious levels. Confession is a whole-hearted agreement with God in spite of what one’s fleshly self has said or done in seeming disagreement. It disannuls apparent disagreement by being a

declarative of that which takes precedence over any other words or deeds in this regard.

Just as repentance (*metanoia*) and conversion (*epistrepho*) represent two inseparable distinctions (see those chapters, respectively), confession and profession are two inseparable distinctions within the single word *homolegeo*.

Confession is that which a person utilizes to heartily and verbally identify all of their thoughts, words, and deeds as sins which are in demonstrated disagreement with God's standard. The purpose of this contrition is to have one's resistant disagreement with God to be superseded by agreement. Confession is associating one's thoughts and actions with guilt and wrong-doing.

Profession relates to declaring Christ's works, while confession relates to our own works. We confess our faults and profess the lack of fault in Christ; and in so doing, we disaffirm and disassociate ourselves from our sin while affirming and associating ourselves with Christ and his sinlessness which is imputed to us as our standing before God.

The confession of one's sin (singular as pertaining to man's nature) is an aspect of initial salvation, whereas the confession of one's sins (plural as pertaining to man's actions) is an aspect of continued repentance and is done in perpetuity. As one progresses in spiritual maturity, it will include a greater awareness of sin's effects and occurrences and will be a continuing agreement with God as His word and ways are revealed more and more in one's life. This means confession is a dynamic integrated part of a Believer's life, not merely a single or occasional act. Confession is the on-going process of coming into agreement with God in an ever-increasing manner.

Paired with the thoughtful intelligent awareness of revelation by God from His Word and Spirit, confession will be accompanied by profession as the dual facets of all that *homolegeo* means. Profession will increase just as confession increases. A recognition and awareness of all that Christ is and has done will attend thoughts and expression relative to the recognition and awareness of one's own falling short that needs to be verbalized. This is profession accompanying confession.

Confession is focused upon the negative that is our thoughts, words, and deeds as sins, whereas profession is focused upon the positive that is our sinless Savior and His finished work. Confession is our recognition and agreement that we are in need of Christ and His finished work, whereas profession is our recognition and agreement that Christ is all-sufficient in being our Redeemer and Savior.

This duality of focus means we can be truly separated from our sin and sins at the thought level, as well as the level of action. We can know that no matter what disagreement we have seemingly demonstrated by inward and/or outward actions that are contrary to our salvation, we can reckon ourselves as crucified with Christ in agreeing that He was crucified for our sin. We can also know that just as He was resurrected after sin being put upon Him, we have agreement that we can live because of Christ rather than any righteousness that we have in and of ourselves. Our confession is for our sin/sins, while our profession is of Christ alone.

Our profession can and should include all the promises of God, just as our confession will have included all the faults and failures we had in our sin (unto salvation) and our sins (unto continued forgiveness in penitence). We may be clearly focused on both aspects of *homolegeo* in sequence, therefore enabling us to distinguish and separate our negative failure

from Christ's eternal victory over sin and death. We can simultaneously be contrite for our grievous sins and be gloriously celebratory for Christ's once-for-all overcoming of sin on our behalf.

The prevailing tendency is to become mired in one's own confession to the point that one might even avoid it because of the seeming weight of one's own faults. It is the profession aspect of *homolegeo* that allows us to not be so weighted with this guilt. We are also free in our profession to primarily focus on Christ's righteousness being imputed as our standing before God.

This presents the two-fold danger of not understanding *homolegeo*. To be overly consumed with merely the confession aspect of *homolegeo*, one jeopardizes their thinking and action to be increasingly guilt-ridden as only a partial agreement with God. For God sees us as He sees His Son, for we are in Christ. So a limited comprehension of confession unfortunately omits any understanding of profession. The reason for our confession is also the reason for our profession. And since *homolegeo* begins in the heart and mind, confession is very often incomplete in this sense. Profession is every bit as important as what is misperceived as confession. Declaring the positive of Christ's atonement is the necessary inclusion which is vital in thinking and speaking the same thing as God about both our sin AND our redemption from it in Christ.

The opposite danger to focusing too much on the confession aspect of *homolegeo* is focusing too much on the profession aspect. If there's merely a positive reference to Christ with no negative reference to oneself in regard to sins, then one is not speaking in agreement with God in totality. The appropriate balance of both negative and positive is necessary in valid *homolegeo*. One must understand that it is neither lament nor celebration alone apart from the other. There must be

penitence and contrition conjoined to joyful and glorious celebration of Christ. Our sins should point us to Christ, and with earnest expectation that we have our forgiveness, atonement, redemption, and salvation in Him alone and not in ourselves.

We must not depend upon the act of our confessing for our salvation, but upon Him who is professed alongside our confession regarding ourselves. This keeps us from being self-centered about our sins, and thus from us losing sight of who has saved us from our sins. Confession/profession should be both solemn and gleeful. We should consider ourselves negatively and Christ positively at the same time. An overemphasis on either aspect is to lose the balance of repentance and forgiveness, and can rob us of the joy God has given in us being able to come into complete agreement with Him about both ourselves and Christ. Both aspects are vital.

Another function of profession is to proclaim to others. Profession is something done publicly, just as it is done privately when accompanying confession. The positive of redemption in Christ is to be expressed and proclaimed, while the negative of our thoughts and acts of sin is not to be heralded to others. Profession is in all that we do in our life of faith. We proclaim and declare Christ in every way possible, and this begins in our penitence and contrition related to the confession portion of *homolegeo*.

In summary, the admonition is to understand that *homolegeo* is equally a confession of our sins as an awareness of the negative of ourselves, while also being a profession of Christ's finished work as an awareness of the positive of Him alone as Savior. Confession and profession are a means of outwardly expressing the Gospel. It should never be a meaningless ritual of empty words, nor should it be a one-sided emphasis of either our sins or Christ's work as Savior. True *homolegeo* will express both the necessary negatives of ourselves and the

precious positives of our salvation in Christ. The fact that one Greek word serves both purposes is one of the most beautiful truths of the Gospel and of our salvation. With one frame of mind upon both aspects of truth, we are able to think and speak in relation to both our sins and our Savior who bore our sins, and thus all our sorrows.

FORGIVENESS / REMISSION

The concept of biblical forgiveness is unique to the Christian faith in every way. However, the scriptural meaning of forgiveness is not what is generally understood and employed. As is often the case, forgiveness is grossly misunderstood, and thus it functionally becomes something other than God has given to us.

Very often, forgiveness is thought of as putting a band-aid on a wound and just dealing with the pain and difficulty until the wound heals, and then thinking of whatever happened as something that must be forgotten and glossed over. Forgiveness is mostly considered to be the offended party bearing up under whatever offense has occurred, and only letting it go for the sake of oneself and one's own good for healing and/or restoration from the wound. "Forgive and forget" is the most common phrase usually understood and utilized when referring to remission (another term for forgiveness). But nothing could be further from what forgiveness is and means.

Aphiemi (G863) is the Greek word that is translated as forgive or remit, and it specifically means "to cause to stand apart". Remission is causing someone's sin to stand apart from them. It is very hard to do this if the understanding of forgiveness is to cover something over for the sake of trying to forget it. Instead, forgiveness requires remembrance, and that the remembrance be relative to the fact that someone's sin has hurt them as the offender more than whomever they have sinned against.

God understands that our sin is a result of our lapsed and fallen condition. He knows it is our state of being according to

the old man and the sin that is in our nature and our members. With anyone's sin against God, He considers the source as our state of being, and that we can do nothing else apart from His grace and mercy for our salvation.

So it is with us as men for each other. Instead of considering our wound and focusing upon the hurt of the wound perpetrated by whomever has offended us, we are enabled by God to cause someone's sin to stand apart from them in awareness that their sin has wounded them far more than it could ever wound us. It does not mean that we just bandage our wound and do our best to let it heal and then try to forget the event ever happened.

In contrast to the "forgive and forget" mantra so often repeated, authentic forgiveness requires a remembrance that has greater concern for the offender than for oneself as the offended. Sin is a negation. It is something that is missing from someone at the core of their being. It is a "something" like a hole or a void is a something. Sin means the offender is devoid of whatever it is that would have kept them from offending.

Aphiemi is the means of causing someone's sin to be set aside from them. Christ did this on the cross for the sin of all mankind so that we may also do this for various sins against us. We cannot atone for man's sin as the state of being, but we can set apart offenses against us so that others might see what forgiveness is and means rather than just a form of selfish forbearance.

Remission is more about the disposition of our own heart toward someone who has harmed us just as we have all committed offense against God's holy standards of righteousness for both inward character and outward conduct. Forgiveness is something we can extend to others because God has extended it to us. And remission is about an

authentic concern for someone else who would do something so horrific rather than a focus upon one's own pain and anguish from being sinned against.

With true biblical forgiveness, we are the agents of remission for any sins committed against us. We do not and cannot forgive sin as a state of being for someone else. We cannot absolve anyone of their guilt before God for their sin condition and all they have done out of that positional standing before Him. But we are to be greatly willing to absolve men of their guilt toward us in their offenses. We do not forgive men of their sins against others or against God. *Aphiemi* refers to us causing their sin to stand apart from them so that they might see their offenses apart from the sin that has blinded them to their guilt. It is not primarily to get them to see the effects of their sin upon us, but to demonstrate God's love in setting their sin aside so they might see their standing before God and their need for His forgiveness on the grander scale of their sin condition.

The challenge for the Believer most often comes when someone is not penitent for what they have done. This does not lessen the need for our forgiveness, but instead intensifies the need for it. Even if someone does not subjectively desire their sin to be set apart from them (whether from ignorance, apathy, or malice), our retention of their sin leaves them more culpable before God than if we remit their sin (any singular or plural act/s) and cause it to stand apart from them. Our demonstrated authentic mercy toward unbelievers can mean that they might also see the need for God's mercy for their sin. With brothers and sisters in Christ remission serves as the means for us to deal with our offenses against each other in the same manner as God does toward man.

Our objective remission toward others for individual acts of sin against us cannot affect someone's standing before God relative to salvation, but is the pattern God has established for

human forgiveness between one another. We may objectively forgive someone and they may never subjectively recognize or receive it. But the sin is not retained against them if we have set it apart from them. Forgiveness is an aspect of us showing mercy for the consequences of someone else's sin that has affected us. Remission is mercy extended on our behalf to others.

Grace is for sin itself, to keep sin from coming forth from us into action. We cannot give grace to others and keep them from sinning. But we can be merciful to them in forgiveness, because mercy is for the consequences of sin. We can bear up under the consequences and offer remission for those consequences in our forgiveness. This does not change the sin state of being or condition in the lost, but it does remove the consequences as we set their sin apart from them as the individual act committed against us that has brought consequences of pain and wounding.

This is an aspect of laying down one's life for a friend. Life is *psuche* in that passage, and refers to everything one is and thinks as a living soul. Laying down one's "soul life" (the literal meaning) means to set aside our own desire for easing of pain and suffering from someone else's sin against us, and loving them enough to cause that sin to stand apart from them in mercy. The merciful shall obtain mercy. We do this not that we might obtain something from God in return, but because we have already obtained mercy from God concerning our own sin.

If someone sins against a Believer and retains their own sin despite true forgiveness from whomever they have sinned against, then it is not because the remission was not demonstrated and available from the offended Believer; it is because the offender is bound to their sin. This is all the more reason to remit their sin, not to just try to coerce some degree of valid apology from the offender.

Remission means to forgive in the manner of Christ so as to set apart an offender's sin from them that they might be freed from the weight of that particular offense among the many they have committed against others. Forgiveness is the mercy of God demonstrated on someone else's behalf and for their good, not considering the effects of the wrong upon oneself.

For Believers, forgiveness extended to other Believers is different than extending forgiveness to unbelievers. With fellow Believers, remission is something that can and should be easily recognized and reciprocated, with penitent hearts by both or all parties to any offense. For unbelievers, they may never consciously be aware of their sin being set apart from them. They may never ask for forgiveness in any form of apology, for they most likely will not know they have sinned against whomever they have wronged.

But our responsibility is still the same. We are to cause offenders' sins against us to stand apart from them and not to be retained just as God, in Christ, has caused our sin to stand apart from us and has not retained it regarding salvation. As He is in this world, so are we. We are to forgive and show mercy for the consequences of sin.

LAW AND GOSPEL

The two primary aspects of how God deals with man throughout the ages of human existence and history are Law and Gospel. These are the distinct means or manners of interaction that are the overarching prime principles of God ruling and governing His creation relative to His own character and conduct as the foundation for man's character and conduct.

One of the greatest misunderstandings about Law and Gospel is to separate them by covenant or testament. This common fallacy places Law exclusively in the Old Testament and Gospel exclusively in the New Testament, and nothing could be further from the truth. There is both Law and Gospel since the beginning of creation, and the meanings and applications of each must be understood to properly read all of scripture in context and appropriately comprehend the doctrines of the Christian faith. Nowhere is it more important to define terms than it is with Law and Gospel.

Law is *nomos* (G3551), and it means distribution, allocation, allotment, or apportionment. In particular, Law is that which is given from a source or standard for righteousness as inward character and outward conduct. Righteousness is *dike* (G1349), and is one English word for the Greek word in translation, while justice is the other primary English word for *dike*.

Nomos speaks of distribution, and this refers to the standard of God being His own internal character as the basis for all His external action. So Law is the distribution, allocation, allotment, or apportionment to man of what God's righteous

standard is for Divine Justice based upon every facet of Himself as God.

Law is that which informs us. This informative gives a framework for God to provide a clear standard in verbal or written form that represents Himself and His objective standards. This is how written law can then be codified as a set of ordinances, policies, statutes, guidelines, or rules on any level. “Rules” are to be understood as a straight edge in accordance with a standard, not just a made-up list of things that are required for an arbitrary reason.

The purpose of the Law is to wound man by being a constant reminder that we cannot fulfill God’s objective standards ourselves. This wounding is ultimately for the healing of the Gospel as God alone administers it and accomplishes salvation in man. Those unhealed by the Gospel remain wounded and in their affliction, devoid of any means to be healed by any other source.

Law is to comparatively demonstrate that man’s own standards are inadequate when attempting to determine and fulfill our own subjective standards in place of God’s objective standards. This always reveals the condition of one’s heart, but is measured outwardly based upon one’s conduct as actions which have come forth into sin.

By measuring the outward conduct, Law determines the flaws in inward character; and this is how and why Law wounds man. It determines punitive action where necessary and leaves man wounded by the resulting consequences of the faults and failures in man’s subjective standards while violating God’s objective standards in all things. Law is the means by which man is judged according to God’s righteousness and justice, and is therefore the foundation for

human governing structures to make the same type of assessment by establishing codes, ordinances, or statutes.

The informative of law is the distribution of a clear standard of expected behavior. God's own character and conduct are the preeminent standard for law, but human history also shows us that law can be based upon subjective standards that are not according to the righteousness of God. For purposes of theology, this is not relevant. We are exclusively concerned with God's Law as the objective standard in all things. To the extent that man's law agrees with God's Law is the extent to which man's law reflects absolute justice and truth. This is why man cannot validly be a law unto himself, for man will never be an infallible source that is equivalent to God and in accordance with God's divine justice or righteousness.

Law wounds by demonstrating failures of outward obedience or compliance by man. In this, man is wounded by his own faults that result in these failures. Often, the first resort of man is to modify law to conform to man's own subjective standards, thereby avoiding or lessening any such wounding. This, of course, results in a different standard for both inward character and outward conduct.

Another issue with Law is that outward conduct is often not a complete determination of inward character, but of action(s) done in weakness or carelessness that may not fully represent one's inward character. The difficulty with man's implementation of Law in codification is that intent and other factors are not primarily considered. Law can be rigorous and strict, not caring whether it was a lapse in someone's character or if it was a lack of character. Thus, the Law as it pertains to man and man's authority structures on earth, can be brutal and unyielding. Man's Law most often judges primarily based upon action. Some leniency is available in man's law, but that is most often directly represented in the codification itself rather than on an individual basis.

The Law of God is perfect. It deals with both the inward and outward aspects of man in both character and conduct. The ancient Mosaic Covenant demonstrates this for us. Being paired with the more-ancient Abrahamic Covenant of faith, the Mosaic Covenant of the Law was given as the means of fulfilling faith as the inward coming forth into the outward. The Mosaic Law was a covenant wherein the Abrahamic covenant of faith could be demonstrably fulfilled by man according to guidelines given by God with promise.

Character is to be understood as the inward disposition of the heart, reflecting the quality of the source of any action. Conduct is to be understood as the outward demonstration of character in relation to the disposition of the heart, reflecting whatever disposition is put into economy (doing) from ontology (being). God's perfect disposition and demonstration are the objective standard for all things; therefore, His character and conduct serve as what is to be understood as perfection and completeness in all things inward and outward.

In scripture, the English term commandment is not the best rendering for the Hebrew language when translating the term used for the tenets of the Mosaic Law. The Hebrew word (*davar/dabar* as noun/verb) used in Exodus chapter 20 simply means "word". The Ten "Commandments" are actually the Ten "Words" God gave as the primary outline for His expectations that He then empowers man by faith to fulfill. Additionally, the Hebrew grammar does not charge us in an emphatic sense regarding this passage and these tenets.

What this means is that the Ten "Words" (there are actually a few more than ten) are promissory based upon covenantal understanding. They are not merely restrictive or punitive but are the prescriptive for righteous behavior that God has given for us to be able to fulfill by faith. This is how the Abrahamic

and Mosaic Covenants were understood by those to whom they were given by God, and their fulfillment in Christ's finished atoning work is complete. God gave the Law as the means of fulfilling faith, not as the means for man to try to attempt to be righteous by man's own outward conduct alone. The inward character was to be the character of faith by believing God empowers man to live according to His standards, both inwardly and outwardly.

Gospel is *euaggelion* (G2098) and is the "good news" that it is God's empowerment and accomplishment alone by which we can fulfill His righteous standards as originally distributed in the Law. Christ has fulfilled both the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants, so by being in Christ we, too, can fulfill both the covenant of faith and the covenant of the Law. This is the healing that serves as the contrasting bookend to the wounding of Law.

Gospel is the performative, referring not to our performance but to God's. God alone gives us the faith and its works in our lives to perform according to His righteousness. This is an imputation of Christ's own perfection and completeness in this regard, as we are unable to attain unto that perfection and completeness on our own. Any personal efforts are futile and in vain. Only Christ was able to have fulfilled God's Law by faith and that fulfillment is imputed to us as our standing before God in Christ.

Only by ceasing from our own works and resting in Christ's finished work can we be justified before God, and this is by faith alone through grace alone (both by God alone). This demonstrates the performative of the Gospel in that Christ became the perfect sacrifice for sin so that we need not be guilty of our sin (and therefore our sins). God alone performed our redemption unto salvation in Christ. He alone is the means of our righteousness. Whether for internal character or external conduct, the means of salvation cannot come from within ourselves or from any other subjective standard.

Law and Gospel are inseparable but distinct. There must be Law and Gospel for both wounding and healing. Law wounds and Gospel heals. The Law informs and the Gospel performs. Neither is complete without the other. God gives us both the means of the informative and the accomplishment of the performative. Both are according to the Word, which is the Son. Christ is both Law and Gospel to us and for us, having fulfilled everything according to the objective righteous standards of God while Incarnate. He alone atoned for our sin. We can neither inform ourselves nor perform for ourselves the finished work of Christ.

CONCLUSION

Many considerations were undertaken to include the most impactful and dynamic areas of doctrine to address in this publication. There are 4 primary categories of theology: Historical, Exegetical, Systematic, and Practical. Though it hasn't been exhaustive, the foregoing chapters have dealt with all 4 categories in presenting each major theological topic.

The purpose here has been to highlight the most practical areas of Christian doctrine and illuminate how much further understanding is needed and available to better implement doctrine into a Believer's everyday life. Realizing the limitations of language and translation helps outline how easily common misunderstandings can overshadow truth in all major areas of Christian faith and practice.

Functionally, the modern church has not dealt with the doctrines of sin, evil, and death very well. In general, words are not clearly defined and used properly. This epidemic is because of comparative language structures in translation of the inspired text. Not everyone has the time or inclination to become a linguist or exegete, so any lack or loss in how the church at large deals with doctrinal topics is going to have a great impact upon how much or how little is properly understood. It shouldn't be only Seminarians who have access to proper theological information, whether it is basic, intermediate, or advanced for understanding and growth.

Every Believer can have a far deeper spiritual walk with greater understanding of the precepts of God in proper doctrine. It shouldn't be left to the academic halls of universities and seminaries, even though those can and should be for the training and preparation of whomever is called to holy vocations of leadership and service in the church. Pastors and Elders shouldn't have to necessarily get 4-8 years of undergraduate and graduate education to

understand a wide platform of all the deep theological truths of scripture.

This is not to advocate for or against bible college and/or seminary. That's always a personal issue of individual leadership by the Spirit of God. What's important is that every professing Believer in Christ has access to at least basic theological information that has the depth, breadth, and height of truth apart from personal speculation and general conceptualization through false or partial doctrinal truths.

There should be a growing desire to know and understand words and their meanings and usage as a vital component of examining the biblical text for truth and life that doesn't read personal preferences and perspectives into the Word. Knowing the weaknesses of comparative languages in translation is vital and practical. Seeing how Greek doesn't line up well with English is an aspect of finding the deeper meanings conveyed in scripture.

Once a basic framework is presented to deal with areas of doctrine that need some hard work to comprehend and rethink, it's far easier to see how several simple things have compromised and undermined thought and practice for Christians in the modern western world. Obtaining and maintaining a clear usage of basic language details is vital to having an authentic doctrinal foundation.

The importance of accessible information can't be emphasized enough. The church today doesn't just need vague feel-good concepts that reflect subjective personal opinion and preference. What's needed are more and better ways of processing absolute objective truth in a way that impacts daily life to fulfill all God has called us to be and do in His name. The primary objective of the Christian faith is the same as it has always been, to come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and to know Him the one true God and

Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. This is the work of God, that we believe in Him.

All God's richest blessings be upon those who have read these chapters. It is the author's deepest prayer and desire that these truths bring necessary change to whatever areas of doctrinal understanding have needed clarification, whether great or slight. Line upon line, precept upon precept. Grace and mercy and peace be with you all. Amen.

NOTES

Proverbs 4:7

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom:
and with all thy getting get understanding.

John 7:17

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,
whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

2 Timothy 4:3

For the time will come when they will not endure sound
doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to
themselves teachers, having itching ears;

1 Corinthians 11:19

For there must be also heresies among you, that they
which are approved may be made manifest among you.

ISBN 979-888627463-9



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