

Systematic Theology for the Local Church
#30—Theology Proper—Part IX¹
The Decree of God
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For studies in theology proper, 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 associates readings with the study topics. The next study will be on the Providence of God. You may read in Reymond pgs. 398-404. Relevant for today's study are pgs. 343-382².

Questions we all have

One of the most important questions concerning theology and everyday life is "How and how much does God control his creation?" This is significant for theology because at issue is the very relation of God to everything that exists outside of him, as well as the very nature of God. We have seen, for example, that the Open Theist has a heretical view of God that matches his view of God's control (and man's freedom and power relative to God's): God does not know what is going to happen and depends on the actions of "free" human beings to bring about his goals.

The question of control is also of great practical significance, because every human being faces the issue of why things happen—things that are pleasant as well as things that hurt. Why does a child have cancer? Why are innocent people killed by terrorists that fly airliners into skyscrapers in New York? Why does a bridge that has stood over a river in Minnesota for years suddenly collapse? Why do some people suffer in poverty while others have all the material goods anyone could possibly want? Why do bad things happen to good people?—as the saying goes.

These ponderings lead to more sinister questions, of course. Does God care what happens to us? Why does he seem to care sometimes and not care at other times? Does God favor some people? Why doesn't salvation come to everyone? Why do sinful people seem to prosper? Why should righteous people suffer? Why does the world go on year after year while people are born and die, generation after generation? How can God be good and still allow or perhaps even *send* evil? Is God really loving? Is the Bible deceiving us when it says that God is good? Is God unfair sometimes?

We can be thankful that answers to all these questions are found in the Bible. I don't mean that we can know on particular occasions all the reasons why a bridge collapses or why a child is terribly sick. The Bible tells us enough that we should conclude that the details of ultimate reasons usually aren't to be found in this life. But we can know a lot about God's involvement in his creation and the relation of his nature and character to what he does.

So we turn now in our studies to the relation of God to his creation. We will deal with issues such as 1) God's decree—the overall plan for his creation, 2) God's providence—his provision, care and support for his creation and 3) God's sovereignty—his control of his creation. It will help you to sort these out if you think in terms of *plan*, *care* and *control*.

Today we will study the decree of God. I encourage you to learn to live in light of the decree of God. I will suggest ways that we can do this. In this study I will provide many passages from the Bible and for the most

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² In this section Reymond has extensive discussion of the errors of Clark Pinnock.

part allow them to speak for themselves. This will enable us to get the maximum impact of the Bible's powerful teaching on the decree.

Defining the decree of God

To return to our questions—we can sum them up with this one: To what degree does God exercise control over the universe? The first place to start in answering this is to investigate God's planning in eternity past. The totality of this planning and the certainty of its outcome is often referred to as God's decree (or sometimes 'decrees'). So here is a definition:

The decree of God is his plan for the universe that includes all things and is certain to come to pass.

One of the best statements of the decree of God is that found in the Westminster Shorter Catechism:

The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass (Q.7).

Dr. William Ames (1576-1633), British Puritan theologian and participant in the Synod of Dort in 1618-1619, defined the decree of God this way:

The decree of God is his firm decision by which he performs all things through his almighty power according to his counsel.

In writing this he was thinking of 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

This verse talks about salvation, but let's leave that out for now. It also says that God has a plan that concerns everything. Yes, that's *everything*! That plan is actualized by God himself and it matches the 'counsel' of his will (or 'desire'). Here is the Greek text of this important verse:

Ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργούντος κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ

It will help us to see the import of the elements of this verse if we put its features in their logical order:

1. God has a will or desire (θελήματος) for the universe.
2. God's will has wisdom and purposefulness associated with it ('counsel'; βουλήν).
3. God's will is expressed or carried out through a plan (πρόθεσιν).
4. God works out everything (τὰ πάντα) in keeping with (κατὰ) his counsel. This means that nothing at all is left out.

It is this plan that theologians are talking about when they speak of God's decree.

Ames makes these points about God's counsel:

- The counsel of God is, as it were, his deliberation over the best manner of accomplishing anything already approved by the understanding and the will.

- Counsel is attributed to God because of his perfect judgment whereby he does all things advisedly, i.e. willingly and knowingly, not as a result of inquiry as men make judgments. For God sees and wills all things and everything at once. Therefore his counsel is said to resemble deliberation in the strict sense.
- Three things concur in the perfection of this counsel: one, the purpose [scopus] or the end set forth; two, the mental conception of that end; three, the intention and agreement of the will.
- The purpose or end of the counsel is the glory of God himself, i.e. the goodness or perfection of God which is manifest in his efficiency and shines forth in his works.

In connection with Ames' last point, recall Eph. 1:5-14 and the three-fold goal of self-glorification in all that God does:

⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹ And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. 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, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

God's ultimate goal is to glorify himself, not to make us happy or comfortable. Everything that he does in his plan—his decree—will lead with certainty to that glorification. Whatever the plan includes, God will be glorified.

Features of God's decree

Here are some of the key features of God's decree³:

1. The decree is unified

There is only one decree, as described in Eph. 1:11. Human beings can only see part of the plan at any one time and can never in this life know the whole plan. In addition we cannot see all the connections between parts of the plan. But in the mind of God there is a unified plan in which all the parts are connected. This plan has existed from eternity:

Acts 15:17b-18 : the Lord, who does these things' ¹⁸ that have been known for ages. . .

We see a child with cancer but we do not see all the pieces of the plan that surround this and are connected in turn to other pieces. We suffer in a trial but do not see all the pieces related to it. We don't see, perhaps, the value that our trial has on someone halfway around the world that we have never met. It is good that God's decree is unified, with everything fitting together.

2. Nothing is excluded

³ Some of these observations are drawn from Arthur Pink's "The Decrees of God."

God's decree encompasses absolutely everything—large or small, great or insignificant, good or evil. It extends to all that exists from his creative hand (angels and spiritual actions by beings with spiritual natures [human beings and angels] in the spiritual realm and material things in the physical realm). I never need to wonder if my problem is somehow outside God's decree, as if he had missed something. The bridge collapse in Minnesota is as much a part of his decree as the salvation of a sinner or the birth of a beautiful baby last week. Isaiah 10:5, 15 speak to the extent of God's involvement:

“Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! ¹⁵ Does the ax raise itself above him who swings it, or the saw boast against him who uses it? As if a rod were to wield him who lifts it up, or a club brandish him who is not wood!

Arthur Pink comments:

God did not merely decree to make man, place him upon the earth, and then leave him to his own uncontrolled guidance; instead, He fixed all the circumstances in the lot of individuals, and all the particulars which will comprise the history of the human race from its commencement to its close. He did not merely decree that general laws should be established for the government of the world, but He settled the application of those laws to all particular cases. Our days are numbered, and so are the hairs of our heads. We may learn what is the extent of the Divine decrees from the dispensations of providence, in which they are executed. The care of Providence reaches to the most insignificant creatures, and the most minute events—the death of a sparrow, and the fall of a hair.

Here are some scriptures that demonstrate this:

Acts 17:26: From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

Prov. 16:33: The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

Mt. 10:29-30: ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Eph. 2:10: For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Phil. 2:12-13: Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

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.

Acts 4:27-28: ²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

Acts 13:29: When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.

1 Pet. 2:8: and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”

Jude 4: For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you.

Here is the Greek text of this verse.

⁴παρεισέδυσαν γάρ τινες ἄνθρωποι, οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα,

I would translate the verse like this:

For certain men, who were inscripturated for this judgment, have secretly slipped in among you.

Rev. 17:17: For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled.

Gen. 45:5-8: ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ⁸ So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.

Gen 50:20: You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. . . .

3. There are different levels of relationship in the decree

God's decree includes different levels of relationship with the objects of the decree. So, while the decree includes sin and God orders and controls it, he is not the author of sin in the same way that he is the author of good. Human beings and angels bear the consequences for sin, not God. This is exactly why James says what he does about God and sin (Jas. 1:13-17), answering someone who suggests that God tempts us and leads us to sin:

¹³ When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. ¹⁶ Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. ¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

No, temptation and sin come from evil desire. God only gives good things. No matter how much we would like to avoid it, we are responsible for our sin, even though God's decree includes sin.

4. God's decree is eternal.

Unlike the god of the Open Theist, Yahweh never has to scramble to re-do his plan when his actions are thwarted. Arthur Pink lived decades before Open Theism came on the scene. Listen to what he says about the eternal character of the decree:

To suppose any of them to be made in time, is to suppose that some new occasion has occurred, some unforeseen event or combination of circumstances has arisen, which has induced the Most High to form

a new resolution. This would argue that the knowledge of the deity is limited, and that He is growing wiser in the progress of time—which would be horrible blasphemy. No man who believes that the Divine understanding is infinite, comprehending the past, the present, and the future, will ever assent to the erroneous doctrine of temporal decrees. God is not ignorant of future events which will be executed by human volitions; He has foretold them in innumerable instances, and prophecy is but the *manifestation* of His eternal prescience.

Acts 15:16-18: ¹⁶ “After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, ¹⁷ that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things” ¹⁸ that have been known for ages.

1 Pet. 1:20: He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

2 Th. 2;13: But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

2 Tim. 1:9: who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. . .

1 Cor. 2:7: No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

5. God’s decree is wise.

This should be one of the greatest comforts when we wonder about our circumstances. There is wisdom that we cannot see or understand.

Ps. 104:24: How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

We should see what are usually regarded as great ‘tragedies’—the tsunami that takes thousands of lives, the death of a loved one “before his time”—as having God’s wisdom written all over them.

6. God’s decree is entirely free of outside influence. No being helped God form his decree.

Isa. 40:13-14 ¹³ Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor?
¹⁴ Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

These verses show us that we have no claim on any part of God’s decree nor can we think that we might have a better plan. This points us in the direction of trusting confidence in God.

7. God’s decree includes his sovereignty over all things.

The Open Theist has a god that cannot be sovereign because he cannot know what is going to happen. His plans are often thwarted and he can be frustrated. The God of the Bible exercises control freely over everything.

Rom. 9:11-18: ¹¹ Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: ¹² not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³ Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” ¹⁴ What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶ It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” ¹⁸ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

We treat God’s sovereignty more fully in a coming study.

8. God’s decree is absolute and unconditional.

Nothing can change it, nor does it need to change. Nothing in the decree depends on something else to enable it to go ahead at any point. God did not provide at the Cross for salvation but then has to see who will respond. The Open Theist has a god who has to change his plan and guesses about the future just as we do. Which one would you put your trust in?

Isa. 46:10: 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.

Ps. 33:11: But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Prov. 19:21: Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails.

Isa. 14:24, 27: ²⁴ The LORD Almighty has sworn, “Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand. . . .” ²⁷ For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

The preceding three verses are sufficient to disprove the God-dishonoring heresy of Open Theism. Since these verses must be in their Bibles, then their error is at heart that of rejecting the Bible itself.

Rom. 9:11: Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand. . . .

Isa. 46:9: 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.

9. God’s decree preserves human responsibility.

In Rom. 9:19 Paul cites a hypothetical objector who questions the fairness of God in response to his hardening of Pharaoh:

One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?”

The answer is that as the Potter God can do what he wants with what he has created. This includes the charging of sin to human beings. After all, we are born in sin and bear the guilt of Adam.

Gen. 50:20: You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

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.

Acts 3:18: But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer

Acts 4:27-28: ²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

Eph. 2:10: For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

10. God's decree includes the conversion of sinners and the course of sanctification.

Eph. 2:8-9: ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Phil. 2:12-13: ¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

2 Tim. 2:25: ²⁵ Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,

11. God's decree varies in its visibility.

We can see parts of the decree, but other parts are obscured from us. This lies behind many of our questions about God's control of the universe.

Dt. 29:29: The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Those parts of the decree that are revealed in Scripture are certainly visible: the existence of the Church, the work of the Holy Spirit, the salvation of a soul. But there are many things that we simply do not have information about—such as the difficulties that we go through.

12. God's decree makes events certain to happen.

This is seen most clearly in regard to prophecy, but we can trust that it applies to everything in our lives, too. Think how far this fact is from what the Open Theist holds!

Mt. 16:21: From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Lk. 18:31-33: ³¹ Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. ³³ On the third day he will rise again.”

Lk. 24:45-46: ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,

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.

Acts 13:29: When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.

1 Cor. 11:19: No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval.

Conclusion

The Bible teaches everywhere that there is a decree of God that is comprehensive and good. We should be overwhelmed by the power of this evidence and cry out with the apostle Paul

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” ³⁵ “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen. (Rom. 11:33).

I am including here the section entitled “Of the Eternal Decree of God” in the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1646.

1. God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.
2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath He not decreed any thing because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.
3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.
4. These angels and men, thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.
5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto: and all to the praise of His glorious grace.
6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power, through faith, unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.
7. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.
8. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men, attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.

Study question

1. What is the Decree of God?
2. What is not included in the Decree?
3. What bearing does the Decree of God have on the view of some that there are levels in God's will, i.e. a will that decrees certain things, along with a "permissive" will (the latter concept is usually used to explain 2 Pet. 3:9—God wants everyone to be saved, but he will allow some to go their own way)?
4. What is included in the way God works in the account of Joseph's being sold by his brothers, particularly with regard to the brothers?
5. Give as many answers as you can to the following: "I'm glad for the decree of God because . . . "

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. Spirituality: God is not physical, but immaterial, incorporeal, invisible and alive.
16. Self-existence/Aseity: God exists independently of anything else. He is self-existent.
17. Immensity: God is infinite in relation to space.
18. Eternality: God is infinite with regard to time.
19. Simplicity: God is not a plurality and cannot be looked at as divisible into parts.
20. Pure actuality: There is nothing about God that is potential. He is not unfinished in any way.
21. Necessity: God is uncaused and exists because he must exist.
22. Immutability: God is unchanging and unchangeable.
23. Impassibility: God is incapable of being changed or disturbed by what he experiences and is incapable of suffering.
24. Transcendence: God and the world are distinct; he is not part of the world, and the world is not part of him.
25. Immanence: God is present in the world.
26. Infinity: There are no limits to God's person and his perfections.
27. Omnipotence: God can do whatever he wills.
28. Omniscience: God knows everything there is to know.
29. Omnipresence: God is present everywhere in his creation

30. Holiness: God is morally pure and separated from all moral evil and sin.
31. Goodness: A quality that describes or includes his love, benevolence, mercy and grace
32. Truth: God's person, actions, knowledge and revelations correspond to reality
33. Love: God's continual communication of himself to his creatures.
34. Benevolence: God's goodness toward his creatures.
35. Mercy: God's goodness toward those who are helpless.
36. Grace: God's goodness toward sinners.
37. Glory: The greatness of God's perfections.
38. Trinity: There is only one true God, existing as a single Being comprised of three Persons who are equal in every way, yet distinct in their tasks and relations to humanity.
39. God's decree: The decree of God is his plan for the universe that includes all things and is certain to come to pass.