

Christian Foundations: Key Theological Terms and Concepts

Key Theological Terms

1. Attributes of God

- *Definition:* The characteristics of God, including but not limited to His holiness (Isa. 6:3), sovereignty (Dan. 4:35), justice (Deut. 32:4), love (1 John 4:8), and mercy (Eph. 2:4).

2. Canon

- *Definition:* The collection of books recognized as Scripture, divinely inspired and authoritative.
- *Key Insight:* The canon is closed, meaning no new Scripture is being added (Rev. 22:18-19).

3. Eschatology

- *Definition:* The study of last things, including Christ's return, the resurrection, judgment, and the eternal state. This includes the **Rapture**, the event in which Christ will gather His Church, removing believers from the earth before the outpouring of God's judgment in the tribulation (1 Thess. 4:16-17, 1 Cor. 15:51-52, Rev. 21:1-4).

4. Glorification

- *Definition:* The final stage of salvation when believers are perfected and enter God's eternal presence (Rom. 8:30, 1 John 3:2).

5. Grace

- *Definition:* God's unmerited favor toward sinners (Eph. 2:8-9).

6. Hypostatic Union

- *Definition:* The doctrine that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, united in one person without confusion (John 1:14, Col. 2:9).

7. Inerrancy

- *Definition:* The doctrine that the Bible is without error in its original manuscripts and completely true in all it affirms.
- *Key Insight:* Since God cannot lie (Num. 23:19), His Word is entirely trustworthy.

8. Infallibility

- *Definition:* The Bible, as God's Word, is incapable of leading believers astray in matters of faith and practice.
- *Key Insight:* While inerrancy focuses on the accuracy of Scripture, infallibility emphasizes its trustworthiness and purpose (Isa. 55:11, John 10:35).

9. Inspiration

- *Definition:* The divine influence on human authors of Scripture, ensuring they wrote God's Word without error (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 1:21).

10. Justification

- *Definition:* The sovereign act of God in which He declares sinners to be righteous by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Jesus Christ alone (Rom. 3:24, 5:1).

11. Predestination

- *Definition:* God's sovereign choice, made before the foundation of the world, to save certain individuals by His grace, often referred to as the elect (Eph. 1:4-5, Rom. 8:29-30).
- *Key Insight:* This election highlights God's unmerited favor and ensures that salvation is entirely His work, not based on human effort or merit.

12. Prophecy

- *Definition:* Divine revelation of God's will or future events, often recorded in Scripture (2 Pet. 1:19-21).
- *Key Insight:* True prophecy comes directly from God and is fulfilled without fail.

13. Propitiation

- *Definition:* Christ's sacrificial death that satisfied the wrath of God against sin (1 John 2:2, Rom. 3:25).

14. Revelation

- *Definition:* God's act of making Himself known to humanity.
 - *General Revelation:* God's self-disclosure through nature and conscience, revealing His existence and attributes (Ps. 19:1-4, Rom. 1:20).
 - *Special Revelation:* God's specific revelation through His Word and the person of Jesus Christ, providing the knowledge necessary for salvation and understanding of His redemptive plan (Heb. 1:1-3, John 1:14).

15. Regeneration

- *Definition:* The work of the Holy Spirit in giving new spiritual life to a believer (John 3:3-5, Titus 3:5).
- *Key Insight:* Regeneration is the divine act that transforms a sinner's heart, enabling them to respond in faith and begin a new life in Christ (Ezek. 36:26-27).

16. Sanctification

- *Definition:* The process by which believers are progressively made holy through the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 4:3, Phil. 2:12-13).
 - *Definitive Sanctification:* The one-time act of being set apart as holy at the moment of salvation (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11).
 - *Progressive Sanctification:* The ongoing process of spiritual growth and becoming more like Christ through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:29, 2 Cor. 3:18).

17. Sin

- *Definition:* Any thought, word, or action that violates God's law (1 John 3:4, Rom. 3:23).
 - *Original Sin:* The inherited sinful nature from Adam (Rom. 5:12).

18. Soteriology

- *Definition:* The study of the doctrine of salvation, including justification, sanctification, regeneration, and glorification (Eph. 2:8-9, Titus 3:5-7).

19. Sufficiency

- *The Sufficiency of Scripture:*
 - *Definition:* Scripture contains everything necessary for life and godliness, equipping believers for every good work (2 Pet. 1:3, 2 Tim. 3:17).
- *The Sufficiency of Christ's Atonement:*
 - *Definition:* Christ's sacrifice on the cross fully satisfied God's wrath, providing complete salvation for those who believe (Heb. 10:10-12, John 19:30).

20. Trinity

- *Definition:* The doctrine that God exists as one essence in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14).

Important Themes and Concepts

1. The Word of God

- Inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative, and sufficient for faith and practice.

2. The Gospel

- The good news of salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

3. The Church

- The body of Christ, composed of all believers, tasked with worship, discipleship, and evangelism (Eph. 4:4-6, Acts 2:42-47, Mt. 28:19-20).

4. Family and Government

- God's design for family as the foundational unit of society (Gen. 2:24, Eph. 6:1-4).
- Government as God's instrument for justice and order (Rom. 13:1-7).

5. **The Holy Spirit**
 - Indwells, regenerates, and sanctifies believers, empowering them to live godly lives (John 14:16-17, Gal. 5:22-23).
 6. **Israel and the Church**
 - Israel retains a unique role in God's redemptive plan (Rom. 11:25-27), while the Church is God's primary instrument for ministry in the present age (Eph. 3:10).
 7. **The Doctrines of Grace**
 - A summary of the biblical teaching on salvation, often encapsulated in the five points of Calvinism:
 - **Total Depravity:** Humanity is entirely corrupted by sin, affecting every aspect of our being - mind, will, emotions, and actions - so that we are morally and spiritually incapable of seeking God or doing good apart from divine grace. This does not mean people are as sinful as they could possibly be, but that sin permeates all we are and do (Rom. 3:10-12, Eph. 2:1-3).
 - **Unconditional Election:** God's choice to save is not based on any foreseen merit but solely on His grace (Eph. 1:4-5).
 - **Limited Atonement:** Christ's death effectively saves those whom the Father has given Him (John 10:14-15).
 - **Irresistible Grace:** God's grace irresistibly draws His elect to salvation (John 6:37, 44).
 - **Perseverance of the Saints:** Those truly saved will persevere in faith until the end (Phil. 1:6).
 8. **The Second Coming**
 - Christ will return to judge the world, establish His kingdom, and bring eternal peace and justice (Rev. 19:11-16, 20:1-6).
-

Keys to a Joy-Filled Christian Life

- **Daily Bible Reading and Study:** Cultivate a consistent habit of Scripture reading and study (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Ps. 1:2).
- **Prayer:** Approach God daily, seeking wisdom, strength, and guidance (Phil. 4:6, Matt. 6:9-13).
- **Church Participation:** Be active in a Bible-teaching church for worship, fellowship, and growth (Heb. 10:24-25, Acts 2:42).
- **Evangelism and Discipleship:** Share the gospel with the lost and help fellow Christians grow in Christ (Matt. 28:18-20, 2 Tim. 2:2).