

True Theology

- **PURPOSE:**
 - To specify the God in which we believe
 - To properly understand some difficult characteristics of God

Objective 1: To specify the God we believe in

- Creator of Heaven and Earth
 - Set HIM apart from other gods
- God of Israel
 - Special relationship in history
- God of the Bible
 - Character revealed in the scriptures

Objective 2: To gain a better understanding of some of the attributes

1. God's Relation to man - Transcendent or Immanent – There is a common misunderstanding regarding God's closeness. While some may feel that God is so distant from us, others irreverently treat God as though he were just another friend.

a. False Theology

- i. Transcendent (far away)
 1. Above all creaturely activity
 2. Indifferent or aloof from creation
- ii. Immanent (close)
 1. Irreverent Relation
 - a. "Jesus is my Homeboy"
 - i. Remember YHWH
 2. Immoral Relation
 - a. Believing that you are on the same level as God

b. True Theology

- i. Transcendent – God is supreme in the most fullest sense
 1. Incommunicable Attributes
 - a. Omnipresence
 - b. Omnipotence
 - c. Omniscience
 2. Holiness of God - God's "otherness"
 - a. Sovereignty
 - b. Moral Lawgiver
 3. True Encounter
 - a. **Isaiah 6:5-12**
 - i. **5** "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." **6** Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. **7** With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." **8** Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"
- ii. Immanent
 1. Specific Revelation
 - a. Revealed himself to us
 - b. The Bible
 2. Interferes with history
 - a. For Salvation
 - b. So that we may know him

3. A Privileged Relationship

a. Romans 8:15,16

- i. **15** you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."
16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

CONCLUSION: God's nature is fully transcendent, however he has chosen to reveal himself to us and grant a privileged relationship.

2. Justice and Mercy – There is a common misunderstanding as to how God responds to our sin

a. False Theology

i. Justice

1. God is a jealous god who is ready to strike you down
2. Cosmic-Killjoy – God does not want you to have fun

ii. Mercy

1. "God is Love"
2. God wants to bless you, not punish.
3. Cosmic-Santa Clause

b. True Theology

i. Justice

1. Justice in the Bible

a. 1 Chronicle 13:7-11

- i. "**7** They moved the ark of God from Abinadab's house on a new cart, with Uzzah and Ahio guiding it. **8** David and all the Israelites were celebrating with all their might before God, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals and trumpets. **9** When they came to the threshing floor of Kidon, Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark, because the oxen stumbled. **10** The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah, and he struck him down because he had put his hand on the ark. So he died there before God. **11** Then David was angry because the Lord's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah."

2. An expression of His holiness

a. We can understand God's holiness if we look at our unrighteousness

- i. God is the ultimate standard of good
- ii. Our actions never come close to that standard
- iii. We stand deserving constant judgement
- iv. God has never killed an innocent person

b. His *internal* righteousness, aligns with his *external* righteousness

- i. His actions are always just, never unjust
- ii. To question God's *judgments* is to question God's *justice*

3. All of God's actions are just, but God does not always act with justice

ii. Mercy

1. Old Testament vs. New Testament

- a. OT lists tens of offenses that are punishable by death, whereas the NT does not.
- b. The NT list may be shorter than the OT, but the OT is shorter than the original.
- c. Adam and Eve: "If you sin, you shall die"
- d. **Ezekiel 17**: "The soul who sins will die"

2. Mercy is not injustice, but *nonjustice*

a. What we don't like is not knowing which will be given

b. Exodus 33:19

- i. *19 And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*

3. Common Grace

- a. Common Grace is the mercy that is shown toward all humanity.

- i. We are allowed to live though we sin.
- b. Why would a just God allow good things to happen to bad people?

iii. **CONCLUSION**: All of God's judgments are just, but he has occasionally decided to with mercy

3. Limited or Unlimited

a. False Theology

- i. God is unlimited. He can do anything and everything.

b. True Theology

- i. God's actions "limited" by his character (nature)
 - 1. God cannot sin
 - 2. God cannot change
 - a. If he "could" change, we could have no faith in God

c. **CONCLUSION**: God is unlimited in many ways, but always remains in line with his character (holiness, immutability, etc.)

4. Sovereign or Out of Control

a. False Theology

- i. Sovereign
 - 1. God controls all human being.
 - 2. Theological Fatalism
- ii. Out of Control
 - 1. Has given this world free reign on itself.
 - 2. Humans have the ability to do anything.

b. True Theology

- i. Sovereign
 - 1. Keeps creation existing – Preservation
 - a. **Hebrews 1:3** - The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.
 - 2. Works with creation - Concurrence
 - a. Controls inanimate objects
 - i. **Psalms 135:6** - The Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.
 - b. Controls "Random" events
 - i. **Proverbs 16:33** - The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.
 - c. Events caused by God and creatures
 - i. "God *causes* the grass to grow"
 - 3. Directs creation to fulfill His purposes
- ii. Out of Control
 - 1. The bible never relieves humans of their responsibility
 - 2. The bible never attributes evil to God

c. **CONCLUSION**: God is completely sovereign, working with creation to fulfill his purposes.

True Christology

PURPOSE:

- To understand the Deity of Christ
- To understand the Humanity of Christ
- To reconcile the coexistence of two natures in one person (Christ)

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,**

suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended hell.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

The Deity of Christ – “Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord”

1. The Apostles Creed recognizes Christ's divine nature
 - a. “His only Son”
 - i. An allusion to the Trinity
 - b. “our Lord”
 - i. Put in the same position (Lord) as God the Father
2. Christ's divine nature
 - a. Claims by authors of Scripture
 - i. OT – **Isaiah 9:6** - For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 - ii. NT – **Romans 9:5** - Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.
 - b. Christ's claims
 - i. Christ identified himself as God did to Moses:
 1. **Exodus 3:14** – God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'"
 2. **John 8:57** "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" **58** "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"
 - ii. Christ identifies himself as the Son of Man:
 1. **Daniel 7:13** – "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. **14** He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.
 2. Jesus identified himself and was identified as the Son of Man 70-plus times in the Gospels
 - c. Christ's attributes:
 - i. OMNIPOTENCE

1. Calmed the storm – Matt 8
2. Turned water into Wine – John 2
- ii. SOVEREIGNTY
 1. “But I say to you.....” – (E.g. Matt 5)
- iii. WORTHY OF WORSHIP
 1. **Philippians 2:9** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 2. God allows worship of none other than Himself
 - a. Thou shalt have no other gods

The Humanity of Christ

3. The Apostle’s Creed affirms Christ’s humanity
 - a. “He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary”
 - i. Virgin birth is a simple affirmation
 - b. Virgin Birth
 - i. **Matthew 1:8** This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. Physical process of child bearing.
 - c. Human Body
 - i. **Luke 2:52** And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.
 1. Jesus’ physical stature grew
 - d. Human mind
 - i. **Luke 2:52** And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.
 1. Jesus’ mind grew in wisdom
 - e. Human Emotions
 - i. **John 11:35** Jesus wept (for Lazarus)
 - f. Sinless
 - i. **2nd Corinthians 5:21** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
 1. We are in an *abnormal* state of sinfulness, whereas God created Adam and Eve without sin; Christ is in that state.
4. Reconciling Christ’s Divinity and Humanity
 - a. The problem: It seems as though Christ was at some times human and some times divine.
 - b. The solution: The Chalcedonian Definition of 451 A.D.
 - i. “Two Natures.....One Person”
 - ii. “The property of each nature being preserved”
 - c. One nature does some things that the other nature does not do
 - i. Christ ascended into heaven, yet he is still with us “to the end of the age”
 - ii. Christ was about thirty years old, yet he eternally existed
 - iii. Christ’s natures show themselves (or, are shown) at different times
 - d. The person, Christ, does what either nature does.
 - i. We don’t say, “my fingers typed this paper”, we say, “I typed this paper”
 - ii. Similarly, we don’t say “Christ the human did this”, we say, “Christ did this”

True Christology – Part II

PURPOSE:

- To understand the necessity of Christ's humanity
- To understand the necessity of Christ's divinity

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended hell.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the quick and the dead.**

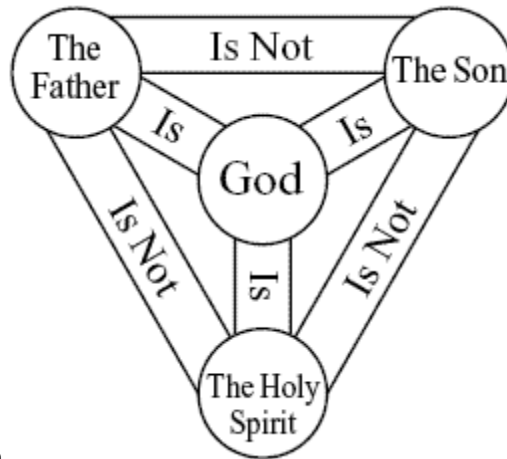
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

TRUE CHRISTIANITY – HOLY SPIRIT

OBJECTIVE: To understand the nature and workings of the Holy Spirit

1. Nature of the Holy Spirit
 - a. Overview of the Trinity
 - b. Scriptural Evidence
 - c. The work of the Holy Spirit
2. Workings of the Holy Spirit
 - a. Empowers
 - b. Purifies
 - c. Reveals
 - d. Unifies

1. Nature of the Holy Spirit
 - a. Overview of the TRINITY
 - i. Doctrine of the Trinity:
 1. God is three distinct persons
 2. Each person is fully God
 3. There is only one God



- ii. Illustration
 - b. Scriptural Evidence
 - i. OLD TESTAMENT
 1. **Genesis 1:2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
 - ii. NEW TESTAMENT
 1. **Acts 2:4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
 - c. Work of the Holy Spirit
 - i. The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.
2. Workings of the Holy Spirit
 - a. The Holy Spirit EMPOWERS for the service of God
 - i. Joshua – **Numbers 27:18** So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him. **19** Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. **20** Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. **21** He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the Lord. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in."
 - ii. Gifts of the Holy Spirit
 1. 1st Corinthians 12 lists some spiritual gifts:
 - a. Prophecy

- b. Teaching
 - c. Miracles
 - d. Healing
 - e. Tongues and Interpretation
 - f. Words of Wisdom/Knowledge/distinguishing spirits
 - 2. Not all gifts are listed, or are even mentioned in the bible
 - 3. How do we find and use our gifts?
 - a. Paul seems to assume we know what our gifts are, but tells us of how to use them:
 - b. **1st Peter 4:10** Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.
- b. The Holy Spirit PURIFIES
 - i. Convicts – **John 16:7** But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. **8** When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:
 - ii. Growth – **2nd Corinthians 3:18** And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
 - iii. Can an experience purify me? Slain in the spirit?
 - 1. **Matthew 7:16** By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? **17** Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. **18** A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. **19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20** Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.
 - 2. Fruit of the Spirit
 - iv. Is the Christian life easy after conversion?
 - 1. Paul – Race analogy
 - 2. Christian life is hard
- c. The Holy Spirit REVEALS
 - i. Revelation to Prophets and Apostles
 - 1. **Numbers 24:2** When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came upon him **3** and he uttered his oracle:
 - ii. Guides and Directs
 - 1. Phillip – **Acts 8:29** *go up and join this chariot*
 - 2. Jesus – **Mark 1:12** *The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness*
 - iii. Does God still give direct guidance?
 - 1. It is not normal
 - 2. It is not vague / is specific
 - 3. It is unmistakable
 - 4. It is typically against wisdom
 - 5. It is never wrong
- d. The Holy Spirit UNIFIES
 - i. After the Pentecost
 - 1. **Acts 2:44** All the believers were together and had everything in common. **45** Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. **46** Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **47** praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.
 - ii. The Holy Catholic Church
 - 1. HOLY – Separated for God
 - 2. CATHOLIC – Universal – in all parts of the world, at all times in the world
 - 3. CHURCH – the body of believers, body of Christ

True Salvation

In Christianity, there is a common misunderstanding of salvation. Today we will discover true salvation by answering the questions "Saved from what? By what? And for what?"

1. Saved *from* what?
 - a. We have all been asked the question "Are you / have you been saved?"
 - i. Movie "Saved"
 - b. Christians United for Reformation (CURE) poll what is the definition of **saved**
 - i. "Being saved is asking Jesus into your heart"
 - ii. "Saved is having a relationship with God"
 - c. We are **NOT** saved from:
 - i. A purposeless life
 - ii. A life of poverty / misery
 - iii. The devil
 - iv. Physical demise
 - d. Zephaniah answers the question "saved from what?":
 - i. Zephaniah 1:14-18 **14** "The great day of the Lord is near-- near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the Lord will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. **15** That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, **16** a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers. **17** I will bring distress on the people and they will walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord. Their blood will be poured out like dust and their entrails like filth. **18** Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath. In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth."
 - e. We are **saved from the wrath to come**.
 - i. Because of our sin, we are in a status deserving punishment
 - ii. "The biggest point of unbelief in Christianity is an unbelief in the wrath of God and His certain promise of judgment for the human race." – RC Sproul
 - f. For unbelievers, the Day of the Lord is the worst calamity imaginable:
 - i. **Amos 5:18** Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light. **19** It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him. **20** Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light-- pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?
 - g. **CONCLUSION: We are saved from the wrath of God**
2. Saved *by* what?
 - a. We are **NOT** saved by:
 - i. Good works
 - ii. Being a good person
 - iii. God feeling sorry for us
 - b. Simply put, **by the atoning sacrifice of Christ**
 - i. John 3:16
 - ii. This is the central issue of Christianity
 - c. Salvation through Christ is the thing that can only be offered by Christianity
 - i. Other religions can offer good morals and wise teachings.
 - ii. Paul said he was determined to preach nothing but Christ and Him crucified. (hyperbole)
 1. 1 Corinthians 2:2
 - d. We need Christ for the atonement of sin.
 - i. Sin is a debt
 1. Because of God's standard of righteousness, it is an incalculable debt.
 - a. "The man who sins will die"
 2. "Everyone deserves a second chance".....says who?
 - a. None of us can erase the debt
 3. Hence, we need Christ's sacrifice to erase the debt
 - ii. Sin as enmity
 1. By nature, we are enemies of God
 2. When we sin, it is because of our hostility
 - a. God is the injured party
 3. Christ is the mediator
 - a. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 - **5** For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave himself as a ransom for all men
 4. We need Christ's mediation to be reconciled with God
 - iii. Sin as crime

1. Sin is a crime, a penal (moral) debt is incurred
 - a. Monetary debt
 - i. Child buys ice cream but is \$1 short. I can help pay for that debt.
 - b. Moral debt
 - i. Child buys ice but is \$1 short, he then runs out of the store. There is a penal debt incurred. The storeowner is the one who can decide to press charges or not.
2. God is under no obligation to accept Christ's sacrifice.
3. God has accepted Christ's sacrifice.
4. We need Christ to pay the moral debt.
- e. Those who say, "I don't need Christ" are essentially saying, "I have no sins that need atoning"
- f. **CONCLUSION: We are saved by Christ's atonement for our sins.**

3. Saved *for* what? – When one gets "saved", there is an overarching purpose for being saved.

- a. We are **NOT** saved for:
 - i. Earthly prosperity
 - ii. Happiness
 - iii. Physical pleasure
- b. Because of our sin we have been estranged from God. The bible speaks of ADOPTION as **restoring our standing with God**
 - i. **Romans 8:14** because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." **16** The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. **17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. **18** I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
 - ii. A story of adoption
 1. Preface: Jonathan, David's brother-like friend, died. King David's generals sought to destroy all remnants of Jonathan's family. When David discovered this, he was saddened. He discovered that a son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth, still survived. A crippled son. He sent for him:
 - a. **2 Samuel 9:6** When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "Your servant," he replied. **7** "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table." **8** Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" **9** Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. **10** You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table." (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.) **11** Then Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.
 2. We, like Mephibosheth, are like one of the King's sons, through no doings of his own.
- c. The glory that is to come
 - i. John tells us of a glory to come.
 1. **1 John 3:2** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for **we shall see him as he is**. **3** Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.
 - ii. As we are, the bible tells us that we cannot see God as he is and live.
 - iii. Moses wanted to see God face to face. Moses saw the "back side" of God and it changed his form, he became frightening.
 - iv. When we are adopted, we are purified by God, so that we are able to see God as He is.
- d. **CONCLUSION: We are saved for God, so that we may see Him as He is.**

4. **FINAL CONCLUSION:** We are saved *from God, by God, and for God.*