

**Systematic Theology for the Local Church**  
**#50—Pneumatology—Part IV<sup>1</sup>**  
**The Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation Part I:**  
**Efficacious Grace**

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Helpful for this study are Reymond, pp.703-718; House, Section 37; David Steele and Curtis Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 2004), 48-56; and John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984) 88-94. The next study will be on Regeneration. Helpful for that study are Reymond, pp.718-721; House, Section 37; Steele and Thomas, 48-56; and Murray, 95-105.

**1. Definition and description of efficacious grace**

Efficacious grace is also called effectual calling and irresistible grace. None of these names is found in Scripture. However, it is convenient to use them to describe what God does in saving a person. Actually, this doctrine—whichever term is used—is a useful way to talk about all of God’s work in space and time to bring a person to salvation. As such, it extends beyond an initial stirring all the way to the point of faith. So, while the word call is used to describe God’s work in bringing a person to Christ, using it by itself in theological formulations could give the idea that efficacious grace only involves a call. There is much more involved. Regeneration is part of this process, as is faith. Efficacious grace brings a new heart that wants to do the will of God. Without it a person cannot respond to the special call to the elect and cannot exercise faith. We will consider regeneration as a separate topic in the next study. I am providing a definition as we start this study and will explain its meaning in the points to follow:

Efficacious grace is the working of God in an individual that cannot be thwarted and that leads that person to faith in Christ.

The Westminster Confession of Faith provides a valuable statement of this doctrine (Chapter X, sections I, II and IV):

*Of Effectual Calling.*

I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ: enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

II. This effectual call is of God’s free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore can not be saved:

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much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may be without warrant of the Word of God.

## 2. The background of efficacious grace: its subjects and prerequisites<sup>2</sup>

The great purpose of the Holy Trinity is to bring the elect into heaven to enjoy God forever. Each of the persons has a role in the overall plan of this salvation. The following passages imply that the Father has done the choosing and the Son dies for those the Father has chosen (underlining is mine):

Jn. 6:37-40:

<sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Jn. 10:28-29:

<sup>25</sup> Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, <sup>26</sup> but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. <sup>27</sup> My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all ; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

Jn. 10:11-16:

<sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. <sup>13</sup> The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <sup>14</sup> "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Yet even with the substitutionary death of the Son, the subjects of that death cannot and will not come to God on their own. In their natural state of spiritual death (Eph. 2:1), which is really separation from God, they are at enmity with him and reject him at every turn, as seen in Rom. 3:10-18:

<sup>10</sup> As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

<sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

<sup>13</sup> "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips."

<sup>14</sup> "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."

<sup>15</sup> "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

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<sup>2</sup> For valuable insights see David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1963), 48.

16 ruin and misery mark their ways,  
17 and the way of peace they do not know.”  
18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

No one can or will turn to Christ on his own. There must be a supernatural work of God to cause the elect sinner to turn to Christ. In his *Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* Lorraine Boettner says this about the need<sup>3</sup>:

In his unregenerate state man never adequately realizes his utterly helpless condition. He imagines that he is able to reform himself and turn to God if he chooses. He even imagines that he is able to counteract the designs of infinite Wisdom, and to defeat the agency of Omnipotence itself. As Dr. Warfield says, “Sinful man stands in need, not of inducements or assistance to save himself, but precisely of saving; and Jesus Christ has come not to advise, or urge, or woo, or help him to save himself, but to save him.”

This could not be more clearly stated than in Jn. 6:44 and 6:65:

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.

### **3. The agent of efficacious grace**

While there are many passages that say that God is the agent of calling (Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 1:9, etc.) even specifically the Father (Eph. 1:17-18), clearly the Holy Spirit is the agent of conviction (Jn. 16:8-10) and regeneration (Jn. 3:6, 8), so it is appropriate to think that the Holy Spirit has a significant role in the whole process.

### **4. The process of efficacious grace**

God summons each elect person to salvation individually in space and time. At some point in their life he calls every one of the elect; none is overlooked.

Romans 10:14 tells us that the gospel message (information about Jesus Christ) must be present in some way for a person to be saved:

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

The proclamation of the gospel constitutes a general call to sinners whenever it is proclaimed, whether to one person or to 10,000. All of the elect and some of the non-elect hear this call (not everyone hears the gospel). This general call must precede the specific call of efficacious grace. The first part of Mt. 22:14 states this general call: “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Only the elect will respond to the general call with faith. Is the general call a lie, then, since God invites many but only some can respond? No, the general call is still genuine and says that if a person will believe in Christ he will be saved. The fact that God knows that some will not believe because they are not among the

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<sup>3</sup> P. 93. See <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/boettner/predest.html>

elect does not make the offer a sham. God means what he says: If a person believes he will be saved.<sup>4</sup> If a person is one of the elect, hears the gospel and it is God's sovereignly chosen time for him to be saved, God will continue to work in him to bring him to faith in Christ. If a person is one of the elect but it is not God's chosen time for him to be saved, the Spirit will lead him to faith at a later point. Here is Boettner on this time factor in God's calling:<sup>5</sup>

The elect hear the Gospel and believe—not always at the first hearing, but at the divinely appointed time—the non-elect hear but disbelieve, not because they lack sufficient evidence, but because their inward nature is opposed to holiness.

Passages such as the following demonstrate that it is God's sovereign work and his alone to cause a sinner to respond to the gospel:

Acts 13:48:

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

Notice that all the elect—those appointed for eternal life—who were present when Paul preached believed, and only those who were appointed. One of the clearest statements in the Bible concerning the sovereign work of God in opening a heart to the gospel is found in Acts 16:14 (underlining is mine):

<sup>13</sup> On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. <sup>14</sup> One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. <sup>15</sup> When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Acts 18:27:

When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed.

Jn. 3:27:

To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven."

In addition to the difference in the response to the general call and the response to the call of efficacious grace, these calls differ in another significant way: The general call can be rejected—in fact, it is rejected by all but the elect. But the call of efficacious grace cannot be rejected: it never fails to bring a person to salvation, working in and with a person's will to bring him to Christ. It is irresistible and always works: this is why it is said to be efficacious.

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<sup>4</sup> For a classic discussion of this problem, along with question of the need to preach the gospel if the elect are certain to be saved, see J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*.

<sup>5</sup> Boettner, 94.

The position of the Arminian is that the Gospel is offered to all and response is dependent on the individual. This makes the enemies of God fully able to decide for or against Christ, and also means that God can be resisted. Here is Boettner's rebuttal of this:<sup>6</sup>

If, as Arminians say, God is earnestly trying to convert every person, He is making a great failure of His work; for among the adult population of the world up to the present time, where He has succeeded in saving one He has let perhaps twenty-five fall into hell. Such a view sheds little glory on the Divine Majesty. Concerning the Arminian doctrine of resistible grace Toplady says that it is "a doctrine which represents Omnipotence itself as wishing and trying and striving to no purpose. According to this tenet, God, in endeavoring (for it seems that it is only an endeavor) to convert sinners, may, by sinners, be foiled, defeated, and disappointed; He may lay close and long siege to the soul, and that soul can, from the citadel of impregnable free will, hang out a flag of defiance to God Himself, and by a continued obstinacy of defense, and a few vigorous sallies of free will compel Him to raise the siege. In a word, the Holy Spirit, after having for years perhaps, danced attendance on the free will of man, may at length, like a discomfited general, or an unsuccessful politician, be either put to ignominious flight, or contemptuously dismissed, *re infecta* [without accomplishing one's purpose], without accomplishing the end for which He was sent."

It is unreasonable to suppose that the sinner can thus defeat the creative power of Almighty God. "All authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth," said the risen Lord. No limit is set to that authority. "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" "He doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and no one can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" In view of these passages and many others to the same effect it ill becomes us to imagine that God is struggling along with man as best He can, persuading, exhorting, pleading, but unable to accomplish His purpose if His creatures will otherwise. If God does not *effectually* call, we may imagine Him saying, "I will that all men should be saved; nevertheless, it must finally be, not as I will but as they will." He is then put into the same extremity with Darius who would gladly have saved Daniel, but could not (Dan. 6:14). No Christian who is familiar with what the Scriptures teach about the sovereignty of God can believe that He is thus defeated in His creatures. Is it not necessary that a creature must have power to defy and thwart the purposes of Almighty God before his actions can be rewarded or punished. Furthermore, if God actually stood powerless before the majesty of man's lordly will, there would be but little use to pray for Him to convert any one. It would then be more reasonable for us to direct our petitions to the man himself.

A common complaint of the Arminian against the doctrine of efficacious grace is that a person is forced against his will to come to Christ. But if I really believe Rom. 3:11 and Eph. 2:1, then I should be glad that God has overcome my resistance. I should not care how he does it. But to make this more palatable to the Arminian, notice the first section of the Westminster statement (underlining mine):

I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ: enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

The Holy Spirit works lovingly and gently in a person to lead us to want to do what pleases God by bringing about regeneration, giving a new heart and desire to obey him. When I became conscious that God was

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 96-97.

working in my life to bring me to Christ, I never thought for a moment that he was forcing me to do something I did not want to do. Boettner describes God's working this way:<sup>7</sup>

Man is not dealt with as if he were a stone or a log. Neither is he treated as a slave, and driven against his own will to seek salvation. Rather the mind is illuminated, and the entire range of conceptions with regard to God, self, and sin, is changed. God sends His Spirit and, in a way which shall forever rebound to the praise of His mercy and grace, sweetly constrains the person to yield. The regenerated man finds himself governed by new motives and desires, and things which were once hated are now loved and sought after. This change is not accomplished through any external compulsion but through a new principle of life which has been created within the soul and which seeks after the food which alone can satisfy it.

John Calvin says this about God's drawing work:<sup>8</sup>

It is not violent, so as to compel men by external force; but still it is a powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit, which makes men willing who formerly were unwilling and reluctant. It is a false and profane assertion, therefore, that none are *drawn* but those who are willing to be *drawn*, as if man made himself obedient to God by his own efforts; for the willingness with which men follow God is what they already have from himself, who has formed their hearts to obey him.

And British Calvinist John Gill (1697-1771) describes it with the following words:<sup>9</sup>

This act of drawing is an act of power, yet not of force; God in drawing of [the] unwilling, makes willing in the day of his power: he enlightens the understanding, bends the will, gives an heart of flesh, sweetly allures by the power of his grace, and engages the soul to come to Christ, and give up itself to him; he draws with the bands of love.

The Spirit may deal with a person for a good portion of his life before he exercises saving faith in Christ. The book of Hebrews speaks of people among the readers who have known a lot about Christ and have certainly heard the gospel but have not yet responded. It is also true that the entire life of an elect person from the time of birth to the time of salvation involves the working of the Holy Spirit, indeed the whole Trinity, to bring the person to faith in Christ. This is the meaning of 'predestine' in Rom. 8:29, which means that God surrounds the elect with his protective and guiding care so that the elect person will not fail to come to Christ and after that will not fail to reach heaven. Everything in the life of an elect individual is designed to bring him to Christ and take him to heaven. Efficacious grace is a process, and we do not know how long it is. In one sense it operates the full length of time from birth to the point where we come to Christ. In another sense, it involves our conscious perception of need and our understanding of the gospel probably for some shorter period of time.

## 5. The extent and results of efficacious grace

Efficacious grace actually includes many works of God. In addition to regeneration and faith, here are several other things that God does that are included in efficacious grace. Many references use 'call,' but often in a wider sense than the special call that brings a person to faith<sup>10</sup>:

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>8</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. See <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom34.xii.vii.html>.

<sup>9</sup> John Gill, *Exposition of the Bible*. See

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Commentaries/GillsExpositionoftheBible/gil.cgi?book=joh&chapter=006&verse=044&next=045&prev=043>.

- a. Calls a person to holy standing before God:

Rom. 1:6-7:

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

- b. Brings the elect (those shown mercy) to Christ:

Rom. 9:23-24:

<sup>23</sup> What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— <sup>24</sup> even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

- c. Brings a person into fellowship with Christ: 1 Cor. 1:9

God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

- d. Gives a sinner a desire to please God and do his will: 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.

On the new desire to please God, Boettner comments:<sup>11</sup>

This effective and irresistible grace converts the will itself and forms a holy character in the person by a creative act. It removes a man's appetite for sinful things so that he refrains from sin, not as the dyspeptic refuses to eat the dainties for which he longs, lest his indulgence should be punished with the agonies of sickness, but rather because he hates sin for its own sake. The holy and thorough submission to God's will, which the convert before dreaded and resisted, he now loves and approves. Obedience has become not only the obligatory but the preferable good.

- e. Calls him out of darkness into God's light: 1 Pet. 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

- f. Calls him into his kingdom: 1 Thess. 2:11-12

<sup>11</sup> For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, <sup>12</sup> encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

- g. Calls him to the marriage supper of the Lamb: Rev. 19:9

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<sup>10</sup> This list is drawn from Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of The Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 713.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 97.

Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’

- h. Calls him to eternal life: 1 Tim. 6:12

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

- i. Calls him to freedom from the law: Gal. 5:13

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

- j. Calls him to the hope of being with Christ: Eph. 4:4

There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called

- k. Calls him to holiness 1 Thess. 4:7

For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

- l. Calls him to following Christ through suffering: 1 Pet. 2:21

<sup>20</sup> But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup> To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

- m. Calls him to good relations with other people: 1 Cor. 7:15

<sup>15</sup> But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

## 6. The place or time of efficacious grace: the location in the *ordo salutis*

God’s work of drawing a person to himself is one of many things that God does outside and inside space and time to bring a person to himself. Theologians speak of the sequence of these things as the *ordo salutis* or the sequence of salvation. Romans 8:29-30 presents several of the actions of God in this sequence in one place, although it is certainly not the only passage that deals with the sequence or the elements in the sequence. This is the first time that we have reason to look at the sequence in our studies, and we will consider several of them in future studies. Our purpose in this study is to determine the place of efficacious grace in the sequence. Here are the relevant verses:

<sup>28</sup> And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

The five terms in Rom. 8:29-30—foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified—form a chain that moves from before space and time (‘foreknew,’ ‘predestined’) to being in the presence of Christ (‘glorified’). In between are three things that God does during a person’s time on earth. A careful examination of these verses shows several important things:

- The five acts apply to the same group of people. Whoever is foreknown ('planned for, 'chosen,' i.e. is one of the elect) and predestined is also called, justified and glorified.
- Paul was thinking sequentially: justification precedes glorification, the planning of predestination precedes justification, etc. The order of the five acts of God cannot be changed.
- 'Called' either describes the whole process of bringing a person to Christ, i.e. efficacious grace as a whole, or only the actual calling portion of God's drawing a person to himself. For our purposes in this study, it is not important to make a distinction with regard to this passage.
- Since God's calling here leads to justification and entrance into the presence of God, it must be the calling of efficacious grace and not the general call that saved and unsaved can receive.
- Each of the last four acts depends on the preceding element in the chain for its existence. In other words, a person cannot be glorified unless he is justified; he cannot be justified unless he is called, etc. Calling is therefore essential to bringing about justification.
- Reading between the lines, we can conclude that between calling and justification is faith, since the Bible teaches that justification is the result of faith. Similarly, because regeneration is necessary for salvation, it must be implicit in the sequence and, indeed, is connected with the calling.
- Because the five acts of God apply to the same set of people, anyone who is foreknown ('planned for') *must* receive all four other actions of God. For our purposes, this means that those that God plans for and chooses and are therefore the elect will not fail to be called. God's saving grace is applied in space and time to those he has chosen.

The first section of the Westminster Confession on this doctrine provides a fitting summary of this study:

I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ: enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

## Study questions

1. Why can this topic be studied under pneumatology?
2. What is the relation of regeneration to efficacious grace?
3. How is 'calling' or 'call' used in relation to efficacious grace?
4. Why is efficacious grace necessary?
5. What are the differences between the general call and the call of efficacious grace?
6. Comment on the use of 'irresistible grace' to describe this doctrine.
7. What is wrong with the Arminian view of how a person comes to God?
8. What is the *ordo salutis*? What does thinking this way tell us about efficacious grace?

## 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.
48. Son of God: A name for Jesus that describes his deity and his approval by the Father at the resurrection.
49. Son of Man: A messianic name for Jesus that emphasizes his humanity backed by deity and his role of taking humans to God through suffering and humiliation.
50. Messiah: A transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning 'anointed one'; used of the expected national deliverer of Israel; the linguistic equivalent of Greek *christos*, 'Christ'.
51. Efficacious grace: Efficacious grace is the working of God in an individual that cannot be thwarted and that leads that person to faith in Christ. It is also described as effective calling and irresistible grace.