

KEY DOCTRINES & THEOLOGICAL TERMS

IMAGO DEI: Humans are created in God's image, reflecting His character and given dignity, purpose, and responsibility in creation.

FREE WILL: Humans have God-given moral agency to make real, meaningful choices for which they are responsible.

THE FALL: Humanity's first rebellion against God brought sin, death, and disorder into God's good creation.

ORIGINAL SIN: Because of the Fall, sin and its effects are inherited by all humanity, shaping human nature and behavior from birth.

TRINITY: One God in three persons. God exists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Equal in essence, distinct in person.

ATONEMENT: Through the cross, Jesus dealt with sin and reconciled us to God.

ATONEMENT THEORIES: Different ways Christians explain how Jesus' death and resurrection save us and restore our relationship with God.

- **SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT:** Jesus took our place and bore the consequence of sin so we could be forgiven.
 - **PENAL SUBSTITUTION:** Jesus took the *punishment* sin deserved, satisfying God's wrath towards sin so grace could be given.
- **CHRISTUS VICTOR:** Jesus defeated sin, death, and the powers of evil through the cross and resurrection.
- **RANSOM THEORY:** Jesus gave His life to free humanity from bondage to sin and death.
- **MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY:** Jesus' love shown on the cross changes our hearts and calls us to repentance.
- **SATISFACTION THEORY:** Jesus repaired the damage sin caused by offering perfect obedience and honor to God, restoring what was broken.

ECCLESIOLOGY: The study of the nature, purpose, structure, and mission of the Church. It focuses on who the Church is, how it is formed, and how it is called to live and serve in the world.

JUSTIFICATION: We are made right with God in a one-time act. God declares us forgiven and righteous through faith in Jesus.

SANCTIFICATION: We are being transformed. The Holy Spirit continually shapes us to become more like Jesus.

GLORIFICATION: The final stage of salvation in which God fully transforms believers to share in Christ's resurrected life and glory.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD: God's reign breaking into the world. God's rule is present now through Jesus and will be fully realized in the future.

- **THE ALREADY AND THE NOT YET:** The Kingdom of God arrived in Jesus' life and ministry, but will not be fully here until his second coming

INCARNATION: God became human in Jesus (John 1:14).

HYPOSTATIC UNION: Jesus is fully God and fully human.

MESSIAH: Literally, "anointed one." Jesus is God's promised Savior.

HEAVEN: God's present dwelling place where those who are in Christ are with Him after death.

NEW CREATION: The future renewal of all things, when God fully restores heaven and earth and dwells with His people forever.

HELL: The final state of separation from God resulting from persistent rejection of Him.

- **ETERNAL CONSCIOUS TORMENT (ECT):** The view that hell involves unending, conscious suffering for those who reject God.
- **ANNIHILATIONISM/CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY:** The view that those who reject God ultimately cease to exist rather than consciously suffer eternally.
- **ULTIMATE RECONCILIATION:** The view that God will ultimately restore all people to Himself through Christ.

HERESY: A belief that contradicts the *essential* teachings of the Christian faith as historically confessed by the Church.

INFALLIBILITY OF SCRIPTURE: The belief that the Bible is completely trustworthy and unailing in accomplishing God’s purposes and teaching what He intends to teach.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE: Scripture is God-breathed, written by human authors under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE: The Bible is the final authority for Christian faith and practice.

CANON: The recognized collection of books that make up Scripture (66 in the Protestant Bible).

OMNIPOTENCE: God is all-powerful, able to accomplish all that He wills in accordance with His nature.

OMNISCIENCE: God knows all things—past, present, and future—fully and perfectly.

OMNIPRESENCE: God is present everywhere at all times.

SOVEREIGNTY: God has supreme authority and control over all creation and history.

- **MACRO SOVEREIGNTY (THE BIG PICTURE):** God sovereignly governs the overall direction and outcome of history to accomplish His purposes.
- **MICRO SOVEREIGNTY (THE INDIVIDUAL DETAILS):** God sovereignly governs every detail of reality, including individual events and human actions.

SECOND ADAM: Jesus is called the Second Adam because He succeeds where the first Adam failed, bringing life and restoration.

PNEUMATOLOGY: The study of the Holy Spirit

REGENERATION: The Spirit gives new spiritual life (being “born again”).

INDWELLING: The Holy Spirit permanently lives within believers.

COVENANT: A binding relationship God establishes with His people.

OLD COVENANT: God's covenant with Israel through the Law.

NEW COVENANT: God's covenant through Jesus, written on hearts by the Spirit.

EXEGESIS: Drawing meaning out of the biblical text.

EISEGESIS: Reading meaning into the text.

DAY OF THE LORD: A future time when God decisively acts to judge sin, defeat evil, and establish His righteous rule over the world.

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD: God will raise the dead to life at the end of the age.

SACRAMENTS: Sacred acts instituted by Christ: baptism and communion.

ESCHATOLOGY: The study of the "last things," including the return of Jesus, resurrection, judgment, and the renewal of creation.

ESCHATOLOGICAL VIEWS: Different Christian perspectives on how and when end-times events unfold.

- **AMILLENNIAL:** Christ reigns presently from heaven, and the "millennium" represents the current church age, with final fulfillment at His return.
- **PREMILLENNIAL:** Christ will physically return before a future, literal thousand-year reign on earth, during which He rules directly.
- **POSTMILLENNIAL:** Christ's reign will increasingly shape the world through the spread of the gospel, leading to a prolonged period of righteousness before His return.

CHARISMATIC: The view that the gifts of the Spirit (such as tongues, prophecy, and healing) continue today as active expressions of the Spirit's work.

CESSATIONIST: The view that certain miraculous gifts of the Spirit were limited to the early church and are no longer normative today.