

What We Believe: *The Theology of GHCC*

Can we understand the Trinity? Why is the church important? Why is the study of end times confusing? These are all theology questions. Theology is the way we understand *who* God is, *how* He has communicated to the world, and *what* He expects of His people. In this 8-week class, we will explore the theological distinctives that make up the Golden Hills Affirmation of Faith.

When: Sundays, Jan 12—March 1, 2020

Where: W247

Time: 10:55am—12:05pm

www.theologyclass.org/believe

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Recommended Resources:

1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith [LBCF]

Online version

www.the1689confession.com

App version

“LearnReformed”



Systematic Theology Textbooks:

Wayne Grudem: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine

Wayne Grudem: Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith

RC Sproul: Everyone's a Theologian

The Affirmation of Faith of Golden Hills Community Church (2019)

The Word of God

[LBCF: 1; 20.2]

We believe that the Bible, composed of sixty-six books, is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Romans 10:17)

The Trinity

[LBCF: 2; 5; 22.2]

We believe that there is only one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. (Father: John 10:30; Son: Hebrews 1:8; Spirit: Acts 5:3-4; Trinity: Matthew 3:16-17; Oneness: Deuteronomy 6:4)

God the Father

[LBCF: 3; 12]

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, hears and answers prayer, concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of humanity, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (John 16:23-28 & 17:5; Ephesians 1:3-14)

Jesus Christ

[LBCF: 8]

We believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, exaltation to the right hand of the Father where He reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords, perpetual intercession for His own people, and personal,

visible return to the earth. (John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-23; Romans 8:34)

The Holy Spirit

[LBCF: 13; 20.4]

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment and to regenerate, sanctify, baptize, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe the Bible's teaching that the Holy Spirit is received by every believer at the moment they hear the gospel and trust in Christ; that He indwells every believer in Christ and intercedes for them in prayer; that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide; and that He gives gifts to individual believers for building up the body of Christ in love. (John 14:26 & 16:7-13; Ephesians 1:13; Romans 8:16; Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11-16)

Humanity

[LBCF: 4; 6; 7; 9; 18]

We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in His own image and, therefore, from conception all human life has inherent value and is sacred before God; that men and women belong to a created order that God declared to be very good and, as believers, enjoy equal access to God as coheirs of God's grace in Christ. We believe that the image of God in human beings is now distorted and the original blessedness has been forfeited due to the fall of Adam; that the sin of Adam resulted in physical, spiritual, volitional, and emotional corruption, which is separation from God—eternal death. The supreme need of every human being is reconciliation with God, and the restoration lovingly and freely offered by God through the gospel. (Genesis 1:26; 1 Timothy 2:13; 1 Peter 3:7; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-4, 12; Romans 5:10; 8:29; Acts 3:21)

Regeneration (Salvation)

[LBCF: 10; 11; 12; 14; 17]

We believe that human beings are created in the image of God; but through the Fall of Adam, that all people are sinners by nature and by personal choice and, therefore, have need to be saved from condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ by faith as their personal Lord and Savior are saved from condemnation, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, are declared righteous before God and become new creations preserved by the grace and power of God. We also believe that those thus saved need no mediation other than Jesus Christ and can come directly to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:21-22; Romans 3:23-24; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 3:18)

Satan

[LBCF: 6.1]

We believe that Satan is a spirit being, a fallen angel, the first created being to sin; that he is the enemy of God and man and consciously strives to separate the two; and that he will suffer eternal, conscious punishment in the Lake of Fire. (Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 20:1-10; 2 Corinthians 4:4)

The Church

[LBCF: 26; 22.1, 5, 6, 7, 8]

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit of God. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that the Holy Spirit gives leaders to the church to equip believers for the work of the ministry, and that God has laid upon the local church the primary task of giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

(Matthew 28:16-20; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 10:24-25; Ephesians 4:11-16; Ephesians 3:10)

Christian Conduct

[LBCF: 13; 16; 19; 23; 24; 25; 27]

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God, the enjoyment of God, and the well being of others; that their conduct should be blameless before God, the church, and the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions, and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others that full stature of maturity in Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:31; Psalm 16:9-11; Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Colossians 1:28 & 3:1-17)

The Ordinances

[LBCF: 28; 29; 30]

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Biblical baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the triune God to publicly signify their union with Christ. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for the commemoration and proclamation of His death for us. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of Jesus Christ for His church. (Romans 6:1-11; Matthew 3:13-17 & 26:26-29 & 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:20-34)

Religious Liberty

[LBCF: 15; 21]

We believe that each human being is ultimately responsible to God alone in all matters in the practice of faith. Also, this church is independent and autonomous and will be subject to no other authority than God in its beliefs and practices of faith. We further believe that although church and state should be separate, the church shall always remain free to exercise its influence for biblical morals and ethics. (Romans 14:12; Proverbs 14:34; Mark 12:17; Acts 4:19; Romans 13:1-2)

Church Cooperation

[LBCF: 27]

We believe that local churches can promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with others of like faith. Such organizations exist and function by the will of the church.

Cooperation in any organization is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. (1 Corinthians 12)

The Last Things

[LBCF: 31; 32]

We believe in the blessed hope of the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for His church. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust for final judgment—the everlasting joy of the just, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost. We believe in the final and full consummation of the kingdom of God in the New Creation—the New Heavens and New Earth, the home of righteousness where all sin and its effects are forever removed. We believe that God will make all things new again. (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:10-11; Acts 24:15; John 5:29; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20-21)

What We Believe [Week 1]: Introduction

I. Affirmation of Faith

A. Purpose

1. To articulate the theological beliefs and distinctives that a local church holds regarding their understanding of biblical interpretation.
 - a. Creeds: Latin for “I believe”
2. Why is it important?
 - a. AOF declare where a local congregation stands on specific theological issues
3. Modern catechisms/confessions

B. Connected to Church Membership

1. Church members are affirming that they believe what the church believes.
2. Complete agreement?
 - a. Secondary issues might have differing opinions

II. Defining “Theology”

A. Theology

1. The knowledge of God
 - a. Everyone is a theologian

B. Systematic Theology

1. “The attempt to summarize in an orderly and comprehensive manner what the whole Bible has to say about any given topic.” — Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*
 - a. Organizing topics
 - b. Known as doctrines

C. Theology is applicational

1. Doctrines have ethical implications

D. Why we study theology?

1. Not to “get the right answers”
2. We study to *know* God
 - a. By knowing God better, we love him more
 - b. In our love for him, we please him
 - c. When we please him, we enjoy him
 - i. This is the chief end of man!

III. Categories of Belief

A. Orthodox

1. Literally “right belief”
2. Positions that are sound and affirmed among the historic church
 - a. The Creeds
 - i. Apostles’ Creed
 - ii. Nicæan Creed (Constantinopolitan Creed)
 - iii. Chalcedonian Creed
 - iv. Athanasian Creed
 - b. Main point:
 - i. One God (Father, Son, Spirit)
 - ii. Jesus died, rose, ascended
 - iii. Second coming of Christ/judgment/salvation

B. Heterodox

1. Not sound, but not outside of Christianity
2. Something is heterodox depending on perspective

C. Harmful

1. Beliefs/methods that may not be wrong, but are bad practice
 - a. Evangelistic methods; eschatological positions; foreknowledge positions

D. Heresy

1. A teaching rejected by the Christian community (contrary to scripture)
2. Technically the teaching of an unorthodox perspective (not merely a view that's held)

III. Christian Essentials

A. Primary (Core doctrines revealed in the Bible about God, and affirmed by the church through history):

1. Monotheism
 - a. Humanity/deity of Christ
 - b. The Trinity
2. Jesus
 - a. His deity
 - b. His incarnation
 - c. His resurrection
3. The Gospel
4. Salvation by Grace
 - a. Through Christ alone

B. Secondary?

1. Even though these are secondary, not all secondary positions are valid
 - a. Need to evaluate each position to determine validity
2. Creation
3. Eschatology
 - a. Millennium
 - b. Heaven/Hell/Death
 - i. Eternal Hell/Annihilationist
4. The Church
 - a. The Ordinances/Sacraments
 - i. Baptism/Communion
 - b. Spiritual Gifts
 - c. Elders/Pastors/Deacons
 - i. Female ordination
 - d. Denominations
5. Foreknowledge
 - a. Election/predestination
 - b. TULIP/Calvinism/etc.
6. Etc.

Resources for this topic:

The Golden Hills Podcast: *“Does Theology Matter?”* (season 2, episode 1)

J.I. Packer, *“Knowing God”* (InterVarsity Press, 1993)

Justin S. Holcomb, *“Knowing the Creeds and Councils”* (Zondervan, 2014)

Michael Bird, *“What Christians Ought to Believe”* (Zondervan, 2016)

Albert Mohler, *“The Apostle’ Creed: Discovering Authentic Christianity in an Age of Counterfeits”* (Thomas Nelson, 2019)

What We Believe [Week 1]: *The Word of God*

I. The Authority of the Bible

A. How God reveals Himself

1. General revelation
 - a. God reveals Himself through nature (Ps 19)
 - b. God reveals Himself through conscience (Rom 1:19)
 - c. This is not saving knowledge
2. Special revelation
 - a. What God has revealed through the Scriptures
 - i. 1 Tim 3:16
 - b. Special knowledge for how to please God

B. The words are God's words

1. The Bible is self-authenticating
 - a. We don't determine its reliability/authority
 - b. The words are inspired, the writers are not
 - c. God speaks through vision
 - i. Rev 2:1, 8, 12
 - d. God speaks through interviews
 - i. Luke 1:1-3
 - e. God brings the Spirit to mind
 - i. John 14:26
2. Biblical perspectives
 - a. Thus says the LORD (Ex. 4:22)
 - b. 2 Tim 3:16
 - c. 2 Pet 3:16

C. The words are human words

1. God used real people
2. It includes culture, personality, backgrounds, style, etc.
 - a. The human author must be validated as part of the writing

D. God is true and doesn't change

1. All truth is consistent
 - a. Inconsistencies are an interpretation issue
 - b. Findings challenge our interpretations, not the truth of scripture

F. God's and man's fingerprints

1. The Bible is completely inspired by God
 - a. Yet completely the work of people
 - b. Similar to the "hypostatic union"?

II. Sola Scriptura

A. The Bible is sufficient for what people need to know in matters of salvation and conduct

B. Without error

1. Inerrant

a. The Bible contains no errors

2. Infallible

a. Unable to err/contain mistakes.

b. The Bible is a sufficient source for matters dealing with what is necessary to be saved (faith) and how to live a godly life (practice).

c. Whatever the Bible says about these matters is without error.

C. Sola Scriptura misnomers

1. Don't use other resources

a. Apocrypha

2. Church history is bad

3. If the Bible doesn't teach it, you can't do it

Questions:

1. Is this a primary or secondary affirmation?

2. What is the core theological idea of the affirmation?

3. Is there any room for theological diversity within this affirmation?

4. If there is room for theological diversity, where does GHCC lean?

In 1-2 sentences, how would I summarize this theological idea?

Resources for this topic:

For reference in the LBCF, see Chapter: **1; 20.2**

Greg Gilbert, *“Why Trust the Bible”* (Crossway, 2015)

The Golden Hills Podcast: *“Why do we use the ESV?”* (season 2, episode 2)

“The Five Solas: Sola Scriptura” (Golden Hills, 2018)

What We Believe [Week 2]: *The Trinity*

I. The Bible's View of the Trinity

A. Trinity

1. Non-biblical word
 - a. un-biblical
 - b. Descriptive about what is taught
 - c. Triunity?

II. The Theology

A. What is the Trinity?

1. MONOTHEISM
2. Shema: Deut. 6:4 *HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE*
 - a. Fundamental aspect of Judaism
 - b. 1st cent every male Jew would say this 3 x's a day

B. Basic Definition of the Trinity

1. The Bible teaches there is only one true God
2. The Bible identifies three eternal Persons as YHWH
 - a. The Father is called God (Col 1:3)
 - b. The Son is called God (John 20:28; Titus 2:13; Col. 2:9; Phil. 2:4-6)
 - c. The Holy Spirit is called God
 - i. Eternal (Heb. 9:14)
 - ii. Omnipresent (Ps. 139:7–10)
 - iii. Omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10–11)
 - iv. Omnipotent (Luke 1:35–37)
3. But only one God exists—the Persons are not the same as each other
 - a. The Father is not the Son
 - b. The Son is not the Spirit
 - c. The Spirit is not the Father
 - i. These three Persons are the one true God

C. Illustrations

1. Helpful analogies
 - a. _____
 - b. Modalism
2. Illustrations usually reject the 3 distinct persons
 - a. God in different modes/manifestations
 - b. Common Christian error
3. God's not an analogy
 - a. He's unique, one of a kind, infinite
 - b. NOTHING is like him
 - c. Nothing is analogous...just describe God biblically!

III. Christology: The Nature of Jesus

A. Four affirmations of the biblical person of Jesus Christ:

1. Jesus Christ is fully and completely *divine*
 - a. Isa. 9:6
 - b. John 1:1
 - c. Rom 9:5; Matt. 28:9; Col 1:15-20
2. Jesus Christ is fully and completely *human*
 - a. Luke 2:7, 40, 52
 - b. 1 Tim 2:5
 - c. Heb 2:17
3. The divine and human natures of Christ are *distinct*
 - a. Not a flesh/spirit division
 - b. The divine didn't overtake the human
4. The divine and human natures of Christ are completely *united* in one person
 - a. Technical term: Hypostatic Union
 - i. 100% Man
 - ii. 100% God

IV. God is not abstract & distant - He's relational & interpersonal

A. The Trinity is not fully *comprehensible*, but is completely *graspable*

1. Difference:
 - a. *Comprehensible*: To understand fully, have complete knowledge of something
 - b. *Grasp*: To have a basic understanding or knowledge
2. It's graspable because God has revealed Himself
 - a. Foreign/pagan gods don't reveal themselves, because they don't love

B. Because God is love, by nature, He has to be plural (in Person)

1. God is the eternal, self-existing one (Exod. 3:15)
2. God is love (1 John 4:8)
3. God has no needs (Ps. 50:8-15)
4. Therefore, God could only truly eternally express Himself within a Godhead
 - a. This means, by nature, Yahweh must exist in a community/plurality

Questions:

1. Is this a primary or secondary affirmation?
2. What is the core theological idea of the affirmation?
3. Is there any room for theological diversity within this affirmation?
4. If there is room for theological diversity, where does GHCC lean?

In 1-2 sentences, how would I summarize this theological idea?

Resources for this topic:

For reference in the LBCF, see Chapter: **2; 5; 22.2**

James R. White, *"The Forgotten Trinity"* (James R. White)

The Golden Hills Podcast: *"What is the Trinity?"* (season 2, episode 3)

Appendix: *Biblical Basis for the Trinity*

A. The term Trinity

1. The word itself isn't found in the Bible
 - a. It's a word used to describe what the Bible teaches about God

B. Trinity Scripture Reference

1. There is only one God
 - a. Deut 32:39; 2 Sam 7:22; Ps 86:10; Isa 43:10; 44:6-8; 46:9; John 5:44; 17:3; Rom 3:29-30; 16:27; 1 Cor 8:4; Gal 3:20; Eph 4:6; 1 Thes 1:9; 1 Tim 1:17; 2:5; James 2:19; 1 John 5:20-21; Jude 25
2. The Bible identifies three Persons identified as God
 - a. The Father is identified as God
 - i. John 6:27; Eph. 4:6; Col 1:2-3; 2 Pet 1:17
 - b. The Son is identified as God
 - i. John 1:1; 8:58; 10:30; 20:28; Phil 2:6; Col 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8; 2 Pet 1:1
 - c. The Holy Spirit is identified as God
 - i. Gen 1:2; John 14:26; Acts 5:3-4; 13:2, 4; 28:25; Rom 8:11; Eph 4:30; Heb 9:14
 - d. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct and distinguishable persons
 - i. Matt. 28:19; Luke 3:22; John 15:26; 16:13-15; 2 Cor. 13:14.
3. But there is only one God
 - a. Isaiah 43:10; Deut. 6:4

What We Believe [Week 3]: *The Economic Trinity*

I. The Ontological Trinity: The Essence of God

A. *Being & Persons*

1. The one *Being* of God is shared by the three *Persons* of the Godhead
 - a. Contradiction?
2. *Being*
 - a. What something is
 - b. Everything that exists has *being*
 - c. Everything isn't *personal*
 - d. Biblical *beings* who are also *personal*
3. *Person*
 - a. Has "baggage"
 - b. Consciousness, personality
 - c. My *being* is shared by one *person*

B. The Godhead

1. God isn't limited
 - a. Infinite being, not finite
2. God's *Being* and *Person*
 - a. The divine *Being* is one
 - b. The divine *Persons* are three
3. WHAT & WHO's
 - a. The one *what* is the Being
 - b. The three *who*'s are the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

II. The Economic Trinity: The Model Community

A. Economics

1. "The ordering of activities"
 - a. e.g., Home-economics
2. Distinguished by the roles they play
 - a. God the Father *planned* everything
 - b. God the Son *implemented* and *carried out* that plan
 - c. God the Spirit *empowered* His people

III. God the Father

- A. Planned Everything
 - 1. Creation (Rev 4:11)
 - 2. Delighted in sending the Son (Isaiah 53:10)
- B. In the OT “father” is used to describe the close kinship that God enjoys with His people
 - 1. Ps. 103:13
 - 2. God is a “*father to Israel*” (Jer. 31:9; Exod 4:22; Hos. 11:1)
- C. Jesus & the Apostles referred to God as father
 - 1. *Our Father* (Matt. 6:9)
 - 2. Cf. 2 Cor. 1:3; Jas 1:17; Eph 1:17
- D. The Father title in relation to the Son
 - 1. Came in His Father’s name as God’s unique representative (John 5:43)
 - 2. Shares the Father’s authority; works done in His Father’s name bear witness (John 10:25)
 - 3. Has provided a full revelation of God because He has declared His name (John 12:28; 17:6)
- E. The Father's will is to give His chosen people to the Son
 - 1. To be raised up on the last day (John 6)

IV. Jesus Christ (the Son)

- A. Implemented & carried out the Father's plan
 - 1. John 3:16
 - 2. Acts 2:22-24; 4:27-28
- B. Filled OT offices of:
 - 1. Prophet (Heb 1:1-2)
 - a. Proclaiming God's word to his people
 - b. Calling the people of his time to repentance
 - 2. Priest (Heb 5:1)
 - a. Mediate before Yahweh
 - 3. King (Luke 1:31-33; Rev 1:5)
 - a. He rules over all creation for all time (Matt 28:18)
 - b. All peoples will bow to his royal authority (Phil 2:9-10)
- C. He saves His people (John 6)
 - 1. Bread of Life (6:31-35)
 - 2. Loses none (and raises up) those that the Father gives Him (6:37-40)
- D. Intercedes for His people to the Father
 - 1. John 14:14
 - 2. Acts 7:59
 - 3. Rom 10:9
 - 4. 1 Cor. 1:2
- E. Reigns as King (Rev 4-5; 7:17; 22:1)
 - 1. His life, death, resurrection, ascension, currently reigns in God’s Kingdom (Matt 28:18)
 - 2. Empowers God's people to sit on the throne & reign over creation with him (Rev 20:6)

V. The Holy Spirit

- A. Empowers God's people to fulfill the Father's plan
 - 1. Christ's incarnation (Luke 1:35)
 - 2. Human regeneration (John 3:5-8)
 - 3. Empowers gospel preaching (Acts 1:8)
- B. The Spirit at work in key events throughout salvation history
 - 1. Creation (Gen 1:2)
 - 2. The believer's intercession (Rom 8:26-28)
 - 3. The inspiration and illumination of Scripture (1 Tim 3:16)
 - 4. Comforts/Helper (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7)
 - 5. Teaches (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:13)
 - 6. Determines the distribution of spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:11)

Questions:

- 1. Is this a primary or secondary affirmation?
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- 3. Is there any room for theological diversity within this affirmation?
- 4. If there is room for theological diversity, where does GHCC lean?

In 1-2 sentences, how would I summarize this theological idea?

Resources for this topic:

For reference in the LBCF, see Chapter: **3; 8; 12; 13; 20.4**

Michael Reeves, *"Delighting in the Trinity"* (InterVarsity Press, 2012)

The Golden Hills Podcast: *"What is the Trinity?"* (season 2, episode 3)

What We Believe [Week 4]: *Humanity*

I. Created in God's Image

A. *Anthropos*

1. Anthropology
 - a. The study of humankind
2. Humankind
 - a. Male (Gen. 2:15-20a)
 - b. Female (Gen. 2:20b-23)
3. Created for God's glory
 - a. Isa. 43:7
 - b. We glorify God by enjoying Him (Ps 16:11)
 - c. We are the Potter's clay (Rom 9:14-24)

B. In the image of God (Gen 1:27)

1. God's pinnacle of creation
 - a. Gen 1:26—2:3
2. Primary image-bearing qualities
 - a. God's vice-regents to creation (Gen 1:28-30; 2:19)
 - i. Name animals (mastery)
 - ii. Humans are to rule over creation
3. Secondary image-bearing qualities
 - a. Morals
 - b. Relationship
 - c. etc.

II. The Fall

A. God's image distorted at the Fall

1. The Fall (Gen 3)
 - a. All of creation was affected (Rom 8:20-22)
2. Restoration of this in Jesus
 - a. Rom 8:29
 - b. Christ is the new/better Adam
 - c. The Bible is the story of God's fixing broken people in a broken world
 - i. Engage in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:11-21)
 - ii. Love others, all people deserve dignity
 - d. God is restoring all of creation
 - i. Care for creation
 - ii. Adam/Eve's first job to care and work the Garden

III. What is Sin?

A. Sin came through Adam and Eve

1. Adam and Eve's nature changed
 - a. We're enemies of God, and of others
 - b. Rom 5:12-14, 17-19
2. *Hamartia* (Gk)
 - a. The departure from divine standards of righteousness
 - b. Missing the mark/goal
 - c. A breach of relationship
 - d. Ungodliness, perversion, rebellion
3. Theologically
 - a. Separation from the holy God

B. Sin corrupted our nature

1. We are spiritually dead; dead people don't want to live
 - a. Eph. 2:1-3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:9-12, 23; 8:7-8; Jer. 17:9; Col. 1:21
2. We are unable to do anything that pleases God
 - a. We don't seek to please God (1 Cor. 2:14)
 - i. Heb. 11:6; Is. 64:6; Ps. 10:4; Rom. 3:10-12
 - b. Depravity
3. Sin affects our nature, our attitude and our behavior
 - a. Gal 5:13-14

C. Sin still affects Christians

1. We no longer have a sin nature, but still have indwelling sin
 - a. Gal 6:1-5
 - b. 1 John 1:8-10

Questions:

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4. If there is room for theological diversity, where does GHCC lean?

In 1-2 sentences, how would I summarize this theological idea?

Resources for this topic:

For reference in the LBCF, see Chapter: **4; 6; 7; 18**

- Jen Wilkin, *"In His Image: 10 Ways God Calls Us To Reflect his Character"* (Crossway, 2018)
- Douglas & Jonathan Moo, *"Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World"* (Zondervan, 2018)
- Martin Luther, *"On the Bondage of the Will"*
- GHCC Sermon: *"Made with Dignity, Gen 1:26—2:3"* by Pastor Phil Ward, 1/19/2020

What We Believe [Week 4]: Satan

I. Identity

A. Names

1. Satan

- a. “Adversary”; proper name for the devil
- b. The accuser in the heavenly court (Job 1–2)
- c. Stands against the people of God/David (1 Chron 21:1)
- d. OT: a title/description; NT: a name

2. Other biblical descriptions

- a. *Beelzebub* (Mt. 10:25); *ruler of this world* (John 14:30); *the prince of the air* (Eph 2:2); *the god of this age* (2 Cor 4:4); *the tempter* (Mt. 4:3); *the deceiver* (Rev. 12:9); *your adversary* (1 Pet 5:8); *the enemy* (Mt 13:39); *the Evil One* (1 Jn 2:13; 3:12; 5:18; Mt. 13:19, 38); *the father of lies, a murderer* (Jn 8:44); *Beelzebub the prince of demons* (Mt 12:24; *the god of this world* (2 Cor 4:4)

3. The Serpent/Dragon

- a. Serpent: Gen 3:1, 13, 14; 2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:15
- b. Dragon: Rev 12:1-17; 13:2-11; 16:13; 20:2

B. Satan’s origins

1. Not much biblical information

- a. “All things” were good (Gen 1:31), not evil at creation?
- b. Two NT references of angels rebelling
 - i. 2 Pet 2:4
 - ii. Jude 6
- c. Former angel?
 - i. 2 Cor 11:14

C. Misnomers

1. Appearance

- a. Not described in Scripture
- b. “Goat”?

2. Lucifer (14:12)

- a. Translational issue
 - a. Comes from the Latin
 - b. The KJV follows the Latin

3. Questionable OT passages (Isa 14 & Ezek 28)

- a. Probably speeches about human kings
 - i. Genre: *satirical lament*
 - ii. their abuse of power/authority = cast down from positions of power
- b. Isa. 14:12-15
 - i. To the King of Babylon (14:4, 22)
- c. Ezek. 28
 - i. To the King of Tyre (28:1, 11-12)

II. Biblical Description

A. The Gospels

1. Matt 6:13 *“but deliver us from evil”*
 - a. The Evil One
2. Jesus encounters in his ministry
 - a. Mark 1:34; 3:22; 5:12
 - b. Matt 8:32
 - c. Matt 12:43
3. Satan falling from heaven
 - a. Luke 10:17-20
 - b. Rev 12:7-12

C. After Jesus’ Ministry

1. Who the saints battle in this world
 - a. Eph 6:12
 - b. 1 John 4:1, 3, 6
2. The “god” of this age
 - a. 2 Cor 4:4
 - b. “This age” (present evil age)

D. Judgment

- Rev 20:1-3
1. Rev 20:7-10

Questions:

1. Is this a primary or secondary affirmation?
2. What is the core theological idea of the affirmation?
3. Is there any room for theological diversity within this affirmation?
4. If there is room for theological diversity, where does GHCC lean?

In 1-2 sentences, how would I summarize this theological idea?

Resources for this topic:

For reference in the LBCF, see Chapter: 6.1

- John R. Gilhooly, *“40 Questions About Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare”* (Kregel, 2018)
- Crossway article: www.crossway.org/articles/5-myths-about-angels-and-demons

What We Believe [Week 5]: *Regeneration (Salvation)*

I. Review of Humanity

A. Creation, Fall

1. Created good (Gen 1:31)
2. Distorted image/sinned by falling to temptation (Gen 3)
 - a. Result: Dead in sin (Eph 2:1)
 - i. Have no desire to please God (Rom 8:8)
 - ii. We desire sin (Prov 21:10; Gal 5:17; Eph 4:22; Rom 7:5)

B. Redemption

1. The effects of the Gospel = redeemed by God sending His Son to become King of Creation
2. Regeneration
 - a. To be made new again
 - b. (IVP Pocket Dictionary—Reformed Theology)
 - c. Regeneration happens by means of the gospel

II. Declaring the Gospel

A. What is the gospel?

1. What God has done in Christ Jesus

B. Key elements of a gospel *call*

1. All have **sinned** (Rom 3:23)
2. Penalty for sin is **death** (Rom 6:23)
3. **Christ** died to pay the **penalty** for sin (Rom 5:8)
4. Jesus was **resurrected** and reigns as King of God's Kingdom (Matt 28:18)
5. **All who repent & believe** this good news will be raised (2 Cor 4:13-15)
 - a. 2 Cor 4:13-15
 - b. 1 Cor 15:3-11

III. Justification: God's Legal Declaration

A. Justification

1. Justify: God's activity of declaring a sinner to be righteous
 - a. God declares at the moment of faith
 - b. Legal declaration; innocent before the righteous God
2. The verb form of the same Greek word as "*righteousness*"
 - a. Righteousness: When something is the way it ought to be
 - b. The quality or characteristic of upright behavior

B. Imputation

1. Exchanging
 - a. Transfer of *benefit* or *harm* from one individual to another
2. Romans 5:18-19 Positive and negative effects of imputation
 - a. Negative imputation:
 - b. Positive imputation:
 - i. (Rom 5:6-11)
 - ii. Christ's righteousness is transferred to all people who have faith in God
3. "The Great Exchange"
 - a. Exchanging Christ's righteousness for our sin
 - b. God declares that sinner's have Christ's righteousness

IV. What is Atonement?

A. Atonement

1. A reparation for an offense or injury (propitiate)

- a. To wash away, rub off, obliteration of sin, the price of a life, ransom, cover over

B. Cause of the Atonement

1. God's love

- a. John 3:16

2. Christ as propitiation

- a. Rom 3:25 *whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood*
- b. Christ took the punishment for sinners

D. Penal Substitution

1. Jesus stood as a substitute for his people

- a. Taking the penalty that was due to those who actually deserve it
- b. Jesus bore the wrath of God on the cross, standing in our place
 - i. Is 53:6, 12
 - ii. 2 Cor 5:21
 - iii. Gal 3:13
 - iv. Heb 10:1-4

E. What are the effects of Christ's atonement

1. Did he just make people "savable"?

- a. theology or slogans?

2. Did he actually "save"?

- a. His sacrifice actually saved those in which it intended
- b. Matt 1:21; John 10:11, 15; Acts 20:28; Rom 5:10; 8:32-35; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 1:4; 3:13; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:28

V. Election & Predestination

A. Election

1. A special choice, selection
 - a. Definition: (Grudem)
2. NT passages
 - a. Acts 13:48; Eph 1:4-6, 12; 2 Tim 1:9; Rev 17:8

B. Predestine

1. *Predestined*: decide upon beforehand, *predetermine*
 - a. Cf. Rom 8:29, 30; Acts 4:28; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11
2. *Foreknowledge*: (verb) to decide upon beforehand

C. Choices

1. God is free to do as He pleases
 - a. Ps 115:3
 - b. Rom 9:20-21
 - c. OT imagery for God's control over his creation (Isaiah 29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Jer 18:6)
 - d. God's decrees aren't based on human choice (Job 42:2)
2. Humans are free to do as we please
 - a. Humans freely act on our desires
 - b. We desire what we want to do (based on nature)
 - i. 1 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:1—3; Rom 8:7—8;
3. Therefore: *Compatibilism*
 - a. God's sovereignty is consistent with human freewill
 - b. Human freedom is not identical to God's freedom
4. Biblical examples of *Compatibilism*
 - a. Gen 50:20; Dan 1:1-2; Ps. 139:16; Prov. 21:1; Rev 17:17; Acts 2:23

D. God Saves!

1. The Golden Chain of Redemption
 - a. Rom 8:29

Questions:

1. Is this a primary or secondary affirmation?
 2. What is the core theological idea of the affirmation?
 3. Is there any room for theological diversity within this affirmation?
 4. If there is room for theological diversity, where does GHCC lean?
- In 1-2 sentences, how would I summarize this theological idea?

Resources for this topic:

For reference in the LBCF, see Chapters: **10; 11; 12; 14; 17**

“*What is the Gospel?*” by Greg Gilbert (Crossway, 2010)

“*The Five Solas: Sola Fide*” (Golden Hills, 2018)

“*American Gospel: Christ Alone*” (2018) (The first 40 minutes can be viewed for free on YouTube)

“*American Gospel: Christ Crucified*” (2019)

What We Believe [Week 6]: *The Church*

I. Church

A. What is a church?

1. The regular gathering of believers in a local church who have submitted and committed themselves to one another, under a God-ordained leadership who administers: baptism and membership (the sacraments), and church discipline.
 - a. All true believers are citizens of the Kingdom of God
 - b. Their job description: To be ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor 5:20)
 - c. The local church: ambassadors/embassies, existing in a foreign land
 - d. These embassies exist within nations that are hostile enemies of God (Ps 2:1-3)

B. *Ekklesia*

1. Gathering/assembly
 - a. Not describing organizations, buildings
 - b. Groups of people who have covenanted together
2. Biblical description for God's people
 - a. OT: Deut. 4:10
 - b. NT: Matt. 16:18
3. Universal vs. Local Church
 - a. Universal: All the Christians around the globe
 - b. Local: The congregations that are united by membership
4. Other identifications
 - a. The body: 1 Cor 12; Eph 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Col 2:19
 - b. The Bride of Christ: Eph 5:32; 2 Cor 11:2
 - c. Family: Matt 25:40
 - d. Other metaphors
 - i. New temple; holy priesthood; branches on a vine; olive tree; field of crops
 - e. Better description?
 - i. The People of God

II. Components & Activities of the Church

A. Components

1. Leadership
 - a. Specific qualifications for leadership
 - i. 1 Tim 3:1-13
 - (a). Elders/Pastors
 - (b). Deacons
 - ii. Titus 1:5-9
 - (a). Elders/Pastors
 - b. **Heb 13:17b** Leaders shepherd a specific flock, give an account to God for those they are watching over
2. Membership
 - a. **Heb 13:17a** Submit to/obey their leaders
 - b. If there is no identifiable membership, there is no one for leaders to lead

B. Activities

1. The Ordinances
 - a. Baptism
 - b. Communion
2. Preaching
 - a. 2 Tim 4:1-5
 - b. 1 Tim 4:13-16; 5:17
 - c. Acts 6:1-6
3. Discipline
 - a. Church discipline when there is unrepentant sin (Matt 18:15-20)
 - b. In Corinth a man was put out of fellowship (1 Cor 5)
 - c. Without membership, a pastor doesn't have authority to exercise discipline

C. Motivation

1. Love (John 13:35)

III. Spiritual Gifts

A. The Spirit is given to the saints

1. Acts 2:1-13
2. 1 Cor 3:16-17

B. The gifts are for the local church

1. For the common good
 - a. 1 Cor 12:7
 - b. 1 Cor 14:12; 26
 - c. Eph 4:11-16
1. Not personal gain
 - a. 1 Pet 4:10-11

Questions:

1. Is this a primary or secondary affirmation?
2. What is the core theological idea of the affirmation?
3. Is there any room for theological diversity within this affirmation?
4. If there is room for theological diversity, where does GHCC lean?

In 1-2 sentences, how would I summarize this theological idea?

Resources for this topic:

For reference in the LBCF, see Chapters: **[LBCF: 26; 22.1, 5, 6, 7, 8]**

What is a healthy Church Member? by Thabiti M. Anyab, (Crossway, 2008)

What is a Healthy Church? by Mark Dever (Crossway, 2007)

Baptist Foundations edited by Mark Dever & Jonathan Leeman (B&H 2015)

What We Believe [Week 6]: *The Ordinances*

I. Sacraments

A. Background of the term

1. Gk. *Mysterion*
2. Lt. *Sacramentum*
 - a. holy, hallowed, consecrate
 - b. Secular use: a Roman soldier's oath of allegiance

II. Baptism

A. The two functions of baptism:

1. The local church affirming a believer's testimony
 - a. The church affirms that the believer is united to Christ in his death/resurrection (Rom 6:3-4)
 - b. Baptism is the application of the gospel
2. The believer publicly committing him/herself to Christ and His people

B. Background

1. Immersion
 - a. *baptize* to dip/plunge something in water
2. Jewish practice prior to Jesus
 - a. Mark 1:4-8 (John's baptism)
 - b. Mark 1:9-11 (the baptism of Jesus)

C. Who/how is one baptized

1. Believers
 - a. Baptism is the first public act of the faith that receives Christ as savior
 - b. Baptism is where we "put on Jesus' team jersey"

III. Communion

A. Different identifications

1. Lord's Supper, Communion, Holy Communion, the Ordinances, the Sacrament, the Lord's Table, the Breaking of Bread, the Love Feast
2. Eucharist (*eucharisteo*): to give thanks

B. Background of the meal

1. Jesus' last supper
 - a. Matt 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-20
 - b. Most clearly demonstrated in 1 Cor 11:23-26

C. Views through Church History

1. RCC
 - a. *Transubstantiation*: The substance changes
 - b. The substance in the elements (bread/wine) is transformed/changed into Christ's body/blood, while the appearance, taste, touch, smell remain the same
 - c. Since it's the real presence of Christ, this is a sacrifice offered to God

2. Luther
 - a. *Consubstantiation*
 - i. *Con* [in, with] the substance
 - b. Jesus is truly and completely present in the sacraments (it's the very body/blood)
 - c. Therefore, Christ is "in, with, and under" the bread
 3. Zwingli
 - a. The *Memorial* view
 - b. We do this "in remembrance of Jesus" (Matt 26:26)
 4. Calvin
 - a. The *Spiritual Presence* view
 - b. The elements are symbolic that exhibit Christ as truly present, but it's not an empty symbol
 - c. Affirmed a true presence of Christ
 - d. Since the Lord's body was once for all sacrificed for us, we may feed on it, therefore, Christ himself is spiritually present
- D. Who should take communion?
1. Believers only
 2. As relates to membership:
 - a. Closed communion
 - b. Partially-closed communion

Questions:

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In 1-2 sentences, how would I summarize this theological idea?

Resources for this topic:

For reference in the LBCF, see Chapter: **[LBCF: 28; 29; 30]**

- *What is a Healthy Church?* By Mark Dever (Crossway, 2007)
- *Understanding Baptism*, by Bobby Jamieson (B&H, 2016)

What We Believe [Week 7]: The Christian Life

I. Christian Conduct

A. Common Grace

1. God's non-salvific divine favor towards all humans
 - a. How can good things happen to depraved/evil people?
 - b. Saving grace is only offered to those the Father draws to the Son (Jn 6:35-59)
2. Four ways this manifests itself
 - a. Providential care of creation
 - i. Sustaining creation Heb 1:2-3; John 1:1-4
 - ii. The rain falls on the just/unjust Mark 5:45
 - b. Restraining sin in human affairs
 - i. Civil authorities Rom 13:1, 6
 - ii. Limit a person's sin Gen 20:6; 1 Sam 25:26
 - c. By the human conscience
 - i. Doing right without the law Rom 2:14-15
 - d. Unbelievers performing blessings to humankind
 - i. Medical, therapeutic, and technological advancements
3. The church and common grace
 - a. God does good to all, the People of God can do good to all
 - b. This is demonstrated in our conduct

B. Stewards

1. Of all possessions
 - a. Financial
 - b. Material
 - c. Time
 - d. Ecological

II. Religious Liberty

A. Churches

1. State-churches: Taxes funded churches
2. Independent: Churches don't receive favoritism, function as autonomous gatherings

B. Job Descriptions (Leeman's *"How the Nations Rage"*)

1. The Government/State:

- a. Builds a platform for life
 - i. Gvmnts don't accomplish salvation; build a platform for salvation
 - ii. Judgment for the sake of justice (Gen 9:6)
 - iii. To provide justice & punish harm
 - iv. Israel isn't prescriptive of the nations in history
- b. Is not a savior
 - i. Gvmnts provide common grace
 - ii. Gvmnts build streets so you can drive to church
 - iii. Gvmnts protect the womb so you can hear the gospel
 - iv. Gvmnts insist on fair lending so you can own a home/offer hospitality to non-Christians

2. The Church:

- a. Embassy of Heaven, not a lobbying organization
 - i. The church has authority to declare the who of the gospel
 - ii. We don't want politicians declaring who the true/false church is

3. The Pastor:

- a. a gospel preacher, not a policy proposer
 - i. Pastors declare what is biblically clear and significant
 - ii. Speaking to policy is saying more about Jesus than they have authority to say
 - iii. When pastors tie their name to policy, they tie the name of Jesus to that endeavor
 - iv. When should a pastor address public policy?
 - v. Pastors can sin by not speaking when they should, but they can sin by speaking when they shouldn't

4. The Christian:

- a. Is an ambassador for Christ, not a culture warrior (or a withdrawler-ers)
 - i. Christians work through the rules of the institutions to change the culture
 - ii. Christians have no place in overthrowing the state/marketplace
 - iii. Christians challenge the secular-pagan state (a threat), but they do not overthrow the state/marketplace (no threat)
- b. We need to *"be before we do"*

III. The Church's Mission

A. Minister to God

1. Through worship
 - a. Rom 12:1-2
 - b. Col 3:16

B. Minister to its members

1. Nurturing and building up
 - a. Col 1:28
 - b. Eph 4:12-13

C. Minister to the world

1. Preaching the gospel to the world (Mt 28:19)
 - a. In word
 - i. Acts 1:8
 - b. In deed
 - i. Mt 25:40 (cf. Acts 9:4-5)
 - ii. James 2

Questions:

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In 1-2 sentences, how would I summarize this theological idea?

Resources for this topic:

For reference in the LBCF, see Chapter: **13; 15; 16; 19; 21; 23; 24; 25; 27**

Jonathan Leeman, *“How The Nations Rage: Rethinking Faith and Politics in a Divided Age”*
(Thomas Nelson, 2018)

James Hamilton, *“Work and Our Labor in the Lord”* (Crossway, 2017)

What We Believe [Week 8]—*Eschatology*

I. Intro: “Final Judgment/The Coming of Christ”

A. Eschatology

1. Study of end times (*eschatos*)
2. Eschatology is more than the “millennium”
 - a. The “last days”
3. the Kingdom of God

B. Foundational Eschatological beliefs:

1. The bodily return of Jesus where God makes all things new
 - a. For His people
 - i. Resurrection of the just
 - ii. The final consummation of the Kingdom of God
2. The unjust for final judgment
 - a. Everlasting conscious punishment of the lost

II. Millennial Views

A. Pre-Millennial

1. Popular premill view
 - a. Dispensational Premillennialism
2. Christ will return in power and glory *before* (pre) the “thousand years”
3. Futurist reading of Revelation
 - a. Future Great Tribulation
 - i. 7-year period (Dan 9; Matt 24)
 - b. Rapture of the church (1 Thes 4:17)
 - c. Will defeat and destroy the beast and false prophet
4. View among Christians:
 - a. Historic Premill: Widely held through Christian history
 - b. Dispensational Premill: Popular among American laypeople (since 1900s)

B. Post-Millennial

1. Christ will return *after* (post) the “thousand years” in which the dragon is bound
 - a. The church helps usher in God's kingdom
2. View among Christians: Minority view
 - a. Seasons of popularity in the west (from the Reformation on)

C. Amillennial

1. The millennium is not defined by 1,000 years
2. Christ will return after the time that is symbolized as a “thousand years”
 - a. The millennium is not limited to a thousand years
 - b. The period between the first advent of Christ, and his 2nd coming; Satan is bound from deceiving the nations
3. The prophecies and visions of Revelation are symbolism (blessings/trials of the church)
4. View among Christians: Majority position of scholars

III. Tribulation & The End Times

A. Expect Tribulation

1. Tribulation

a. “Distress, trouble, persecution, and suffering experienced by God’s people as a part of living faithfully in a world opposed to God.”

2. NT Tribulation?

a. Not a future 7-year event, but something that Christians will experience

b. Jesus said His followers would experience tribulation (John 16:33)

c. The early church experienced tribulation (2 Cor 4:16-18; 6:4; Rev 7:14; Acts 20:23; Col 1:24; Phil 3:10; 1 Thes 3:1-5; 2 Thes 1:4; 2 Tim 3:10-13)

i. Acts 14:21-22

d. The people of God are to imitate Jesus (1 Cor 4:14-16; 1 Cor 11:1; 1 Thes 1:6; 1 Thes 2:14; Heb 13:7)

i. Eph 4:31—5:2

3. Therefore: we expect tribulation, even great tribulation. This isn’t something we escape

B. The people of God and the great tribulation?

1. Great Tribulation

a. Rev 2:22

b. Rev 7:14

c. Matt 24:21

IV. The Parousia/Rapture

A. The Rapture

1. 1 Thes. 4

- a. Rapture of the church
- b. 4:17 “will be caught up”
 - i. *Harpazo*

2. Theology of the rapture

- b. When Jesus returns, the church meets him in the air (*Parousia*) and then the Kingdom of God will be fully ushered into the New Heavens and New Earth!

B. Cultural background of 1 Thes 4:13-18

V. Theological Ramifications

A. The kingdom is here, now!

- 1. Jesus brought the kingdom (Mark 1), and so while our hope is in a future/fully consummated kingdom, we engage in the "already" Kingdom!
- 2. We don't live in an end-times paranoia, full of world-event distractions
- 3. We don't escape culture, but embrace it, contribute to it, and enhance it

B. Does our eschatology have an “escape”

Questions:

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- 2. What is the core theological idea of the affirmation?
- 3. Is there any room for theological diversity within this affirmation?
- 4. If there is room for theological diversity, where does GHCC lean?

In 1-2 sentences, how would I summarize this theological idea?

Resources for this topic:

For reference in the LBCF, see Chapter: **31; 32**

Rob Dalrymple, *“Understanding the New Testament and the End Times, second edition”* (Wipf & Stock, 2018)

Sam Storms, *“Kingdom Come”* (Mentor, 2015)