

## Systematic Theology for the Local Church

### #24—Theology Proper—Part III<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction to Open Theism

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If you have the book, you should read Bruce Ware's *Their God Is Too Small*. The table entitled "Topics and Readings for Theology Proper" includes Reymond's book along with the two books of charts by Wayne House and links readings with the study topics. Pages 10 and 21 in *Charts for Open Theism and Orthodoxy* are appropriate for today's study. The next study will be on God's attributes of simplicity, pure actuality, necessity, aseity and immutability, with readings found on lines 6-10. Subsequent studies will cover the other attributes found in the chart on lines 11-19. Having House's *Charts for Open Theism* with you during our study times will be useful for you. Reymond's book is apparently out of print until October.

### Introduction

To condition our hearts and minds to scriptural teaching, I begin with this great passage—Isa. 46:8-11—that describes in striking words both the nature and actions of God:

<sup>8</sup> Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels.<sup>9</sup> Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. <sup>10</sup> I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

God is unique and unlike any other being. He knows end results before anything begins and can describe them fully. His plans cannot be modified by anyone or anything outside of himself. He is not forced to change what he plans to do.

In 1986 an article appeared<sup>2</sup> that brought to public attention a radically new theology, one that devotes most of its writing to the nature of God and his relationship to human beings but that actually affects other areas of theology in significant ways. It is called Open Theism or Openness of God Theology. Many Christians have accepted this view and have been helped in this by the publications of major Christian publishing houses and by the lack of strong action by those in a position to refute the error and marginalize its proponents.

### Some publications that present Open Theism

Many books and articles have appeared that present some form of Open Theism. Some of the central ones are:

Gregory A. Boyd, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker, 2000).

Pinnock, Clark, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2001),

Pinnock, Clark H., Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker, and David Basinger, *The Openness of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

Sanders, John, *The God who Risks* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

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<sup>2</sup> This was Clark Pinnock's contribution to *Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom*, ed. David Basinger and Randall Basinger (Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 141-162.

## Critics of Open Theism

Many books and articles have appeared that show the errors of this movement, including mishandling of Scripture and misunderstanding of positions held by theologians and philosophers over the centuries. Some of the individuals who have criticized Open Theism or whose positions counter it are:

Donald A. Carson  
William Lane Craig  
Millard Erickson  
John S. Feinberg  
John M. Frame  
Norman L. Geisler  
Wayne Grudem  
Michael Horton  
Wayne House

John MacArthur  
Roger Nicole  
John Piper  
Thomas Schreiner  
R. C. Sproul  
Mark Talbot  
Bruce Ware  
David Wells

### Why should we spend time on Open Theism at this point in our series?

My first reason for spending time on this has to do with materials that you can read. We will utilize Wayne House's *Charts on Open Theism and Orthodoxy* as our primary reference work. This book enables us to see historic views of God side-by-side with the views of Open Theism. In making these comparisons we will be able to appreciate better what is true. This will also help us to learn better the details of the scriptural presentation of what God is like. This then is a pedagogical reason for bringing Open Theology into our studies in theology proper.

But there is a more important reason for spending time on this movement as we cover theology proper. Let me quote from John Piper's forward to *Beyond the Bounds*<sup>3</sup>:

The stunning thing about open theism in American Christianity is how many leaders do not act as though it is a departure from historic Christianity and therefore a dishonor to Christ and pastorally damaging. Some have seen the departure clearly and said so. For example, Thomas Oden, a Methodist minister and the Henry Anson Buttz Professor of Theology and Ethics at Drew University, writes in *Christianity Today*, "The fantasy that God is ignorant of the future is a heresy that must be rejected on scriptural grounds." His warning to the church is sobering: "Keeping the boundaries of faith undefined is a demonic temptation that evangelicals within the mainline have learned all too well and have been burned by all too painfully"<sup>4</sup> Oden's indictment points toward the baleful heart of open theism and the broken heart of those who love the historic biblical vision of God.

This then is a significant movement of which you should have more than a passing knowledge. In his chapter in *Beyond the Bounds* entitled "Why Open Theism is Flourishing Now,"<sup>5</sup> William Davis points out that one of the main reasons for the acceptance of this view is that Christians do not have great interest in doctrine. In addition, the movement and discussion about it have taken place largely outside the local church in parachurch organizations—publishing houses, colleges, universities and professional organizations such as the Evangelical Theological Society. These groups lack what the local church has or should have: authority structures and the associated means of removing error and disciplining those involved in it. Davis says that

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<sup>3</sup> John Piper, Justin Taylor and Paul Kjoss Helseth, eds., *Open Theism and the Undermining of Biblical Christianity: Beyond the Bounds* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books: 2003), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas C. Oden, "The Real Reformers Are Traditionalists," *Christianity Today*, 42, no. 2 (9 February 1998): 45.

<sup>5</sup> Piper, *et al*, 111-145.

we are in “a downward spiral away from a healthy community in which academic talents are encouraged to flourish under the careful oversight of God’s appointed shepherds.”<sup>6</sup>

I believe that Davis does not go far enough. We live in a time when for most Christians the local church is low on or at the bottom of the list of valuable things. There is a terrible neglect of what the Apostle Paul calls “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). The local church should be the place where theology is studied, developed and refined, as Christians in particular fellowships interact with others in such fellowships, all under the oversight of recognized elders. Sadly, there is a huge and powerful institution of “Christian scholars” that functions outside the bounds of local churches, and, barring a radical change brought by God, it will be a long time before this situation is any different. I also believe that the reason so much Christian activity is done outside the local church is because local churches have allowed themselves to become weak and ineffective. So the place where sound doctrine should be upheld and expounded has permitted others be the main carriers of this responsibility, with the result that error no longer has the checks God provided for in Scripture.

But what about you? I have wanted for a long time to present to the saints in this local church my understanding of the whole spectrum of systematic theology. I believe that the average person in a sound local church can understand systematic theology and interact with and evaluate critically what people write today about theology. The stakes are high. In many places in the New Testament we are commanded to teach sound doctrine, to understand it and to promote it. We must all take this seriously. If we do not, we will as a group of believers and as individuals be subject to satanically induced error in what we believe and what we do. Our walk with God and our testimony before the world will be damaged. For every topic we cover in systematic theology you need to nail down facts in terms of descriptions of positions and views. We cannot evaluate and talk about theology without having information and assimilating basic details. This admonition includes Open Theism. I encourage you to be able to talk clearly about what it espouses and to be able to show where it is unbiblical. You have responsibility to be involved in stopping false teaching. This movement contains a huge amount of false teaching.

We will present a summary of the errors of Open Theism at the end of our study of theology proper, when we are all in a position to deal in detail with its deviations from Scripture.

### **Key problems with Open Theism**

While we are not in a position to justify these at this point, here are some of the key features of Open Theism.

In terms of its methodology Open Theism

1. Is based on a thoroughly Pelagian view of sin. Man has complete free will to choose good or evil, to choose for or against God. It is an extreme extension of contemporary Arminian theology.
2. Emphasizes biblical narrative over biblical teaching.
3. Uses Scripture selectively.
4. Does not address many key features that contradict its system.
5. Allows significant theological contradictions to stand together and leaves many areas of theology up in the air or erases them (e.g. election).

Compared with the views of historic Christianity, Open Theism, among other errors,

1. Presents a radically different view of God.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 132.

2. Reduces the power and greatness of God.
3. Denies the sovereignty of God in human affairs.
4. Completely eliminates the doctrine of election, either in the Calvinistic or Arminian sense, since God doesn't know who will exist.
5. Changes the meaning of faith and trust and calls into question our hope of heaven.
6. Changes the nature of sanctification and our role in it.
7. Presents a radically different picture of the plan of God, including the Cross (e.g. the Cross is an accident, there can be no imputation of sin, since God doesn't know who will exist ahead of time), the resurrection and Jesus' return.
8. Downgrades the inerrancy of Scripture.

### **Key features of Open Theism**

Here are the core doctrines of Open Theism.<sup>7</sup> They are not necessarily held by everyone involved in the movement in the exact form stated here.

1. Human beings have free will to determine their future.

God has made it possible for human beings to have a meaningful relation with him as they work with him to determine the future. A God who completely determines the future limits human freedom and therefore human meaningfulness. God does not “coerce” anyone into being saved or doing his will. Our sin natures do not keep us from being able to choose the things of God.

The terms ‘libertarian free will’ and ‘compatibilism’ are used in the presentations and discussion of Open Theism. Here is a description of libertarian free will from Theopedia<sup>8</sup>:

Libertarian free will means that our choices are free from the determination or constraints of human nature and free from any predetermination by God. All “free will theists” hold that libertarian freedom is essential for moral responsibility, for if our choice is determined or caused by anything, including our own desires, they reason, it cannot properly be called a free choice. Libertarian freedom is, therefore, the freedom to act contrary to one's nature, predisposition and greatest desires. Responsibility, in this view, always means that one could have done otherwise.

Free will is affected by human nature but man retains ability to choose contrary to his nature and desires. Man has the moral ability to turn to God in Christ and believe of his own “free will,” apart from specific (special) divine enablement. Indeed, according to Open Theism, God is anxiously waiting to see what each person will do, for he cannot know ahead of time what the choice might be. Or, according to Arminianism, God chooses to save those whom he foresees will believe of their own free will.

The Open Theism proponent argues that for human existence to be meaningful we must have the full ability to make decisions without interference from God.

Compatibilism holds that we can act in freedom and yet there may be another reason why we acted as we did. It holds that God's sovereignty is compatible with human freedom. Put in other terms, it holds that determinism and free will are compatible.

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<sup>7</sup> Some of these are drawn from “Basic Tenets of Open Theism,” by Matthew J. Slick, available at <http://www.carm.org/open/tenets.htm>. See also Bruce A. Ware, *Their God is Too Small*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 13-22.

<sup>8</sup> Available at [http://www.theopedia.com/Libertarian\\_freedom](http://www.theopedia.com/Libertarian_freedom).

Determinism in theology is the view that God determines what human beings do in advance. Here is part of the Wikipedia entry on Determinism<sup>9</sup>:

Theological determinism is the thesis that there is a God who determines all that humans will do, either by knowing their actions in advance, via some form of omniscience or by decreeing their actions in advance. The problem of free will, in this context, is the problem of how our actions can be free, if there is a being who has determined them for us ahead of time.

Here are some summaries from Theopedia:

Compatibilism is a theological term that deals with the topics of free will and predestination. It seeks to show that God's exhaustive sovereignty is compatible with human freedom, or in other words, it claims that determinism and free will are compatible. Rather than limit the exercise of God's sovereignty in order to preserve man's freedom, compatibilists say that there must be a different way to define what freedom really means.<sup>10</sup>

Free will is affected by human nature and man cannot choose contrary to his nature and desires. [Compatibilism] acknowledges man as a free moral agent who freely makes choices. But due to the effects of the fall, as contained in the doctrine of total depravity, man's nature is corrupted such that he cannot choose contrary to his fallen nature—He cannot discern spiritual things or turn to God in faith apart from divine intervention.<sup>11</sup>

The Compatibilist believes that free will is “compatible” with determinism (as in the sovereignty of God). The incompatibilist says that the [sic] free will is “incompatible” with determinism. The Libertarian is an incompatibilist who consequently rejects any determinism associated with the sovereignty of God. Hence, Libertarian Free Will is necessarily associated with both Open Theism, which maintains that God does not foreknow or predetermine the free choices of man, and Arminianism, which admits that God in his omniscience foresees man's free choices and reacts accordingly. Libertarian freedom is the general view of liberal Protestantism and a growing number of evangelicals.<sup>12</sup>

We need to realize that theological compatibilism is taught in such portions of Scripture as Acts 2:23: “This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.” Here we see divine control and human freedom and accountability side by side. The Bible does not tell us how these two can coexist. It only says that they do.

2. God does not know the future completely (he does not possess ‘exhaustive foreknowledge’).

This is because 1) God has chosen to restrict himself so that he can allow human beings to make free choices or 2) since future events don’t exist yet, no one, not even God, can know them. Our relationship with God is more meaningful and real when God does not know what we are going to do ahead of time. Here are Greg Boyd’s words:

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<sup>9</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Determinism>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.theopedia.com/Compatibilism>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.theopedia.com/Libertarian\\_freedom](http://www.theopedia.com/Libertarian_freedom)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

In a cosmos populated by free agents, the outcome of things—even divine decisions—is often uncertain.<sup>13</sup>

It is true that according to the open view things can happen in our lives that God didn't plan or even foreknow with certainty (though he always foreknew they were possible). This means that in the open view things can happen to us that have no overarching divine purpose. In this view, “trusting in God” provides no assurance that everything that happens to us will reflect his divine purposes, for there are other agents who also have power to affect us, just as we have power to affect others. This, it must be admitted, can for some be a scary thought.<sup>14</sup>

### 3. God takes risks.

Since God does not know the future, he depends on human beings to support his purposes and make decisions that help his plan. The open theist could not have known that Adam and Eve would sin or that Jesus would need to be crucified. John Sanders says that “God takes risks in bringing about this particular type of world.”<sup>15</sup>

### 4. God learns about the future as it occurs.

Since God does not know the future, he is exposed to future events as human beings act. Ware describes it this way:

He knows the past and present perfectly. But if he knows the future perfectly also, then this turns our interaction with him into a sham. If God knows all of the future definitely and perfectly, then he knows (and always has known) every word that you will ever speak, every choice that you will ever make, and every action that you will ever perform. So what would God's response be to your choices and actions, if he knew them all in advance? God could never truly be surprised or delighted or grieved, or relate with you in “real ways,” for he would always have to respond, “Yes, I knew you would say that,” or, “Yes, I knew you would do that.” No real relationship would be possible, open theists argue, if God knows all of our free choices and actions before we do them.<sup>16</sup>

### 5. Any difficulties in your life are the result of the free actions of human beings, not God's.

All evil is the result of the wrong use of free will. “The open view, I submit, allows us to say consistently in unequivocal terms that the ultimate source for all evil is found in the will of free agents rather than in God.”<sup>17</sup> God is not responsible for your trials and does not control them. The possibility that God could ultimately bring about good from our evil acts justifies allowing such freedom. If God knew all the acts of evil and all the suffering that would take place, he would not have created the world.

### 6. God makes mistakes and regrets some of his decisions.

Since God does not know the future, his acts and decisions may turn out to be counterproductive to his plan. He may then decide to adjust his tactics. For example, according to Open Theists, God regretted making Saul king (1 Sam. 15:11—“I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions”). Here is Boyd's explanation of this verse:

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<sup>13</sup> Gregory A. Boyd, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker, 2000), 58.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 102.

<sup>15</sup> John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998), 10.

<sup>16</sup> Ware, 13-14.

<sup>17</sup> Boyd, 153.

We must wonder how the Lord could truly experience regret for making Saul king if he was absolutely certain that Saul would act the way he did. Could God genuinely confess, “I regret that I made Saul king” if he could in the same breath also proclaim, “I was certain of what Saul would do when I made him king,”? I do not see how. . . . Common sense tells us that we can only regret a decision we made if the decision resulted in an outcome other than what we expected or hoped for when the decision was made.<sup>18</sup>

Greg Boyd says concerning Jer. 3:19-20<sup>19</sup>:

God himself says that he was *mistaken* about what was going to happen: “<sup>19</sup> I myself said, ‘How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.’ I thought you would call me ‘Father’ and not turn away from following me.”

7. God may change his mind based on what he finds out that human beings do. He can be surprised, disappointed or angered by what people do.

Here is Jer. 18:1-12, a passage frequently appealed to by Open Theists:

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup>“Go down to the potter’s house, and there I will give you my message.” <sup>3</sup> So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. <sup>4</sup> But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

<sup>5</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>6</sup>“O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, <sup>8</sup> and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. <sup>9</sup> And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, <sup>10</sup> and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

<sup>11</sup> “Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, ‘This is what the LORD says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.’ <sup>12</sup> But they will reply, ‘It’s no use. We will continue with our own plans; each of us will follow the stubbornness of his evil heart.’ ”

Boyd says about this passage:

By definition, one cannot change what is permanently fixed. Hence, every time the Bible teaches us that God changes his mind it is teaching us that God’s mind is not permanently fixed. This directly contradicts the classical understanding of foreknowledge. It means that some of what God knows regarding the future consists of things that may go one way or another. He adjusts his plans—changes his mind—depending on what does or does not take place.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, John Sanders says concerning Gen. 9<sup>21</sup>:

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<sup>18</sup> Boyd, 56.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>21</sup> Sanders, 50.

God makes a covenant with his creation that never again will virtually everything be annihilated. The sign of the rainbow that God gives is a reminder to himself that he will never again tread this path ([Gen] 9:14-16). It may be the case that although human evil caused God great pain, the destruction of what he had made caused him even greater suffering. Although his judgment was righteous, God decides to try different courses of action in the future.

8. God's supreme attribute is love.

God is not controlling or manipulative. He is not a God of judgment. He desires to allow human beings to determine their futures and come to him for salvation. Here is John Sanders' description of God's nature and his purposes, from the Open Theism Information Site<sup>22</sup>:

According to openness theology, the *triune* God of love has, in *almighty* power, created all that is and is *sovereign* over all. In *freedom* God decided to create beings capable of experiencing his love. In creating us the divine intention was that we would come to experience the triune love and respond to it with love of our own and freely come to collaborate with God towards the achievement of his goals. We believe love is the primary characteristic of God because the triune Godhead has eternally loved even prior to any creation. Divine holiness and justice are aspects of the divine love towards creatures, expressions of God's loving concern for us. Love takes many forms—it can even be experienced as wrath when the lover sees the beloved destroying herself and others.

In his "An Examination of Open Theism" Greg Cantelmo describes Open Theism's view of God's love this way<sup>23</sup>:

Richard Rice says, "From a Christian perspective, *love* is the first and last word in the biblical portrait of God. . . . The statement *God is love* is as close as the Bible comes to giving us a definition of the divine reality."<sup>24</sup> After devoting several pages to explain the importance of this theme he states, "Consequently, when we enumerate God's qualities, we must not only include love; to be faithful to the Bible we must put love at the head of the list."<sup>25</sup> He then goes on to say, "A doctrine of God that is faithful to the Bible must show that all of God's characteristics derive from love."<sup>26</sup>

9. Prayer is meaningless if the outcome is determined ahead of time.

Here is Sanders again on the relation of God's foreknowledge and prayer:

Openness Theology (commonly referred to as Open Theism and Free Will Theism) connects with the spirituality of many Christians throughout the history of the church especially when it comes to prayer. Many Christians feel that our prayers or lack of them can make a difference as to what God does in history. The Openness of God is an attempt to think out more consistently what it means that God enters into personal relationships with humanity.<sup>27</sup>

10. Traditional theism is based more on philosophy than the Bible.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.opentheism.info>

<sup>23</sup> Available at [http://www.bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=3767#P76\\_26005](http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=3767#P76_26005).

<sup>24</sup> Pinnock, Clark H., Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker, and David Basinger, *The Openness of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1994), 18.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*



The idea that God exercises meticulous control over human actions does not come from the Bible but from Hellenistic Greek philosophy, which saw God as detached and unmoved by human needs. Open theism presents a God who positions himself to interact with his creatures. Here are the words of Clark Pinnock and Robert Brow:

The difficulty with classical theism, so influenced by Hellenism, is that it makes God impassive and unable to relate. It removes God from the process of real involvement in the world and makes it hard to envisage real conversation with the three persons of the Trinity.<sup>28</sup>

## **Conclusion**

We will see many features of Open Theism as we study theology proper. I have tried to present in this study enough information to enable you to begin to evaluate its views. I conclude with this important verse—Eph. 1:11:

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

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<sup>28</sup> Clark H. Pinnock and Robert C. Brow, *Unbounded Love: Good News Theology for the Twenty-first Century* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 50.

## Study questions

1. Learn by heart at least five of the key features of Open Theism. Try to learn all of them, if you can. Here they are extracted from the study:
  1. Human beings have free will to determine their future.
  2. God does not know the future completely.
  3. God takes risks.
  4. God learns about the future as it occurs.
  5. Any difficulties in your life are the result of the free actions of human beings, not God's.
  6. God makes mistakes and regrets some of his decisions.
  7. God may change his mind based on what he finds out that human beings do. He can be surprised, disappointed or angered by what people do.
  8. God's supreme attribute is love.
  9. Prayer is meaningless if the outcome is determined ahead of time.
  10. Traditional theism is based more on philosophy than the Bible.
2. Consult one or more of the Web references as you can. Good overviews can be found at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_theism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_theism) and [http://www.bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=3767#P76\\_26005](http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=3767#P76_26005). A site sponsored by the movement is <http://www.opentheism.info/>.
3. Become familiar with the meaning and implications of libertarian free will and of compatibilism.
4. Start a written list of theological problems that Open Theism leads to beyond what this study mentions. Be prepared to share this on Wednesdays.

## Running compilation of key definitions

1. Systematic theology: The organized presentation of all that the Bible teaches about God and His works.
2. Exegesis: The actual practice of studying or interpreting a document or other message to determine its meaning.
3. Context: Context in a document or utterance is the surroundings of a portion of a word, a word, or a group of words.
4. Bibliology: The doctrinal study of the nature of the Bible.
5. Biblical authority: The quality inherent in Scripture by virtue of which human beings are completely answerable to its content.
6. Revelation: The information about Himself given by God to human beings.
7. General revelation: God's disclosure of Himself, available directly to everyone, given through means other than dreams, visions, direct words and Christ Himself.
8. Special revelation: The disclosure of information from God that is not available directly to all human beings.
9. Inspiration: A term applied to the Bible denoting that it is the product of God's creative activity, figuratively breathed out from Him (2 Tim. 3:16); applies to the process of recording Scripture, not specifically to the people involved; actually, *expiration* would be a better term to reflect the concept of 2 Tim. 3:16; the result is *inerrancy*.
10. Textual criticism: The science and art of attempting to discover the original text of a literary work for which the original document does not exist. It is especially important for biblical studies, and the foundational endeavor to all subsequent investigation of the Scriptures.
11. Canon: Transliterated from a Greek Word meaning "standard"; as used of the Bible, it refers to books authenticated as possessing divine origin and therefore authoritative; the Jewish canon consists of thirty-nine books, the Protestant of sixty-six and the Catholic of eighty (including apocryphal books).
12. Inerrancy is a term applied to the Bible, although not specifically found in it; it denotes that the Bible, as originally written, possessed no humanly induced deviations from the message God intended to be recorded and that it is true in every respect; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:19.
13. Infallibility: Although some assert that this term has a different meaning from inerrancy, the two terms are, for purposes of biblical study, synonymous; the Bible is infallible because inerrant, and inerrant because infallible.
14. Illumination is the teaching ministry of the Spirit of God that imparts understanding of the message of Scripture to the believer; not to be confused with inspiration, which in the Bible is used of the work of God in giving Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16); 1 Jn. 2:20; Jn. 16:13.
15. Theology proper is the study of the nature of God