

Systematic Theology for the Local Church
#42—Christology—Part VIII¹
The Successful Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ
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The next study will be on Jesus as the Son of God. Helpful for that study is Reymond, pp. 234-315.

In the previous study on the background of Jesus' priesthood, we dealt with priesthood and biblical history, the key requirements for a priest in Scripture and the need for believers to understand and appreciate priesthood as it is found in the Bible. In this study we will see the unique role of the Lord Jesus Christ in fulfilling all the requirements for successful priesthood and the role of the Christian today in living on the basis of that priestly work.

1. Jesus' fulfillment of the requirements of priesthood

What is Jesus' relation to the requirements for a successful priest? Simply that he meets all of them perfectly. He is the one priest qualified to do them all. The Levitical priesthood established a single priest in the line of Aaron as a High Priest. The writer to the Hebrews sees Jesus as higher than any Levitical priest. In 4:14 he calls him our Great High Priest—the one who did what no high Priest could do. The writer to the Hebrews describes Jesus as the only one who could bring the two separated parties together, bridging the gap between human beings and God. He knows both sides (He is divine and human) and is untainted by the sin of the race (4:15). Jesus is the only priest who can do, and has done finally, what is necessary to bring human beings to God. He accomplished it with a perfect sacrifice (Heb. 7:27). The torn curtain in the Temple— split from top to bottom because the solution to the access problem came from a heavenly source, not an earthly—showed the final provision of God for alienated humanity (see Mt. 27:51). Here in detail are the requirements for a successful priest, as met by the Lord Jesus Christ.

a. First, Jesus has been appointed as a priest by God himself. Notice the underlined portions of Heb. 5:5-10:

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.

This appointment is also found in Heb. 7:21:

but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.' "

We will return to this appointment and the time of its occurrence in section f. below.

b. Jesus sympathizes with sinners. Here is Heb. 4: 15:

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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.

c. Jesus represents others before God. Here is Heb. 7:27:

Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people.

We find in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ that this representation includes praying, in addition to sacrifice:

Heb. 7:25: Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Rom. 8:34: Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

This intercession has the purpose of assuring that his substitutionary work on the Cross leads to the complete salvation of the elect, a process that ends as they enter into Jesus' presence.

d. Jesus knows God's side and the human side.

This is the extended point that the writer to the Hebrews makes in the first two chapters of his book. As the only one who is genuine deity and genuine humanity he is uniquely qualified to meet the requirements of both sides. God has gap-bridging requirements met by Jesus' holiness; our needs stem from our sinfulness and weakness.

The writer to the Hebrews—the book that more than any other in the N.T. teaches us about priesthood—is concerned with showing at the outset that Jesus knows both sides and is qualified to represent them. When we look at the contents and flow of the first two chapters, it becomes evident that in ch. 1 the writer wants to show that Jesus is God. So we have, among other statements, the undeniable ascription of deity to the incarnate Son in 1:8:

⁸But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

The constant topic in ch. 2 is Jesus' genuine humanity, as seen, for example, in v. 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.

Jesus knows God's requirements for bringing human beings to himself and he knows through experience what it is like to be human have human needs and weaknesses. He is able lovingly and righteously to bring the two together.

e. Jesus successfully opens the channel between God and sinful human beings. Ponder for a moment this fantastic passage in Heb. 9, which speaks in terms of opening access to heaven, which is the presence of God:

²³ It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. ²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

f. Jesus keeps the channel open against all threats and in spite of all human failures. Here we turn to the biblical presentation of Melchizedek, who first appears in Gen. 14:17:

¹⁷ After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

¹⁸ Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

After Gen. 14 the next time Melchizedek appears is in Ps. 110:4, and then in the book of Hebrews, where he forms the basis for the presentation of Jesus' superior priesthood. The writer gives an exposition of the theological significance of Melchizedek in Heb. 7, presenting two superiorities: 1) Jesus is superior to the Levites in regard to position before God and 2) Jesus is superior to the Levites because his ongoing life makes his work last forever.

⁷ This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, ² and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." ³ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.

⁴ Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! ⁵ Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, their brothers—even though their brothers are descended from Abraham. ⁶ This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷ And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater. ⁸ In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. ⁹ One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, ¹⁰ because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

¹¹ If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? ¹² For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. ¹³ He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴ For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. ¹⁵ And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, ¹⁶ one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

¹⁸ The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

²⁰ And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, ²¹ but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him:

“The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever.’ “

²² Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

²³ Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office;

²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

²⁶ Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

There are several key features of Melchizedek’s presentation in these passages that we should notice, and it is valuable for us to put them in a table alongside Jesus’ priestly features. Here is the comparison of the full set of features for each priest:

Melchizedek (‘My King is Righteous’)	Jesus
King (‘melchi’)	King
King of Salem (perhaps = ‘shalom,’ meaning ‘peace’)	King bringing peace
Proclaimer of a righteous king	The righteous king
No (recorded) beginning or ending	No beginning or ending as the Son of God
Connected with Abraham (versus Moses)	Connected with Abraham (versus Moses)
Spiritually superior (honored by Abraham)	Spiritual superior
Non-Levite	Non-Levite
Priest by divine appointment/oath (an assumption)	Priest by divine appointment/oath
Celebrates a victory	Celebrates a victory (9:28, etc.)
Involved with sacrifices	Makes a sacrifice—himself!

When did Jesus become a Melchizedekian priest? In section a. above we noted that Jesus was appointed as a Melchizedekian priest with a solemn oath from God. This oath occurs first as a prophecy in Ps. 110:4:

The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

Important also in connection with this oath is Ps. 2:7:

I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

The writer to the Hebrews embeds both of these as quotations in 5:5-10, giving us important information about the time when the oath was applied to Jesus and he became a priest in the order of Melchizedek (underlining is mine):

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.

The quotation of Ps. 110:4 appears to give information parallel to the quotation of Ps. 2:7 since they are joined by “and,” that is, Ps. 2:7 and Ps. 110:1 refer to the same event:

“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.”

The logic between the first and second parts of v. 5 is instructive. The writer connects Ps. 2:7 with the time of the oath that established Jesus as a high priest. So the point in Jesus’ life where he was designated a Son must also be the point when he was designated a high priest by the Father. This point was also when Ps. 110:4 was fulfilled.

Heb. 5:8 tells us the designation as a Melchizedekian priest was after his suffering, when the testing of Jesus to determine his qualification to be an effective priest was completed, i.e. after his obedience all the way to death. It was only at this point that he showed that he was qualified to take others into the presence of God. In the language of the writer to the Hebrews, this was ‘perfection,’ a term used in the OT of the qualification of priests. Notice also from Heb. 7:28 that this qualification lasts forever, that is, he is eternal as a Melchizedekian priest:

For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

So three things occur at the same point: 1) the designation of Jesus as God’s Son; 2) the completion of Jesus’ sufferings and 3) the designation of Jesus as a high priest like Melchizedek. When could this have been?

It must have been at the resurrection that all of these things were fulfilled. Acts 13:32-34 shows that Ps. 2:7 was fulfilled at the resurrection. The phrase “raising up” in v. 33 refers in context to Jesus’ resurrection, and Ps. 2:7 is connected with this event resurrection by the words “as it is written”:

³² “We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

“ ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father.’

³⁴ The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words:

“ ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’

So according to Acts 13:33 Psalm 2:7 is a prediction of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the point when the Father designated the Son a high priest like Melchizedek.

We know that Jesus’ sufferings were completed by the time of the resurrection. In fact, Rom. 4:25 shows that the purpose of the resurrection was to show that Jesus’ work on the Cross was completed and that he could never die again:

He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

I prefer to translate this verse in the following way:

He was delivered over to death because of our sins and was raised to life because justification was accomplished.

Here is a summary of the pieces associated with this biblical information about the time of the designation by oath:

1. The designation of Jesus as a Son (Ps. 2:7) comes at the same time as the Melchizedekian oath.
2. Designation as a Melchizedekian priest is the fulfillment of Ps. 110:4.
3. Psalm 2:7 and Ps. 110:4 are fulfilled at the same time.
4. Psalm 2:7 is a prediction of resurrection, as seen in Acts 13.
5. Ps. 110:4 is fulfilled after Jesus' suffering is finished.
6. The Father's designation of Jesus as a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek must have come at or after the resurrection, after Jesus' suffering was finished.

Jesus performed priestly acts before the resurrection. He prayed for others (see especially Jn. 17) and he offered the sacrifice of himself. Heb. 9:11 seems to say he was a high priest before the atonement:

When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

However, the beginning of his role as the unique high priest corresponding to Melchizedek and qualified to take others to God and keep them from being lost is connected with the resurrection. This is due in part to the fact that a successful priest has to be able to stay alive to make his provision of access open. Here is Heb. 7:23-25:

²³ Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

The office of each Levitical priest—including the High Priest—came to an end when he died. Those priests died after a normal human lifespan and so could not live long enough to continue to take people to God, even if they could have offered a perfect sacrifice, which they could not. They could not remain alive to keep people with God forever. Jesus' continual life as a priest guarantees that he can follow through after making the perfect sacrifice and take people all the way into God's presence. Jesus' resurrection establishes him as a priest who will live forever and so can make his work last forever.

The fact that Jesus is a priest in the order of Melchizedek and not Levi means that he is in a superior order to that of all Levitical priests, i.e., what he does is better than what they did. For the writer to the Hebrews this means that he can succeed in taking people to God, which all the Levitical priests failed to do because they were not sinless. In addition, his work lasts forever (because of resurrection), so whoever he died for will always have access to God. The likeness to Melchizedek teaches that Jesus provided the access that even God-established priests under the law could not provide and then keeps it open forever. Of course, this does not mean that God's plan under the law failed, but simply that God never intended for the law, with its Levitical priesthood and associated Tabernacle, to provide access to his presence. Priesthood under the law was both a picture of Jesus' greater priesthood and a testimony to human failure.

Notice then the levels and distinctions associated with Jesus' priestly office:

1. Jesus did the work of a priest throughout his ministry.
2. At the Cross Jesus approached God as a high priest, making a perfect sacrifice. The writer to the Hebrews calls him our Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14; 10:21).
3. Jesus suffered and learned the cost of obedience and was designated as a "perfect" priest, one who was qualified to take people to God (Heb. 7:28).

4. Jesus lives forever after the model of Melchizedek in order to make his work last forever and to keep the recipients of his work under that work. He became this kind of priest at the resurrection.

2. Priesthood after the Cross: the significance of Jesus' priesthood for the Christian today

a. Access and numbers of priests

With the start of the Church the number of priests changes in an interesting way. Now there is a large company of priests, as extensive as the number of the children of God in this age (1 Pet. 2:5), offering sacrifices spiritually, instead of physically, as the Levitical priests did in the tabernacle and temple. As stones these new priests form a new temple, a spiritual one. And this is possible because, as they come through the successful Priest, they have perfect access to God. The sacrifice to end all physical sacrifices, superior to all those going back as far as Noah, has made possible what they could not to secure and what they only prefigured by their acts—entrance into fellowship with a holy God. It is clear that God allowed access to Himself before that perfect sacrifice was made. But all the Old Testament sacrifices were in some way instructive concerning the nature of the only effective one. The writer to the Hebrews exhorts his readers to offer spiritual sacrifices (Heb. 13:15-16). All are now a company of priests destined for rule with Christ (Rev. 5:10). The many sacrifices of the Levitical priests are replaced by many sacrifices of believers looking back at the work of the Son.

b. Looking back and sacrificing

The acts of believer-priests today are retrospective in nature. They are thank-offerings given in response to access that has been provided. Apparently Noah's sacrifice was also a thanks-response. And Melchizedek prefigured this celebration aspect, also. In effect their sacrifices were based on confidence in the provision of God. The Levitical system involved both request- and thank-offerings. And, of course, the great high-priestly act occurring once a year was a request for access and was done according to the ritual prescribed by God. The believer-priest today looks back and says, in effect, "The matter of access is settled. I can rest and, because of grace, need make no attempt to get to God, on my own or through anyone else. He has provided a way. I do now, however, have the responsibility of thanking him." The believer's sacrifices take four forms today: (1) the offering of the body (Rom. 1:12-13); (2) the offering of praise/thanks (Heb. 13:15); (3) the offering of time and effort in doing good (Heb. 13:16); and (4) the offering to God of our physical goods by sharing with others (Heb. 13:16). It is significant, in connection with this last sacrifice, that the giving of money by a believer in this age is clearly described as a priestly act, as in Phil. 4:14-19.

c. Priesthood and worship

We should ask how worship fits with all of this. Before revelation of the assurance of access provided by the cross, those approaching God came with requests for access and with thanks, if they understood His acceptance of them by grace. They were worshipping. Now the believer worships with thanks only, for the issue of access is no longer in doubt. Final access has been obtained (Heb. 10:19-20). Being able to handle biblical teaching on priesthood also has the potential to improve our worship, in which we exercise our priesthood that is built on his (1 Pet. 2:5). The priesthood of all believers is the basis of worship in the local church and includes the feature of multiple participation.

d. Access and an open heaven

In several places in the Old Testament and New Testament there is a beautiful figure associated with this theological theme of access. Our need is for fellowship with God in this life, and for future fellowship that is unhindered by sin. For some individuals in the Bible these goals appear at times to be too distant. Can we have fellowship with God, and will we ever dwell with him apart from the confusion of this world? Will

God's program bring about a time when the righteous do enjoy him, the unrighteous are excluded, and sin is punished? In Gen. 28:10-22 Jacob experiences the heavenly stairway dream. If we had only this passage we would have some difficulty in understanding its significance. However, in Jn. 1:51 our Lord tells us that he himself is the ladder. Jacob must have seen what amounted to a picture of the spiritual reality of the provision by God of access to heaven. Interestingly enough, his conclusion is that he has seen "the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). The work of the Lord Jesus Christ, then, is described by these two passages from the Old Testament and New Testament as involving the provision of a bridge between earth and heaven, at one end of which is the gate to heaven. Jacob correctly assesses the importance of the experience by observing that God is present and the location is "awesome." It is also interesting that the specific content of God's words has to do with the Abrahamic Covenant, whose fulfillment demands participation by individuals in the eternal life provided by God. In other words, to enjoy the Abrahamic Covenant and the land (Gen. 28:15)—actually guaranteed by the Palestinian Covenant—an Israelite, including Jacob, would first have to experience fellowship with God through his provision of access.

We find a further development of the open heaven motif in the first vision given to Ezekiel. The specific statement of Ezek. 1:1 is that "the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God." The essence of the vision is that God is present with Israel in fulfillment of his covenants, and is very much involved with the affairs of the earth. He is not distant, but rather appears sitting on a throne-chariot surrounded by angels who are doing His bidding. This revelation of the nearness of God was designed to show Israel that they could count on His intimate interest in and direction of their affairs as they were in captivity in Babylon. We ought to be alert to this figure of the open heaven as being a way of describing fellowship with and enjoyment of God. It should also be a startling teaching, for the truth is that God does not have to come to human beings, much less have fellowship with them. He is under no obligation to give access to heaven. However, the pattern of his dealing with sin—begun with the skins in the garden—unfolds through the Scriptures with striking presentations of the gracious provision of God: He does allow human beings into his presence, he will permit them to enter heaven and does interact intimately with affairs on earth.

It is not surprising that at the beginning of the ministry of the incarnate second Person there are two important openings of heaven, the ladder teaching found in Jn. 1:51, and the description of the presence of God at the baptism of Christ, where Matthew records: "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him" (Mt. 3:16). The ministry of Jesus, then, is announced at this point as being associated with an accessible heaven. In a subsequent New Testament book it is an individual who walked with God who is granted a glimpse into heaven at the most crucial point in his life. Stephen sees his Savior as he declares, moments before his martyrdom, "Behold, I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). His access to God was such that God revealed to him a glimpse of his new home to assure him of the fact that he pleased him by his message in the face of intense hostility. We should remember also the sudden departures of Enoch (Gen. 5:24) and Elijah (2 Ki. 2:11-12). Heaven was quite open to those godly individuals.

But it remains for the book of Revelation to tie together elements appearing earlier in Scripture, as in 4:1 the throne room of God is disclosed through "a door standing open in heaven." At this crucial point in the Apocalypse, the appearance of this access motif reveals that God is about to actualize a longed-for promise of the ages—that God would dwell with humanity. This is access to God with a plus: people can enjoy fellowship with him over a period of time. Later we learn that this will occur in a kingdom presided over by the God-man, ruling on the throne of David. Further, the creation of the New Heavens and the New Earth will result in a sinless state where there will be perfect fellowship and perfect service—enjoyment of the presence of God and the opportunity to return to Him in love some of the grace shown to the redeemed. So John tells us, "The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads" (Rev. 22:3-4). Those with access will be His

possession! This is all attributable to the work of the perfect Sacrifice, the Lamb/Priest, who gave himself to obtain access for those whom the Eternal God chose to know him.

Study questions

1. What are some of the reasons Jesus is a superior priest?
2. Explain the 'forever' quality of Melchizedek. Why is it important?
3. Why are you a priest? What is your relation to the Levitical priests?
4. What can a believer-priest do now? What is not necessary to do?

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.
47. Priesthood: The system that God established to remedy the problem of alienation between a holy God and sinful human beings.