

# THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES

## The Eternal God

There is a single and simple spiritual being we call God who is eternal, all-sufficient in himself, incomprehensible, invisible, unchangeable, infinite, almighty, free, completely wise, just, good, holy, and the overflowing source of all good. God works all things in accordance with his own counsel and immutable will, for his own glory, and remains most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. God rewards those that diligently seek him, is just in his judgments, and hates all sin. We know God first by his creation, preservation, and government of the universe that makes his eternal power and divinity clear. Secondly, God makes himself known to us more openly by his holy and divine Word for his glory and our salvation by the power and work of the Holy Spirit.

## The Trinity

In the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father has always been and is neither begotten nor proceeding, the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son.

## Our Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the only Son of God incarnate, divine, eternally begotten, fully God, fully man, and the Messiah promised from the earliest of redemptive history—the yes and amen of all of God's promises. Because Jesus Christ was obedient even to the point of death on a cross, God has also highly exalted him with the name above all names and he exists as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. After three days in the grave, Jesus rose from the dead, ascended to Heaven, is now seated at the right hand of the Father and rules over all creation. All mankind must repent and submit to his lordship in every sphere of human life and activity as his Kingdom has no end. Our Lord's Kingdom rule and will is the primary focus of the good news of the Gospel that we proclaim, pray for, and live. Jesus Christ is the ultimate prophet, priest, and king and mediates salvation through his work of sacrifice and continued obedience to the

Father to all who trust in him. Consequently, this work enables believers to share in prophetic, priestly, and royal duties in fulfilling the calling of their lives through the work of the Holy Spirit to see the world transformed in accordance with his will and for his glory.

## The Work and Power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son and is neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but only proceeding from the two of them. He is the third person of the Trinity, of one and the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, and true and eternal God. The Holy Spirit regenerates our hearts, provides us with the power and grace to live for Jesus Christ at the direction of the Father, and graces us with his presence and comfort in our daily lives. The Holy Spirit guides and governs our work and we must be personally filled and energized by Him.

## The Word of God, the Scriptures

The Word of God called the Scriptures are holy, divine, inerrant and infallible in their original languages, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and given to us for our salvation. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments comprise the Word of God we call the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the ultimate authority in any religious controversy. The Scriptures remain the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for God's own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life is either explicitly available to us in Scripture directly or by good and necessary consequence. The infallible rule of Scripture is Scripture itself and the clearer passages explain the more difficult ones.

## Salvation by Faith Alone

Salvation is freely and graciously available to all men who repent of their sins, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and commit to live for Him in every facet of their lives. The penalty and price for sin was paid by Jesus Christ once for all on the Cross and salvation is available to all mankind by the grace of God and through faith in the person of Jesus Christ. True faith results in a changed life of obedience to God and His moral law by the power and work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the

believer. Though we often fail and continue to mature in the faith, believers in Jesus Christ are clothed by His righteousness and will persevere in their salvation until the day that we see Him as He is in glory.

## Opposing Heresy

Heresies and false doctrine in word and deed have afflicted the world since people began to call upon the name of the Lord and live for him. Such heresies must be opposed and especially those that are relevant and active in today's world. Gnosticism, Montanism, Anti-nomianism, etc, as well as Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, its view of man, the surrounding culture, and the secularization of the church have to be consistently opposed.