

Systematic Theology for the Local Church
#40—Christology—Part VI¹
The Temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ

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The next study will be on the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Helpful for the present study is House, Section #33.

We begin this study by considering Mt. 26:36-46:

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. ⁴¹ “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

In this passage we have one of the strangest scenes in the whole Bible. Some believe it is so strange that it was made up. But it is actually so unusual and degrading that we have to conclude no one would have created it. Why is it odd? Because the God-Man looks and feels like we do. He’s not supposed to! We really have here one of the greatest and most helpful gifts of God’s love and grace for us. How can this be? This passage is one of the three main portions of Scripture that describe temptations of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we ask and answer five questions about his temptations and temptation in general, we will see how his responses benefit us.

1. What is a temptation?

a. The timing of temptation

The Bible is clear that a temptation is not the same thing as a sin. Here is what James tells us (1:13-15):

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.

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In this passage temptation and an act of sin are separated. Second Corinthians 10:13 tells us something similar about the difference between temptation and sin. God may act during the time of our temptation to provide a way out:

¹³ No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

This ‘way out’ must be something good, and we should equate it with not sinning. What is missing in this passage, however, is the exercising of faith that turns to God during temptation to request relief, a response that is spelled out in Heb. 4:15-16:

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

From these three passages we learn that 1) temptation and sin are different things, 2) temptation need not lead to sin (we are never forced to sin!) and 3) there is a space—some amount of time—between the temptation and sin during which we can stop the process. The most important thing is to be sure to separate in our thinking the temptation from the act of sin.

b. The element of testing

In Jas. 1:13-15 (above), various forms of the word *peirazo* (πειράζω) are used six times. In ancient Greek, both in the New Testament and elsewhere, the word *peirazo* denoted an attempt to get something to happen or an attempt to demonstrate something. For example, the word is used in Acts 16:7 of the apostles’ trying to go to Bithynia (underlining is mine):

⁶ Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷ When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

It is also used in 2 Cor. 13:5, where the NIV translates it ‘examine.’ The idea is ‘check out’ or ‘put to the test,’ with the goal of determining value or quality:

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.

The word can be positive or negative, depending, of course, on the context. For instance, in the last scripture, Paul certainly hopes that the outcome will be positive. He is saying, in effect, “put yourselves to the test, and I hope you pass.” In Acts 16:7 the goal of the attempt is to succeed in entering Bithynia.

With regard to sin, however, the word is used negatively. It denotes a request, invitation or attempt to get a person to sin. It may come from inside us, as in Jas. 1, or from outside—as with the serpent and Eve in the Garden.

In the summer of 2007 Joy and I had the privilege of having a personal tour by our dear friend John Kelly of the Remington Arms manufacturing plant in Ilion, New York, where most of the company’s rifles and shotguns are made. At the end of the manufacturing process each gun is submitted to ‘proofing,’ where it is

tested for integrity by firing a round of ammunition (called a ‘proof charge’) that is larger than what would normally be used. If the gun survives this, the assumption is that it can survive normal usage. The technician puts the gun in a special enclosure and actually attempts to get it to fail.

This use of the word proofing was new to me. We normally use this word in regard to logical argumentation or demonstration of facts, as in “This is the proof that $2 + 2 = 4$, or the proof that Jesus is God.” However, the words proof or prove in English can be used of attempting to discover a fact or truth or a testing of something, putting it to the test.

It is this use of ‘proof’ or ‘prove’ that is found when peirazo is used in describing the sin process. While the Remington technician is acting for a good purpose, he really tries to get the gun to fail, because if a faulty gun gets into the hands of a consumer, there could be injury or death. In reference to the sin process in the New Testament, the source—usually Satan or the old nature—wants someone to fail by sinning. There is an evil motive and a hope for a failure.

We will return to this ‘testing’ or ‘proofing’ matter later in this study (point #5 below) when we consider the reason for Jesus’ temptations.

2. When was Jesus tempted?

The first of Jesus’ temptations recorded in the Gospels occurs in Mt. 4:1 and occurs at the beginning of his public ministry:

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

At his baptism he receives the approval of the Father. Before he begins his ministry to Israel, it will be necessary to show that he has the spiritual qualifications to carry out this ministry. It is clear that God controls this temptation experience: the Spirit brought him into the temptation.

Although there must have been temptations every day in Jesus life on earth, in my view the second significant temptation comes in the Garden on the eve of Jesus’ crucifixion. Here is Mt. 26:36-46:

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. ⁴¹ “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

There is a great deal of misunderstanding about this incident. Many say that Jesus was looking for a way out of going to the Cross and, if he found it, he would have taken it. The text does not allow this interpretation,

and it would violate the deity of the God-Man, if it were true. In the two recorded prayers *Jesus is asking for information* and affirms that when he knows what he should do he will do it. Each recorded statement includes an affirmation that he will follow the Father's will.

We are seeing him act in his humanity here. As God he knows the future and so knows what will happen the next day. As the God-Man he is strengthened by his deity not to step out of the will of the Father. But he expresses in his humanity the terrible fear of being separated from the Father, something he had never known before. He knows that this separation will involve his being viewed by the Father as a sinner and, while he knows what sin is, as the holy one he has never experienced *being* a sinner, and this is an awful thing for him to have to anticipate. Because the horror of the Cross is spiritually infinite, any temptation to avoid it is infinite in degree also. While Jesus had always sought to do the will of the Father, at this point he asks if there is any possible way to avoid the Cross, any alternative. Once he learns what he must do, he leaves the Garden to face his persecutors.

The third significant temptation comes as Jesus is on the Cross. The issue of whether there was an alternative to being separated from the Father had been settled in the Garden. While it was certainly a temptation to come down from the Cross and avoid its horror, the tauntings from those who hated him had no apparent affect on him. Here is Mt. 27:39-44:

³⁹Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" ⁴¹In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴²"He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

It is important to note also that all of Jesus' temptations came in real-life situations. While we ourselves will never face what he did with regard to the Cross, we continually face the temptation to reject the will of God in our lives.

3. Was Jesus really tempted *or* Were the temptations real?

Some have said that Jesus was not really tempted (although he may have appeared to have been), since he couldn't sin. It would be useless to try to do the impossible. This is the first of two dangerous errors associated with Jesus' temptation. The problem with this position is that Scripture specifically states that Jesus was tempted. Here is Heb. 4:14-16:

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

"In every way" means that his temptations corresponded to ours. This must mean that there were many different kinds of temptations: the temptation to lust, to kill, to hate, etc. So not only was Jesus really tempted, he was tempted in many kinds of situations.

As to the question of whether or not there could be an attempt to do the impossible—to tempt Jesus knowing he could not fail—we need to consider the source of the temptations. In the wilderness they clearly came from Satan. He probably had a good idea that Jesus would not fail, but he is not omniscient, so could not

know the ultimate outcome. In addition, even if he had knowledge that Jesus would not yield, in his self-deception he would try anyway to get Jesus to fail.

Were Jesus' temptations real or did they only have the appearance of being genuine temptations? Certainly Heb. 4:15 teaches that they were real, and in addition the intensity of the temptation in the Garden to avoid the Cross attests to the existence of genuine temptation.

What was the source of Jesus' temptations? Unlike us, Jesus was not tempted from a sin nature, since he did not have one. All his temptations came from Satan or human beings. Further, there was no knowledge of previous sins to appeal to, as is the case with us. We sin more easily when tempted to commit sins that we have done before. All his temptations came from Satan or human beings.

Some have raised the question of the reality of Jesus' temptations by appealing to Jas. 1:13-15:

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.

If Jesus is God, and God cannot be tempted, then he could not be tempted, the reasoning goes. Therefore, Jesus was not really tempted. The answer to this problem lies in the makeup of the God-Man. Jesus' humanity was tempted, not his deity, but Scripture says that his Person was tempted. This is no different in principle from Jesus' hunger. In his human nature he was hungry, but Scripture speaks of the whole Person as being hungry.

4. Why didn't Jesus sin?

There are some evangelicals who say that for Jesus' temptations to mean anything they had to have a genuine basis of appeal. Therefore, he must have been able to sin. Some have said that Jesus could have sinned and that he faced sin in his humanity and called on the strength of the Holy Spirit. This is the second dangerous error associated with his temptation. Similar to this position is the idea that for his temptations to have any value to us, he had to be able to follow through when tempted and so sin as we do. Since the Bible emphasizes his ability to empathize, he must have been able to sin, the argument goes.

The first answer to this lies in the plain statements of Scripture, as in Lk. 1:35:

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

The first reason Jesus did not sin was because he is holy, as this verse tells us. A holy being cannot sin. And if he could have sinned, then our salvation was based on chance. Yet the God-Man was really tempted. The appeals to sin came to his humanity. But as the God-Man he was strengthened by his deity to resist temptation and not go ahead to sin. This is the second reason he could not sin. No matter how great the temptation was, he could always resist because of his divine nature. We said earlier that it must have been an infinite temptation for him to avoid the Cross. Yet as the holy one he resisted successfully through strengthening from his deity.

There are two important principles here. First, divine enablement is the only resource for resisting sin. And second, one who has gone farther than others in resisting has the potential for helping them. These two points lead us to the final question.

5. Why was Jesus tempted?

1. Jesus was tempted to prove his sinlessness and qualification to save.

We can hardly miss the ‘proofing’ or ‘test for failure’ idea in Mt. 4:1. The Spirit himself led Jesus into the wilderness, so what happened there was no accident. It was God’s purpose to bring Jesus into the place where he would be given a test to see if he was genuine. Because God initiated and so controlled the sequence of temptations, Satan was only an instrument of God, as he was in the Book of Job.

There were three parts to this test in the wilderness: 1) to turn stones into bread and thus use his own powers to benefit himself; 2) to test God by invoking the protection of angels unnecessarily; and 3) to gain a kingdom before God’s time. In general these involved testing to see if he would step out of the will of God. Of course, the ‘proof charge’ at this time was greater than any temptation that a normal human being is faced with, because Satan was attempting to get an infinite being to fail. While Satan’s goal was to give a test that would get Jesus to fail, God’s purpose in this temptation was to demonstrate that Jesus *would not* fail. James 1:13 tells us that God does not tempt (peirazo [πειράζω]) anyone. He does not try to get anyone to sin. In the temptation in the wilderness, Satan is responsible for the sin of attacking the Lord Jesus Christ by trying to get him to sin. But as we have seen in previous studies, God can introduce and control situations that involve sin without being charged with making anyone sin. God controlled the temptation in the wilderness so that his purposes would come out. God wanted to show that Jesus would not fail and thus prove that he was a perfect Savior who needed no savior himself.

The temptations in the Garden and when Jesus was on the Cross also involve the question of whether or not Jesus would step out of the will of God and thus show he was not qualified as a sinless savior. They are less specific in detail than the wilderness temptation, but no less intense. In addition, Satan is not specifically mentioned with reference to either time, although certainly he was working in the people that crucified Jesus.

2. Jesus was tempted so he could grow as a priest who can help his people.

The whole book of Hebrews is designed to show that Jesus is a priest uniquely qualified to take people to God because he is both God and man. One of the key features of this is his growth in his humanity as he learned what it was to resist temptation in the midst of suffering:

Heb. 2:17-18: ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

According to the Book of Hebrews, the only effective high priest is one who knows what his people go through. Jesus is qualified as a high priest because he suffered under temptation and yet did not sin, no matter how intense the pressure to sin.

It is important that we pay attention to the language of Hebrews at this point. When used in the book of Hebrews of salvation, either of Jesus as the provider or sinners as the recipients, the word group translated ‘perfect,’ ‘perfection’ or ‘made perfect’ refers to the ability to enter into the presence of God. In Heb. 5:1-10 the writer says that Jesus was ‘made perfect’ (v. 9). This does not refer to his holiness or sinless perfection. He always was sinless. In his classes and preaching S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. used to speak of Jesus’ experience in temptation and make the important distinction between learning what obedience means and learning to obey. The phrase ‘learned obedience’ in Heb. 5:8 tells us that by his sufferings he learned what obedience means. He did not learn to obey. It is not the case that he could ever disobey his Father and so at times he

would correct himself and disobey less and less. He never did disobey. What he learned was *the cost of obeying* and what it meant to obey under infinite temptation. Here is Heb. 5:1-10:

Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. ³ This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. ⁴ No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵ So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.” ⁶ And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” ⁷ During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰ and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Similar is Heb. 2:10:

¹⁰ In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Notice that ‘God’ here must refer to the Father. The Father carried out the plan of the eternal holy Trinity that involved putting the incarnate Son in situations where he would learn the cost of obedience. Only after the resurrection, when the incarnate Son’s eternal existence is established, does the Father pronounce the incarnate son to be an eternal priest (Heb. 5:6 and 10). He resists infinite temptation and demonstrates his qualification to be a high priest who can take people to God by dying in obedience to the Father—in the place of human beings.

3. Jesus was tempted so he could learn what it is like for us to wrestle with temptation.

The final reason for Jesus’ temptation flows from what we have just seen. Jesus resisted temptation to an infinite degree and so can help us when we are tempted. Heb. 2:14-18 stresses the fact of his likeness to us in our humanity. Because of this he can put himself in our place to help us.

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Finally we have the great command of Heb. 4:16. When we are tempted, we are to utilize Jesus’ knowledge of how to resist temptation to an infinite degree.

Heb. 4:15-16: ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

This passage assumes the same gap in time between a temptation and sin. We are commanded to come for help to Jesus our Great High Priest at the point when we are beset by temptation and before we yield and sin. When we are tempted, we have these typical reactions: 1) We toy with the idea of sinning and then give in; 2) We give in right away since we've committed the same sin before and it's easy to slip into it; 3) We give in and blame someone else or 4) We go to our high priest for help and do not yield. The NIV phrase "in our time of need" should be translated "just when we need it"—i.e. after temptation comes and before we sin.

Hebrews 2:18 contains a beautiful statement: "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted." Jesus' existence now is grounded in part in his experience of suffering under temptation. He remembers what it was like to be human and facing the temptations that humans face. He faced all the same kind of temptations that we do (Heb. 4:15—"in every way" or "according to categories") so he can sympathize no matter what the nature of the temptation and help us to resist successfully. He is not "unable to sympathize with our weaknesses."

New Testament scholar Brooke Foss Westcott wrote about this verse and Jesus' experience:

Sympathy with the sinner in his trial does not depend on the experience of sin but on the experience of the strength of the temptation to sin which only the sinless can know in its full intensity.

Jesus resisted the strongest possible temptations successfully. His resisting exceeded any resistance we would ever have to go through, so he knows what it is like for us to resist a lesser temptation.

Augustine said, "Adam turned a garden into a wilderness. In his temptation in the wilderness Jesus brought us back to the garden." Jesus makes resisting sin and enjoying God's fellowship possible. We are foolish not to use this provision that comes from his experience. Under the law the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place only once a year, and could do so only with blood. No one else could enter. That place was where God lived in the midst of Israel. But sinners no longer need keep their distance. We can draw near with confidence, coming for help between the point of temptation and the act of sin. We can be sure of receiving help from the one who endured temptation infinitely greater than ours.

Here are the key points to remember:

1. Temptation and sin are separated in time.
2. Jesus was really tempted to sin.
3. Jesus did not sin because he could not sin.
4. Jesus was made complete as a priest through his resistance of temptation while suffering.
5. Jesus learned the *cost of obedience*; he did not need to learn *to obey*.
6. Jesus was tempted beyond any temptation that a human being can experience.
7. Jesus knows your needs when you are tempted and stands ready to enable you to escape and not sin.

Study questions

1. What are the differences between temptation and sin?
2. What does *peirazo* mean in the NT with reference to temptation and sin?
3. How is the concept of proofing involved with Jesus' temptations?
4. Why were Jesus' experiences in the wilderness, in the Garden and on the Cross temptations?
5. Why is it necessary that Jesus' temptations be real? How do we know they were real?
6. How can Jesus know what our temptations are like since he didn't live long enough to experience exactly every temptation we face?
7. In what sense did Jesus grow as a priest?
8. Try to explain what Westcott meant concerning temptation.

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.
40. Providence: God's care for and upholding of his creation.
41. Sovereignty: God's control over his universe.
42. Christology: The study of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
43. Incarnation: The joining of deity and humanity in one person forever. The word is based on the Latin word for flesh: the Lord Jesus Christ is God joined with human flesh.
44. Pre-existence: Used of the Son, it means that he existed before Bethlehem.
45. Theophany: An appearance of God.
46. Christophany: An appearance of Christ.