Systematic Theology



Understanding the Major Doctrines of the Bible

Zoom Class Norms & Expectations

Time: We will start and end on time. Each class is limited to two hours.

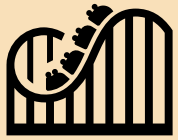
Questions: Please post questions in the chat. Unanswered questions will be added to an FAQ, and common questions will be reviewed during the first 15 minutes of the next class.

Responses: Please limit responses to 1–2 minutes so everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Engagement: Come prepared to think critically, share perspectives, and connect Scripture to Christian life and ministry.

Respect: We may have different perspectives. Listen respectfully and support your understanding with Scripture.

Our Goal: To deepen our theological understanding and apply what we learn to life and ministry.



The Spiritual Realm, Death & God's Eternal Plan

SPIRITUAL REALITIES AND THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PURPOSES

Agenda

Essential Question: How should Christian hope shape ministry today?

Angelology — Doctrine of Angels

Demonology — Doctrine of Demons

Doctrine of Death

Eschatology — Doctrine of Last Things

Outcomes for our final class

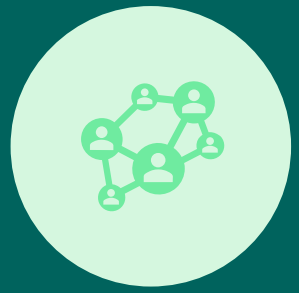
- Manual pp. 15-23

Explain the biblical teaching on angels, evil, death, and the last things.

- Distinguish clear scriptural claims from speculation.

- Apply Christian hope and discernment to pastoral situations.

Where Class 2 leads us



The Church witnesses to Christ and cares for people.



- The Spirit empowers prayer, worship, and ministry.



- Today: discern the spiritual realm and minister with eternal hope.



Manual pp. 13–18 → pp. 15–23

Before we discuss spiritual warfare, prayer, and the supernatural, what must be foundational to everything we do as believers?

The foundation of spiritual life!

Everything We Do Begins with Abiding in Christ.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7 KJV

"It is by abiding in that union that we further receive the purity, the joy, the power, the blessedness, which are stored up in HIM for HIS people."

Abiding precedes asking. Union with Christ sustains spiritual life and ministry – Charles H Spurgeon

Angelology: the study of Angels

Angels are created spiritual beings who serve God's purposes.

- They worship God, deliver messages, and minister to God's people.
- Angels are not objects of worship.

Manual p. 15 • Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 22:8–9



- Scripture directs our attention to God, not angelic encounters.



- Evaluate claims about angels by biblical teaching.



- Ask: When might fascination with angels distract from Christ?

Angels: discernment in ministry

- Manual pp. 15–16 • Colossians 2:18; Revelation 22:9

The Nature of Angels

WHO THEY ARE

- Created by God
- Spiritual beings
- Not subject to human mortality
- Numerous; not described as marrying

WHAT THEY ARE NOT

- Not divine or self-existent
- Not all-knowing or all-powerful
- Not departed human beings

DISCUSS Why does the distinction between Creator and creature matter?

Pearlman, Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible, p. 81 | Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:14; Luke 20:34–36

The Character and Ministry of Angels

CHARACTER

- Obedient and reverent
- Wise, yet limited in knowledge
- Meek, mighty, and holy

MINISTRY

- Carry out God's purposes
- Serve as messengers
- Minister according to God's direction
- Worship God—not objects of worship

DISCUSS How should Scripture shape our expectations of angelic activity?

Pearlman, pp. 84–85 | Ps. 103:20; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 22:8–9

Demonology: the study of evil spirits

- Manual pp. 15–16 • Revelation 12:7–9; 1 Peter 5:8

- The manual describes demonic opposition to God's purposes.
- It emphasizes deception, temptation, accusation, and opposition.
- Christian teaching must avoid fear-driven speculation.

Satan: Origin and Character

ORIGIN: PEARLMAN'S INTERPRETATION

- Pearlman associates Satan's fall with rebellion against God
- Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 are used in this traditional reading
- Their immediate historical contexts should also be acknowledged

CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

- Adversary and accuser
- Deceiver and tempter
- Opposes God's purposes
- Neither equal to God nor sovereign

DISCUSS Why distinguish a theological interpretation from an explicit biblical statement?

Pearlman, pp. 85–89 | Job 1–2; Matt. 4:1–11; Rev. 12:9 | Isa. 14; Ezek. 28 (interpretive texts)

Satan: Activity and Limitations

ACTIVITY

- Tempts and deceives
- Seeks to undermine faith
- Can disguise evil as good
- Opposes God’s people

LIMITATIONS

- A created, finite being
- Cannot act as God’s equal
- Job portrays limits under God’s sovereignty
- Christ’s victory grounds Christian confidence

DISCUSS How does Christ’s authority change our approach to spiritual warfare?

Pearlman, pp. 89–90 | Job 1:12; 2:6; 2 Cor. 11:14; James 4:7; Col. 2:15

Fallen Angels and Demons

WHAT PEARLMAN PRESENTS

- Fallen angels are associated with rebellion
- The Gospels portray demons as personal evil spirits
- Demonic activity is depicted as opposing human well-being

WHAT REQUIRES CARE

- Scripture does not fully explain the origin of demons
- Do not assume every illness or unusual experience is demonic
- Avoid speculative details beyond the biblical text

DISCUSS Where must we exercise humility about what Scripture does not explain?

Pearlman, p. 91 | Jude 6; Mark 1:23–27; Luke 8:26–39; John 9:1–3

- Put on the armor of God and resist the devil.

- Practice discernment, prayer, truth, and faithful living.

- Ministry caution: do not label every illness or struggle demonic.

Spiritual Warfare: Stand Firm

- Manual pp. 16 • Ephesians 6:10 - 8; James 4:7

Pause and examine

- Which claims about angels and demons are grounded in Scripture?
- What might Christian fiction illuminate – and what must Scripture establish?
- How do we care wisely for people experiencing fear or psychological distress?

Spiritual Discernment in Ministry

EVALUATING THIS PRESENT DARKNESS

- Which details are grounded in Scripture?
- Which details are Peretti's fictional portrayal?
- Does the story properly reflect Christ's authority?

RESPONSIBLE PASTORAL CARE

- Listen without labeling or diagnosing
- Pray and provide compassionate support
- Encourage appropriate medical or mental-health assessment
- Never substitute a deliverance assumption for needed care

DISCUSS How can we practice biblical discernment without harming vulnerable people?

Pearlman, pp. 90–91 | 1 Thess. 5:21; Gal. 6:2; James 1:5 | Classroom application

Prayer & Worship: Our Foundation

- Manual pp. 16–18 • Matthew 6:9–13; John 4:23–24

Prayer is communion and partnership with God.

- Worship is a life of reverence, surrender, and obedience.

- Both keep ministry centered on God rather than fear.



The manual distinguishes physical, spiritual, and eternal death.



• Christ's resurrection grounds Christian hope beyond death.



• Pastoral care requires truth, humility, and compassion.

Doctrine of Death

- Manual pp. 18–19 • Romans 5:12; John 11:25–26

Meet the Author: Frank E. Peretti

- American Christian novelist known for supernatural suspense.
- Previously served in pastoral ministry.
- This Present Darkness (1986) depicts spiritual conflict in the fictional town of Ashton.

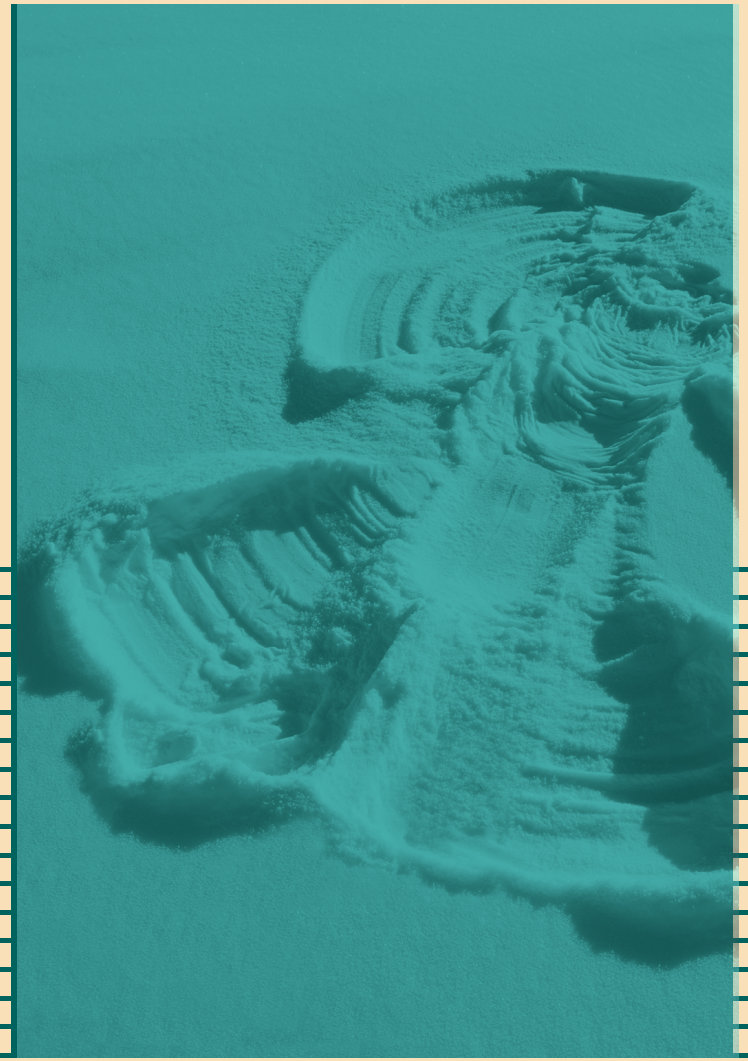
WHY USE THIS NOVEL?

• It brings angels, demons, and prayer into a narrative.

• It is Christian fiction—not a source of biblical doctrine.

• Test its portrayals against Scripture.

Essential question: How can fiction illuminate theology without becoming our authority?



A Literary lens: This Present Darkness

- Frank Peretti's novel portrays unseen conflict around Pastor Hank Busche.
- His frightening nighttime experience brings angels, demons, and prayer into one story.
- Our task: distinguish biblical teaching from literary imagination.

Manual pp. 15–17 • Hebrews 1:14; Ephesians 6:10–18

BREAKOUT • The unseen battle

- 4 min — Read the original classroom synopsis and context.
- 13 min — Discuss all three lenses, supporting claims with Scripture.
- 6 min — Three spokespersons share distinct insights (2 min each).
- 2 min — Instructor synthesis: biblical teaching, fiction, and pastoral care.

Three Lens for every group

- **ANGELS & DEMONS: Which details are supported by Scripture, and which reflect Peretti's imagination?**

- ✓ **PRAYER: How does John 15:7 shape our understanding of prayer? Does Scripture describe the mechanics of angelic battles?**
- ✓ **PASTORAL CARE: How can we respond compassionately without assuming mental illness is demonic?**

Pearlman, pp. 81-91 • John 15:7; Hebrews 1:14; Ephesians 6:18; James 4:7

Pastoral discernment: a ministry scenario

- • A congregant diagnosed with schizophrenia hears voices. Another member calls this demon possession.
- • How should a minister respond without making a spiritual or medical diagnosis?
- • Offer dignity, prayer if welcomed, and support for professional treatment. Never discourage medical care.

Manual pp. 15–17 • 1 Thessalonians 5:21; Galatians 6:2



Eschatology: The Study of Last Things

- Manual pp. 19–20 • 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Revelation 20–21

The Return of Christ (Parousia)

- Manual pp. 19–20 • Acts 1:11; Titus 2:13

- Christ will return; Christians are called to readiness and faithfulness.
- The point is hope and obedience—not setting dates.
- Ask: What would faithful readiness look like in ministry?

Resurrection: More than survival

Christian hope includes resurrection, not merely an immortal soul.

- Paul connects believers' future to Christ's resurrection.

- Resurrection affirms God's renewal of embodied life.

Manual pp. 19–21 • 1 Corinthians 15:20–23, 42–44



• Scripture teaches that God will judge justly.



• Judgment makes human choices and justice morally serious.



• Ministers should teach with sobriety, not manipulation or fear.

Final Judgment & Accountability

- Manual pp. 19–22 • Revelation 20:11–15; John 5:28–29

The Kingdom & New Creation

- Manual pp. 20–23 • Revelation 21:1–5; 2 Peter 3:11–13

1. **God's kingdom is present in Christ and awaits its fullness.**
2. **Revelation describes a new heaven and new earth.**
3. **Christian hope calls us to faithful action now.**

Pastoral Application: Facing Loss

- Manual pp. 18–22 • John 11:25–26; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

• A grieving family asks: “Where is our loved one now?”

• How do you offer scriptural hope without claiming to know what God has not revealed?

• What words or actions communicate compassion?

Self-Check: Can I explain it?

- Manual pp. 15–21

• Why must angels never replace God as the focus of worship?

• How does Scripture frame spiritual warfare?

• What is the difference between cultural afterlife imagery and resurrection hope?



From Doctrine to Daily Ministry

- Manual pp. 15–23

Essential Question

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIAN HOPE SHAPE MINISTRY TODAY?

- Ground our teaching in Scripture.
- Speak truth with compassion.
- Live faithfully in light of Christ's promised future.

Manual pp. 18–23 • Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 3:11–12

Closing & Transition

- In chat, complete: “Because of Christian hope, I will…”
- Submit unanswered doctrinal questions for the FAQ.
- Next: Hermeneutics and Homiletics—interpreting and proclaiming Scripture faithfully.

Manual pp. 15–23

Thank You

