

A Brief Overview of Theological Definitions to Equip the Body of Christ

Hypostatic Union: Jesus is one-hundred percent man and one-hundred percent God at the same time. Jesus was God in the flesh, and during His incarnation, He never lost any of His deity. As a man, Jesus was able to experience everything humans feel, such as emotions, pain, and even death; however, He did not/could not sin (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22).

Arianism: This view denies the deity of Jesus. Arianism teaches Jesus was created by God and that He is not equal to the Father. This belief holds that Jesus is not God. Rather, Arianism believes Jesus is only similar to God and, therefore, not the same as God.

Kenosis: The self-emptying of Jesus as found in Philippians 2:5-11, specifically Philippians 2:7. The Kenosis passage does not mean that Jesus became any less God. He never lost any of His omnipotence, omnipresence, or omniscience. The Kenosis passage means Jesus became incarnate as a man to die for our sins (self-emptying) to redeem us from eternal separation from Him (John 3:16-17).

Impeccability/Peccability: Impeccability means it was not possible for Jesus to sin during His earthly life because He is God. Peccability is the view that Jesus could have sinned, yet He did not sin. Unorthodox scholars believe Jesus did sin. The correct view is that it is impossible for Jesus to sin because He is God and abhors sin (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22).

Redemption: Jesus died for mankind's sin in order for mankind to be reconciled to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Jesus purchased humans from their slavery to sin by His death in order for mankind to be saved (Ephesians 2:8-9). Redemption means that we have been saved from being a slave to sin and are now free in Christ (Galatians 5:1).

Propitiation: Jesus was the propitiation for our sins by turning aside God's wrath. Jesus' death on the cross acted as the appeasement of God's wrath toward us (2 Corinthians 5:21). God hates sin; therefore, only Jesus, who is sinless and is God Himself, was able to turn aside God's wrath and enable mankind to be reconciled to God.

Atonement: Jesus is the atonement for our sins, which means His death enabled mankind to be reconciled to God (substitutionary atonement). The substitutionary atonement could only be done by God, in love, by the means of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, who was sinless and God in the flesh (1 Peter 2:24).

Regeneration: Being born again by placing faith in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (John 3:4-7). Regeneration can only be done by God as man cannot regenerate himself. After an individual places faith in Jesus, the individual is regenerated and the Holy Spirit permanently indwells the believer.

Imputation: Jesus' righteousness is imputed (credited) onto a person after they have placed faith in Jesus. After Jesus' righteousness is imputed on the believer, they are seen as righteous before God's eyes. When an individual places faith in Christ, their sin has been imputed on Christ, and Jesus' righteousness is imputed onto them (Philippians 3:9).

Substitution: Jesus' death on the cross acted as a substitution for our sins (penal substitution). Jesus was the substitute for our sins because He died for our sins though He never committed a single sin. Jesus' substitutionary death does not mean all people will be saved, rather, it means that all people who intentionally place faith in Him will be saved (Romans 10:9-11).

Justification: To be declared righteous before God. Justification does not mean a person is actually righteous. Rather, it simply means the person is declared to be righteous because they have taken Jesus as their Savior (Romans 5:1; 1 Corinthians 6:11). Only God can impart justification by a person placing faith in Jesus.

Sanctification: Positional sanctification causes the person to be set apart and become part of God's family. Present experimental sanctification entails the believer will continue to be set apart and try to live a holy life. Ultimate sanctification will not occur until the believer is in heaven for all eternity. Then, the believer will be set apart as holy to God.

Adoption: When an individual places faith in Jesus, the individual is adopted into God's family (1 John 3:1). This entails that the new believer receives the full rights of a real child in a family. In this way, believers are given all of the privileges and rights of being in the family of God.

Unconditional Election: God divinely chose believers to become the elect without any conditions or basis of merit. God chose His children not based on what we would do, but based on His grace (Ephesians 1:3-6). This teaching of predestination is biblically accurate as unconditional election verifies that we can never be good enough for Him to choose us.

Eternal Security: This refers to the eternal security of the believer. Once a person is saved, it is impossible to lose salvation (John 10:27-28). Once a person is saved, they will want to do things that are glorifying to God and follow the teachings of the Bible.

Spirit Indwelling: When a person places faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit immediately indwells the believer (Romans 8:9). In the Old Testament, indwelling of the Holy Spirit was not permanent; however, for Church Age believers, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is permanent. The Holy Spirit guides, convicts, and instructs believers (John 16:8-11).

Spirit Baptism: This occurs at the moment of salvation and cannot be repeated. All believers undergo Spirit baptism, and it is not the same as the filling of the Spirit nor the indwelling of the Spirit. By having Spirit baptism, it connects and identifies the new believer with Christ.

Congregational Church Government: The members of the church are the ones who are responsible for the government of the church; however, the head of the church is Christ (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22). Congregational church government views each member of the church as being equal to make decisions, yet the congregation does not make every single decision.

Elder Rule Church Government: All authority is given to the elders and all decisions are made by the elders. Elders are responsible for shepherding the church, teaching others, and resolving any problems within the congregation (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

Water Baptism (significance): Water baptism signifies a person has placed faith in Jesus and that they want to live for Him. Water baptism cannot save a person and is not required for salvation. However, water baptism is important because it symbolizes the new believer has identified with Christ and is devoted to Him.

The Lord's Supper (purpose): The Lord's Supper is a memorial dedication done by the church to remember what Christ did for us (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). This event has the purpose of redirecting our minds back to Jesus and how we need to be thankful for His death on the cross to save us.

Premillennialism: Jesus' second coming will occur before the Millennium. The Millennium will be a literal one-thousand year reign of Christ on the earth. Premillennialism is biblically correct as it understands the proper chronological order of eschatology and upholds the distinction between the Church and Israel. Moreover, premillennialism teaches that all unfulfilled prophecies will be fulfilled literally in the future.

Postmillennialism: Teaches Jesus' second coming will occur after the Millennium. Adherents of this view believe mankind will bring about the utopian age by spreading the gospel to everyone on earth. They believe things will keep getting better, and once everyone has heard the gospel, Jesus' second coming will occur.

Amillennialism: The view that there is not a literal one-thousand year reign of Christ. This approach believes the Millennium reign of Christ is already occurring in the heart of the believer in the present day. Amillennialists believe all prophecies that have not been fulfilled will only be fulfilled spiritually or allegorically, such as all prophecies in the Book of Revelation.

Intermediate State: The state of the believer right after they die and before they are resurrected. The intermediate state consists of the time between the death of the believer until they are resurrected into their glorified bodies. The Bible teaches that a person's soul does not simply cease to exist when they die. Rather, believers are taken to be with Christ at the time of death and unbelievers go to hell after death (Hebrews 9:27).

Rapture: The Church (all believers) will be divinely taken up to be with Christ in the air prior to the seven-year tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The rapture is a signless event and could occur at any moment. Only believers will be taken up in the rapture as unbelievers will be left on the earth to undergo the seven-year tribulation.

Tribulation: The seven-year tribulation is a future event to call God's people to accept Him as their Lord, with a focus on the Jews, which will begin once the antichrist makes a covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27). The first half of the tribulation will be terrible; however, after the antichrist breaks the covenant with Israel at the three and a half year mark, the circumstances will become even worse.

Millennium: The literal one-thousand year reign of Christ on the physical earth. This will occur straight after the tribulation and will come before the Eternal State. Satan will be bound during this time and Christ will rule during the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-3).

Eternal State: This will occur after the Millennium reign of Christ. Heaven and earth will be made new by God for the Eternal State (21). This is also known as the New Heaven and New Earth. God will make everything right, the way He intended it to be before the Fall of Man. Only believers will be in the Eternal State, and all believers will have their glorified bodies.

Judgment Seat of Christ: Also known as the Bema Seat of Christ. This is a judgment only for believers (2 Corinthians 5:10). This is not a judgment of salvation, rather, it is a judgment of rewards. After believers receive their rewards, they will take all rewards and lay them at Jesus' feet.

Great White Throne Judgment: This will take place after the Millennium and only unbelievers will undergo this judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). Participants of this judgment will be judged based on their works and their rejection of Christ. Unbelievers will be thrown into the lake of fire with Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet after the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 21:8).

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