

GLOSSARY

Adoption – The act of God of making a believer part of His family.

Advent – the coming of Christ. The first advent took place at His incarnation. The second advent will take place at His second coming.

Amillennialism – This view teaches that there is no literal earthly reign of Jesus before or after His second coming. Reference to the millennium in Revelation 20 is considered to be symbolic and is being fulfilled at the present time.

Angelology – The study of angels. It includes both holy and fallen angels as well as Satan.

Annihilationism – The belief that there is no eternal damnation for unbelievers. That all people will either be punished for a time and then annihilated or else annihilated immediately upon death.

Anthropological argument for the existence of God – The argument for the existence of God based on the existence of man as an intellectual, emotional, creative, and moral being.

Anthropology – The study of the human nature and culture.

Anthropomorphism – A figure of speech attributing human characteristics to God. Anthropomorphic language is used so that man can understand and relate to God in some way.

Antichrist – In the general sense, it refers to anyone who opposes or impersonates Christ. In the specific sense, it refers to the “man of lawlessness” who will appear prior to the second coming of Christ and will lead the world in rebellion against God.

Apocrypha – the collection of books canonized by the Roman Catholic Church but not included in the canon by the Protestant Church.

Apologetics – The formal defense of the existence of God and the Christian faith.

Arminianism – A theological system founded by James Arminius that sees salvation resulting from man’s freewill rather than God’s sovereign choice. The belief maintains that God’s decision to grant salvation is based on His foreknowledge of who would freely choose Him. The system also teaches that a truly regenerate person can lose his/her salvation.

Assurance – the teaching that one can have confidence that he/she is truly and eternally saved.

Atonement – The work that Christ did in His life, death, and resurrection to earn salvation for those who believe.

Attributes – In general, they are characteristics or qualities used to describe an object or a person. In theology, they refer to the characteristics of God. These characteristics are often divided into communicable and incommunicable attributes. Communicable are those attributes that can be exhibited by man; while the incommunicable are those attributes that are unique to divinity.

Baptism of the Spirit – The divine act of God by which He places everyone who believes in Christ into the church at the moment of their salvation. Contrary to Charismatic theology, this is not a “second blessing” that may occur after salvation. It is not accompanied by any sign and is done at the moment of salvation.

Believers baptism – The act of being baptized after one comes to saving faith in Christ.

Biblical theology – The study of individual authors and/or sections of Scripture and determining what place they have in the overall theological development.

Bibliology – The study of the Bible.

Body of Christ – A scriptural metaphor used to describe the church. It is used to speak of both the unity of the church as well as Christ as the head of the church.

Calvinism – A theological system attributed to John Calvin that emphasizes the sovereignty of God in all things, particularly in salvation. It points out man inability to come to salvation apart from the sovereign determination of God.

Canon – Literally, a measuring rod. It refers to the list of books that passed the tests and have been recognized by the church as being authoritative and compiled in the Bible.

Cessationist – A person who believes that certain miraculous sign gifts ceased to function after the infancy of the church.

Charismatic – Literally, having to do with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. More specifically, it has come to describe any group of people who trace their origin to the 1960’s & 70’s that are usually characterized by their emphasis on miraculous sign gifts.

Christology – The study of Christ.

Church – Those who are true believers in Christ. The term is used in the Bible in the universal sense to refer to all believers in Christ and in a local sense to refer to those believers in a specific geographical location.

Communicable attributes – Those attributes of God that He communicates or shares with His children.

Common Grace – the kindness that God shows to all people, whether they are His children or not.

Complementarian – the view that men and women are of equal value to God but that God has determined that certain roles, such as leading and teaching, are reserved for men.

Continuationist – A person who believes that all spiritual gifts are still active today.

Conversion – The willing response of person to the truth of the Gospel, including their repentance from sin and their confession of Jesus Christ as Lord.

Cosmological argument for the existence of God – The argument for the existence of God based on the fact that everything in the universe must have a cause, which can only be God.

Covenant – A binding legal agreement between God and man that stipulates expectations of both sides and conditions for the relationships. There are different types of covenants some are bilateral (the Mosaic Covenant), while others are unilateral (Abrahamic, Davidic, & New).

Creationist – A person who believes that God divinely created everything out of nothing in six consecutive 24-hour days.

Day-age theory – The theory of creation that believes the days in Genesis 1 refer to extremely long periods of times – literally millions of years.

Deism – The thought that God created everything and then has taken a “hands off” approach and is letting creation run its course without His interference or influence.

Depravity – The belief that all men are born completely sinful and entirely incapable of seeking God on their own.

Dichotomy – The thought that man is made up only two parts: body and soul/spirit.

Dictation – The theory of inspiration that God gave the writers the very words to record and they, like secretaries taking a letter, wrote down exactly what God told them to.

Dispensationalism – A theological system that sees God working among His people in distinct ways throughout history and that God has distinct plans for both Israel and the church. The church age is a distinct dispensation, when it is over, God will fulfill the remaining promises to Israel. Though salvation has always been by grace through faith, the focus of man’s salvation has become clearer through progressive revelation.

Doctrine – The teaching of the Bible as a whole as well as referring to the biblical teaching of specific areas.

Ecclesiology – The study of the church.

Eisegesis – Imposing meaning on the text that was not intended by the original author.

Election – The act of God whereby He chose particular individuals for salvation, before the creation of the world. Those whom He has chosen are called the elect.

Ekklesia – The Greek word for “church.” It means a called-out assembly of people.

Elohim – The generic Hebrew word for deity. It is used of both the one true God and pagan gods.

Eschatology – The study of last things.

Eternality – An attribute of God pointing to the fact that He has no beginning and no end. This is also stated by saying that only God is uncaused.

Eternal security – The teaching that no true believer can ever lose his/her salvation. Their salvation is both initiated and maintained by God. Therefore, they can do nothing to forfeit it.

Eternal state – The state of existence for Christians after they receive their glorified bodies.

Eucharist – Another word for the Lord’s Supper or communion. It comes from the Greek word meaning “giving of thanks.”

Excommunication – The act of the church that removes a member from the membership rolls and fellowship of the church. This is the last step in church discipline.

Exegesis – The act of seeking the meaning of a given passage of Scripture by deriving the meaning from the text in its context.

Ex nihilo – A Latin phrase that literally means “out of nothing.” It speaks of the fact that God created everything there is without using any preexisting materials.

Faith – Belief and trust in God and His Word based on the character and attributes of God.

Fall – the act of Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God and in doing so ushered sin and death into the world and passed a sinful nature on to all those born of man.

Foreknowledge – A term that means to “know in advance.” It is used to describe God’s selective choice of those whom He would elect before the creation of the world. It involves more than mere knowledge of whom He would elect; it also includes a relational aspect that points to His love and disposition to them.

Free will – The refers to man’s ability to make choices on his own that have real effects.

Gap theory – The theory of creation that sees a gap of millions of years between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 in which the original creation was judged by God leaving it without form and void and requiring God to recreate the world starting in 1:3.

Glorification – The final stage of salvation in which the sin nature of a Christian is completely removed and his/her sanctification is completed. This will not happen until the Christian is with the Lord.

Hamartiology – the study of sin.

Hermeneutics – The science of the interpretation of Scripture.

Historical theology – A way of looking at the development of theology at various stages throughout history.

Holiness – The attribute of God that shows that He is completely separate from sin.

Hypostatic union – The union of Christ’s divine and human natures seamlessly in one person.

Imago Dei – Latin for “image of God.” It refers to the uniqueness of man among God’s creation.

Immanence – An attribute of God that speaks of His presence and involvement within His creation.

Imminence – The condition that something can happen at any time. Theologically the term is applied to the return of Christ for His church. The rapture is imminent, meaning that it can happen at any time.

Immutability – The attribute of God meaning that He is unchangeable.

Impassibility -The incorrect belief that God does not have passions and emotions.

Impeccability – The attribute of God that points to His inability to sin.

Imputation – The judicial act of God whereby He transfers the believer’s sin to Christ and Christ’s righteousness to the believer.

Incarnation – The moment when Jesus put on human flesh.

Incommunicable attributes – Those attributes of God that unable to be shared with man; such as omniscience and omnipotence.

Inerrancy – The attribute of the Bible that points to the fact that the Bible is completely true and truthful in all that it teaches.

Infallibility – The Scripture is unable to lead man astray and incapable of failing in its purposes.

Inspiration – Literally, “God-breathed.” It is the method that God used to give us His Word as He used the personalities, vocabularies, and experiences of human authors to record what He wanted His Word to say.

Intelligent design – The theory of creation that looks at the complexity of creation and states that someone with intelligence created everything; it is too complex to have happened by chance or natural selection. In this theory, the creator does not necessarily need to be God.

Integrationist – In counseling it is the person who mixes biblical principles with secular humanistic psychology. The integrationist does not believe that the Bible is totally sufficient, in itself, to meet all of man's psychological needs.

Irresistible grace – The grace of God in effectively opening the eyes of the elect so that they will respond to the call for salvation with saving faith.

Justification – The legal declaration of God whereby He declares a repentant sinner innocent and righteous in His sight.

Kenosis – The emptying of Christ in Philippians 2:5-8, in which He laid aside the voluntarily use of some of His divine attributes in order to put on the limitations of human flesh.

Kingdom of God – The reign of God in either the hearts of man or on the earth.

Limited atonement – The belief that the atoning work of Christ is limited to those who confess Him as Lord and call on Him by faith. It is contrast to those who hold to universal atonement, that is all will be saved.

Literary framework – The theory of creation that does not take Genesis 1 as a literal sequence of events, but as a literary framework, a literary tool, in order to speak about God's creative activity. In the literary framework, the days can represent eras of creation rather than a 24-hour period of time.

Lordship salvation – The teaching that salvation only comes when one confesses Jesus both as Lord and as Savior. This is in contrast to those who teach that one may accept Jesus as Savior and may or may not submit to Him as Lord at some later date. Lordship salvation means that one must confess and submit to Jesus Christ as Lord in order for Him to be one's Savior.

Mature creation – The idea that God created everything in a mature state. This was necessary in order to supply food for the animals and man, among other things.

Mediator – The role of Christ in bridging the gap between God and man so that we may have a relationship with God.

Millennium – The period of 1,000 years that Christ will rule and reign on the earth.

Mystery – Something that was unknown in the New Testament until God revealed it.

New covenant – The covenant that was made available through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the covenant of grace and replaces the covenant of law.

Old covenant – A term referring to the Mosaic covenant. It is referred to as the old covenant in light of the new covenant.

Omnipotence – The attribute of God meaning that He is all-powerful; that He can do all that He wills to do.

Omnipresence – The attribute of God meaning that God is entirely everywhere at the same time.

Omniscience – The attribute of God meaning that God has complete knowledge. He knows all things actual and possible completely and effortlessly.

Ontological argument for the existence of God – The argument for the existence of God that states that God is the greatest conceivable being. Such a being must exist for it to be the greatest conceivable being – because existence is better than non-existence.

Ordinance – Sometimes called a “sacrament.” It is a God-ordained practice or symbol administered to the church. The two ordinances given to the church are Believers baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Ordo salutis – Latin for “order of salvation.” The term is used to describe the logical order of events that take place at the time of salvation.

Original sin – The first sin performed by Adam that ushered sin into mankind.

Paedobaptism – The practice of baptizing infants.

Panentheism – The belief that God’s being permeates the entire universe in such a way that everything exists in God. God is affected by each event in the universe and is therefore always changing, even is only in knowledge.

Pantheism – The belief that everything is God. God and the universe are essentially identical. This affectively eliminates any real distinction between creature and Creator.

Parousia – A Greek term meaning “presence.” It is used to refer to the second coming of Christ.

Pelagianism – The heretical teaching that a person can become sinless while on earth. The sin of Adam was not imputed to others, but was merely that of a bad example. Pelagians also believe that they can make the initial steps toward salvation as a result of their personal freewill.

Perseverance of the saints – The teaching that those who are truly saved will remain saved. It is also referred to as “Eternal security.”

Perspicuity – A term meaning that Scripture is clear and understandable. It does not negate the need for diligent study.

Plenary – A word meaning “full.” In regard to inspiration it means that all of the words of Scripture are inspired.

Pneumatology – The study of the Holy Spirit.

Postmillennialism – The view that Christ will return to the earth after the millennium, which will be ushered in by the gradual Christianization of the world.

Practical theology – The organization of theology according to the application of biblical principles. Also referred to as pastoral theology.

Predestination – The predetermined plan of God. Concerning salvation, it refers to God’s choosing the elect before the creation of the world.

Premillennialism – The view that Christ will return to earth prior to the millennium and He will rule and reign during it.

Preterist – The eschatological view that the events of the book of Revelation have already taken place. They believe that John was writing about current event and contemporary history.

Progressive revelation – The belief that God continued to reveal more detail about Himself, salvation, and the object of salvation from the Old Testament through the New Testament.

Prolegomena – Literally, “to say beforehand.” It refers to a preliminary discussion that introduces a greater subject.

Propitiation – The turning away of the wrath of God through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Therefore, those who are in Christ do not bear the wrath of God but are the recipients of His favor.

Ransom theory – The theory of salvation that says that Jesus died in order to pay a ransom to Satan for the souls of the elect.

Rapture – The taking up of the church (both dead and living Christians) from the earth to meet the Lord in the air and then to heaven.

Rapture, midtribulational – The view that Christ will rapture His church at the midpoint of the Tribulation so that the church will be spared from going through the Great Tribulation.

Rapture, posttribulational – The view that Christ will rapture His church after the Tribulation.

Rapture, pretribulational – The view that Christ will rapture His church before the seven-year Tribulation on earth begins.

Reconciliation – The removing of offenses and the restoration of fellowship between two parties.

Redemption – The buying back of an object or as person for a price.

Reformed – A term applied to those who hold to the theology of the Reformation. Specifically, it focuses on the doctrines of grace in salvation.

Regeneration – Literally, “to be made alive.” It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of one who comes to salvation. That person was dead in their trespasses and sins and has been “made alive” in Christ Jesus. It is the theological meaning behind the term “born again.”

Repentance – A genuine heartfelt sorrow over sin and a true desire to have a change of mind and a turning toward righteousness.

Revelation, general – The revelation of God to all men. This revelation is enough to know that there is a God but not enough to know how to have a relationship with Him.

Revelation, special – The revelation of God through His Word. This revelation is needed in order for someone to come to saving faith.

Salvation – The divine act of delivering the elect from slavery to sin and granting them forgiveness and eternal life.

Sanctification – The act of being set apart for special use. The word is used of objects used in worship. In salvation the word is used in two ways: The immediate effect of salvation is God’s setting the elect apart from sin for His use. Then the process of conforming the elect to the image of Christ. The former may be referred to as “positional sanctification,” while the latter may be referred to as “progressive sanctification.”

Security, eternal – The fact that the saved person cannot lose his/her salvation.

Soteriology – The study of Salvation.

Soul – The immaterial part of man. It is used interchangeably with “spirit.”

Sovereignty – God’s absolute rule over all things.

Spirit – The immaterial part of man. Used synonymously with soul. Also used to refer to the Holy Spirit. Context determines the usage.

Substitutionary atonement – The act of Christ in taking the place of the elect sinner on the cross and making payment for their sin.

Sufficiency of Scripture – The Scripture contains all that God wants for us to have and all that is needed for life and godliness. The Scriptures are enough for one to know Christ and how he/she is to live and grow in sanctification.

Systematic theology – The organization of Scripture according to particular themes and topics.

Teleological argument for the existence of God – The argument for the existence of God that since the universe shows intelligence and design that there must be a creator and that creator must be God.

Tetragrammaton – A term for the four Hebrew consonants that make up the name Yahweh (YHWH)

Theistic evolution – The theory of creation that God used evolution to create the world over millions of years.

Theology proper – The study of God the Father.

Theophany – The Old Testament appearance of God, usually in human form.

Total depravity – The belief that man is thoroughly infected by sin and that there is no righteousness in him until the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him.

Tribulation – Trouble. In regard to eschatology, it is the period of seven years of God's wrath poured out on the earth.

Trichotomy – the thought that man is made up of three parts: body, soul, and spirit.

Trinity – The doctrine that God exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each member of the Trinity is fully God and possesses all of the same attributes as the other, but differ in function.

Unconditional election – The teaching that the elect are chosen by God apart from any merit of their own.

Universalism – The heretical belief that God will eventually save everyone.

Verbal Inspiration – The teaching that the Holy Spirit moved the writers of Scripture in such a way that the very words they choose were determined by God.

Vicarious atonement – The work Christ did for the salvation of the elect by taking their place in death and paying their sin debt.

Worship – The act of serving, glorifying, and praising God in word and/or action.

Yahweh – The transliteration of the major Old Testament name for God. It is His covenant name and distinguishes Him from other gods.