

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Revelation and Scripture.

Session 3, Knowing God and the Biblical Story

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Revelation and Holy Scripture. This is session 3, Knowing God and the Biblical Story and Knowing God and our Theology.

We continue our lectures on the doctrines of Revelation and the Word of God and, after, well, still this part of the biblical introduction. We did a historical introduction with the help of Peter Jensen and are now doing a biblical introduction with the help of Christopher Morgan's Christian Theology, Knowing God and the Biblical Story. We want to run thinking about the knowledge of God through the biblical episodes, if you will, of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation.

Creation. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, Genesis 1.1. Already in existence before matter, space, or time, the eternal, self-existent God creates the universe and all that exists. Bruce Waltke introduces Genesis 1:1 to 2:3, quoting that the creation account is a highly sophisticated presentation designed to emphasize the sublimity, power, majesty, and wisdom of the Creator God and to lay the foundation for the worldview of the covenant community.

That's from Waltke's Genesis, a commentary. As the chief character in Genesis 1, God creates, says, sees, separates, names, makes, appoints, blesses, finishes, makes holy, and rests. God is not the sky, sun, moon, water, trees, animals, or anything else created.

God creates them, and they are subject to him. The creation is neither God nor a part of God. He is absolute and has an independent existence, whereas creation has derived existence from him and continually depends on him as its sustainer.

See Acts 17:25 through 28. The Creator who is above and beyond everything, transcendent, sovereign, and has amazing authority and power. Like a king, he affects his will by his very word, bringing things into being out of nothing.

Genesis 1:3, Hebrews 11:3. He further displays his authority over all creation by calling and naming the elements, Genesis 1:5. The transcendent sovereign creator is also personal. On each day of creation, God is personally involved in every detail, crafting his world in a way that pleases him and benefits his creatures. In dramatic fashion, on the sixth day, he personally creates man in his own image, breathing life into him.

The in community and have dominion over creation. As D.A. Carson reminds us, quote, we are accorded an astounding dignity, and there is implanted within us a

profound capacity for knowing God intimately, close quote. Carson, *The Gagging of God*, subtitle *Christianity Confronts Postmodernism*.

By making us in his image, God distinguishes us from the rest of creation and establishes that he is distinct from us. We are not God's, but creatures made in the creator's image. God is also good, which is reflected in the goodness of his creation and reinforced in the steady refrain, "and God saw that it was a good."

Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25. On the sixth day, creation is even described as very good, verse 31. The inherent goodness of creation leaves no room for a fundamental dualism between spirit and matter, such that spirit is good and matter is bad.

Indeed, material creation reflects God's goodness, which is also evident in his generous provision of light, land, vegetation, animals, and creeping, crawling things. These are God's blessings for humanity's benefit, as are the ability to relate to God, fertility to procreate, and authority to use the earth's abundant provisions for humanity's good. Although creation reaches its summit in God's creation of man in his image, Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 culminates in the rest of God.

By the seventh day, God finishes his creative work, rests, blesses, and sanctifies the day as holy as a Sabbath to be kept. In doing so, God displays his joy and satisfaction in his creation and his celebration of completion, and he commemorates this special event. God provides the Garden of Eden as a place in which man and woman may live and work.

God, quote, forms the man, plants the garden, transports man there, sets up the terms of a relationship with him, and searches for a helper for him, which culminates in the woman. John C. Collins, *Genesis 1 through 4* is the source of that quotation. Man is formed from the dust of the ground but is more than dust.

His life comes directly from the very breath of God, Genesis 2, 7. In planting the garden and moving man there, the Creator and Covenant Lord provides a delightful and sacred space in which humans can enjoy a harmonious relationship with him, with each other, the animals, and the land. Waltke observes, "that the Garden of Eden is a temple garden, represented later in the Tabernacle." Waltke, *Genesis* page 85.

As such, the garden highlights God's presence with humans. So, God creates Adam and Eve in his image, as good and with wonderful privileges and significant responsibilities in the Garden of Eden. They experience an unhindered relationship with God, intimate enjoyment of each other, and delegated authority over creation.

God establishes the terms for living in his presence and graciously puts forward only one prohibition: they must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The

fall is our next subcategory. Sadly, Adam and Eve do not obey God's command but fall, Genesis 3. This account begins with a tempter who calls into question God's truthfulness, sovereignty, and goodness.

The tempter is cunning and deflects the woman's attention from the covenantal relationship God has established. In verses six through eight, the central scene in the story of the fall reaches its climax. The fatal sequence is described rapidly in 3.6. She saw, she took, she ate, and she gave, culminating in he ate.

Wenham observes at the midpoint of verses six through eight, and he eats, employs the key verb in the narrative, eat, and is placed between the woman's inflated expectation of eating. The fruit is good to eat, is a delight to the eyes, and gives insight into its actual effects. The man's and woman's eyes are opened. They know they are nude, and they hide among the trees.

Gordon Wenham, Genesis 1 to 15, word biblical commentary. I want to just say a little bit more. Wenham counts the words, and he ate is central, and it distinguishes the woman's inflated expectations in eating from the actual effects, which are devastating.

The contrast is striking. The forbidden fruit does not deliver what the tempter has promised but brings dark new realities, warned about by the good and truthful covenant Lord. This initial act of human rebellion brings divine justice.

“They sin by eating, and so would suffer to eat. She led her husband to sin, and so would be mastered by him. They brought pain into the world by their disobedience, and so would have painful toil in their respective lives.” Alan Ross, Creation and Blessing, page 148, an insightful study.

The consequences of their sin are fitting and devastating. The couple immediately feels shame, realizing they are naked, 3:7.

They sense their estrangement from God, even foolishly trying to hide from him, verses 8 to 10. They're afraid of God and how he might respond, verses 9 and 10. Their alienation from each other also emerges as the woman blames the serpent, while the man blames the woman, and by intimation, even God verses 10 to 13.

Pain and sorrow also ensue. The woman experiences greater pain in childbirth. The man toils in trying to grow food in a land with pests and weeds, and both discover dissonance in their relationship, verses 15 to 19.

Even worse, the couple is banished from Eden and from God's glorious presence, verses 22 to 24. How they wished they had listened to God's warning. If you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will certainly die, 2:17.

Upon eating the forbidden fruit, they do not immediately fall over and die from something like cardiac arrest, but they do die. They die spiritually, and their bodies also begin to experience the gradual decay that leads ultimately to their physical deaths, 3:19. Most devastating is that these consequences do not only befall Adam and Eve but extend to their descendants as well.

Sin enters the picture and brings disruption and alienation in each human relationship with God, oneself, one another, and creation. The immediate context and storyline of Genesis 4:11 underline this gloomy new reality. In 4-7, God warns Cain that sin is crouching at the door and that its desire is for him, but he must rule over it.

Sadly, Cain refuses to heed the advice and kills his brother Abel. Cain is consequently cursed by God, alienated from the ground, and banished from God's presence. Genesis 5 reminds us that God creates humans in His image and blesses them.

The chapter offers hope through the mention of Enoch and Noah but soberly underlines the domain of death with the refrain, Then he died eight times. Genesis 6 clarifies the extension and intensification of sin, which is portrayed as massive, pervasive, continual, and characteristic. God graciously establishes a covenant with Noah and appropriately judges humanity with the flood.

Genesis 6:9. After the flood, God reemphasizes the creational blessing and mandate and offers a covenant promise. Genesis then recounts the history of the Tower of Babel, at which God judges the proud, self-seeking humans who attempt to make a name for themselves and multiply their influence rather than serving as God's image-bearers and advancing His name.

Genesis 11:9. Creation. Fall.

Now, redemption in the biblical story and the knowledge of God. Thankfully, God does not completely eradicate humanity for such cosmic treason but graciously begins a restoration project instead. He starts the process of restoring humanity in the cosmos, particularly restoring humans as full image-bearers so that we can participate in and reflect the glory, identity, and mission that we have longed for the whole time.

God calls Abraham from a family of idol-worshippers and enters into a covenant with him, promising to be God to him and his descendants. Genesis 12:1-3.

17:7. God promises to give Abraham a land to make him into a great nation and through him to bless all peoples. 12:3.

From Abraham came Isaac and later Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel and from whom God brings 12 tribes of His people. The rest of the Old Testament concerns God's dealings with the 12 tribes of Israel. Through Moses, great plagues, and a dramatic exodus, God calls Israel out of Egyptian bondage to be His people.

He gives them the Ten Commandments, promises to be their God, and claims them as His people. He promises to be with them and gives them the Promised Land, which they occupy under Joshua's leadership after defeating the Canaanites. After Joshua dies, judges such as Gideon, Deborah, and Samson become leaders of the people.

History repeats itself as generation after generation experiences peace, then rebels, then receives God's judgment, then cries out to God, and then experiences peace once again. God gives His people a human king, first Saul, then David, then Solomon. Under David, a man after God's own heart, the kingdom grows significantly.

Jerusalem becomes the capital, and God renews His covenant promise with His people. God promises to make David's descendants into a dynasty and to establish the throne of one of them forever. God uses David's son Solomon to build a temple where God's covenant presence is manifest.

Solomon does much right but also disobeys God in major ways, and this leads to the kingdom splitting into northern and southern kingdoms, Israel and Judah, respectively. God sends many prophets to call the people to covenant faithfulness. They warn His people of the judgments that will come if they do not repent of their sins and turn to the Lord.

Nevertheless, the people repeatedly rebel against Him and His prophets. In response, He sends the northern kingdom of ten tribes into captivity in Assyria in 722 BC and the southern kingdom of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, into captivity in Babylon in 586 BC. Through the prophets, God also promises to send a deliverer, Isaiah 9:6 and 7, Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12.

God promises to restore His people to their land from Babylonian captivity after 70 years, Jeremiah 25:11, and 12. And He brings this about under Ezra and Nehemiah. The people rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and built a second temple, yet the Old Testament ends with God's people continuing to turn away from Him, Malachi.

After 400 years, God sends His Son as the promised Messiah, suffering servant, King of Israel, and Savior of the world. The Son of God is conceived of a virgin and becomes fully human while remaining fully divine. In time, Jesus is baptized, successfully defeats Satan's temptation in the wilderness, and is declared to be the Messiah.

Jesus chooses and invests in 12 disciples as new leaders of His Messianic community. He teaches about the kingdom of God, that God's role has come in Jesus the Messiah. Jesus displays this by casting out demons, performing miracles, and preaching the good news to the poor.

Jesus completely follows the will and plan of God, remaining without sin. He is loved by many but is opposed by Jewish, religious, and political leaders. Not only does He not fit their conception of Messiah, He also undercuts their pride, beliefs, and traditions.

The opposition increases as the Sanhedrin condemns Jesus in an illegal trial. Since the nation was occupied by the Roman Empire, the leaders must send Jesus to their staunch enemy, Pontius Pilate, who found Jesus innocent. Under pressure from the Jewish leaders and crowds, however, Pilate crucifies Jesus anyway.

Jesus, the innocent one, the righteous one, dies on the cross. From a human vantage point, Jesus dies as a victim in this despicable, despicably evil act. Yet the biblical story highlights that this death is part of God's eternal plan to save sinners.

Jesus' mission is to seek and save the lost, and He does not fail to do so. Jesus saves sinners as their substitute, victor, sacrifice, second Adam, redeemer, and peacemaker. Incredibly, Jesus not only bears the world on the cross but also is raised from the dead three days later in a variety of places, situations, and group settings.

More than 500 people witness the resurrected Jesus. Through His resurrection, He confirms His identity, defeats sin and death, gives new life to His people, and provides a foretaste of His people's future resurrection. Jesus directs His disciples to take the gospel to all nations to fulfill God's promise to Abraham to bless all peoples through Him.

His disciples are to make disciples of others who will then make disciples of still others. On the day of Pentecost, Jesus sends a spirit which forms the church as the New Testament people of God. The spirit empowers the church to bear witness to Christ among the nations.

The early church devotes itself to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer, Acts 2:42. The early church is involved in evangelism, verses 38 to 41, sharing the gospel with those who do not know Christ as the means of salvation. The church is committed to discipleship, instructing believers to follow Jesus as a way of life. The church is devoted to fellowship, verses 42 to 47, sharing life together, knowing one another, and loving one another.

The church is also involved in ministry, verses 42 to 46, praying for one another, giving to one another, and meeting each other's needs. The church is active in

worship, verse 46, praising God, publicly meeting together, and privately teaching, praying, giving, and partaking of food together. The church grows and faces persecution, but the gospel keeps spreading.

Some Jews and many Gentiles trust Christ. Churches are planted, and the cycle continues. Along the way, the churches teach sound doctrine, correct error, and call believers to live in love, unity, holiness, and truth.

Apostles such as Paul and Peter also teach about salvation. God the Father plans salvation, the Son accomplishes it, and the Spirit applies it to all who believe in Christ. God chooses, calls, and gives new life in Christ to believers.

God forgives, declares righteous, and adopts into His family all who have faith in Christ. God makes His people holy in Christ and will finally glorify all who know Him. God saves out of His generous love and for His glory.

The knowledge of God, according to the biblical story, in creation, fall, redemption, and now consummation. Jesus will finish what He has started. He will return to reign as King, bringing justice, peace, delight, and victory.

The kingdom is God's reign over His people through King Jesus. The kingdom is both a present reality and a future promise tied to Christ's second coming. Jesus brings it in phases.

It is inaugurated in His public ministry as He teaches, performs miracles, and casts out demons, Matthew 12:28, Matthew 13:1 through 50. When Jesus ascends to God's right hand, the place of greatest power, the kingdom expands, Ephesians 1:20, and 21, and thousands enter it through the apostles' preaching, Acts 2:41, 47. The fullness of the kingdom awaits Christ's return when He will sit on His glorious throne, Matthew 25:31.

Christ will judge the world, inviting believers into the final stage of the kingdom, while banishing unbelievers to hell, Matthew 25:34 and 41. The classic passage depicting the consummation and these related truths is Revelation 20 to 22. Just as Genesis 1 and 2 reveal that the biblical story begins with God's creation of the heavens and the earth, Revelation 20 to 22 shows it ends with God's creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

The story begins with the goodness of God's creation and ends with the goodness of the new creation. The story begins with God's dwelling with His people in a garden temple and ends with God dwelling with His covenant people in heaven, a new earth, city, garden, and temple. Heaven comes down to earth.

Heaven and earth are one. Once and for all, God's victory is consummated. God's judgment is final.

Sin is vanquished. Justice prevails. Holiness dominates.

God's glory is unobstructed, and the kingdom is realized. God's eternal plan of cosmic reconciliation in Christ is actualized, and God is all in all in the language of 1 Corinthians 15. As a part of His victory, God cast the devil and his demons into the lake of fire where they are not consumed but, quote, tormented day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20:10, Satan and the demons are not restored but go to hell to receive their due punishment, and they remain there to suffer forever. Then God judges everyone: those whom the world deems important, those whom the world never notices, and everyone in between, quote, everyone whose name is not found written in the Book of Life is thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20 and verse 15.

God does not send only the ruthless Roman emperors to hell, which we might expect. He consigns to hell all who are not the people of Jesus. See Daniel 12, 1, Revelation 14:10 and 11, Revelation 21:8 and 21:27.

Magnificently, the new heavens and new earth arrive, and God dwells with His covenant people. Revelation 21:3 and 7. It brings comfort to them: no more pain, death, et cetera.

Verse 4. Makes all things new, verse 5. And proclaims, it is done, verse 6. Heaven is then depicted as a perfect temple, glorious, multinational, and holy. Revelation 21, verses 9 to 27. The people of God rightly bear God's image, serving Him, reigning with Him, encountering Him directly, and worshiping Him.

22:1 to 5. God receives the worship He is due, and humans are blessed beyond description, finally living to the fullest the realities of being created in God's image. For a more thorough overview of the biblical story, framed with the doctrine of God, see D.A. Carson, *The God who is there, finding your place in God's story. Knowing God, the biblical story, and our theology.*

The biblical story shapes and frames our topics in theology. Creation, fall, redemption, and consummation frame the order and topics of theology, which are essentially extensions of those themes. God, creation, humanity, sin, Jesus and His saving work, the Holy Spirit's application of Christ's work to our salvation, and the church and the future.

The biblical story also shapes and frames the content of our theology. Thus, we strive to interpret the Bible and develop our theology in accordance with and under the

guidance of the biblical story and worldview. We want to read scripture as humble listeners, as we said before, under God and thus under His word.

Therefore, we pursue theology in such a manner. It is helpful to see how biblical truths from the biblical story foster and clarify our approach to theology. We'll look broadly at the contours of theology, of the biblical story, and how each guides us in pursuing theology.

Here are our headings. God, His revelation, and our theology. Creation and our theology.

Humanity and our theology. Sin and the same. Christ and our theology.

Salvation and the same. The Holy Spirit in our theology. The church in our theology.

And the future of our theology. God, His revelation, and our theology. The nature of God is the foundation of all truth and provides a compass for our theology.

God's infinity underlines the fact that He alone possesses full knowledge, past, present, and future. We are limited. He is not.

God's graciousness initiates our theology, for all knowledge of God flows from His generous self-revelation. We know nothing about God apart from His grace, but we can and do know Him by His grace. God's truthfulness shows that His self-disclosure communicates truth and does so coherently.

God's personal nature reminds us that knowledge of Him is also relational, pointing us to a covenant relationship with Him. God's holiness clarifies that theology is holistic, leading us to fear the Lord and walk in holiness. God's love clarifies that Christian theology must not be self-absorbed but directed outwardly toward God and the good of others.

God's glory underlines that all true knowledge of God is from God, through God, and to God. Revelation 11:33 through 36. God's self-revelation reflects Him and also guides our theology.

God's self-revelation is gracious. He freely initiates it and blesses us through it. It is truthful, representing faithfully who God is, what He does, and how He relates to us.

It is a unity. Although transmitted in a variety of forms, God's communication about Himself, humanity, and life coheres. It is personal, communicating God and His ways to us.

It is propositional, making statements or assertions, disclosing truth about God, humanity, life, history, and salvation. Since we are recipients of God's self-revelation, it is analogical, as He uses human contexts, cultures, and languages to communicate. Analogical means it is not exactly like God's knowledge of Himself in every way, and it is not so unlike God's knowledge of Himself, in some ways, that we can't know Him at all.

It is analogical, like the knowledge God has of Himself in certain revealed ways. God's revelation of Himself is partial since the infinite God can reveal only limited information to us finite humans. It is historical, as God communicates with us in space and time, uniquely among the world's religions.

It is progressive within scripture, as it relates to multiple generations, and gradually expands its self-disclosure over time. As such, theology is possible only through divine initiative. Rest on the content and unity of revealed truth, has objective and subjective components, requires insight into human culture, cannot be exhaustive, is linked to all of life, and its study is a perennial process.

Further, God's gracious self-disclosure is given in a variety of ways and in a variety of contexts, yet with striking unity. God reveals Himself to all people at all times and all places through creation, which witnesses to Him as its Creator and Lord, Psalm 19, 1-6, Romans 1:18-32. It also does so by creating humans in His image.

The moral law is written on the human heart, Romans 2:12-16. Our theology, therefore, engages a variety of intellectual, cultural, and vocational worlds. General revelation and common grace remind us that even explicitly non-Christian work and culture will inevitably include some witness to God's truth.

Theology can "recognize, and celebrate the glimpses of justice, wisdom, truth, and beauty we find around us in all aspects of life. Ultimately, a grasp of the gospel and biblical teaching on cultural engagement should lead Christians to be the most appreciative of the hands of God behind the work of our colleagues and neighbors." Timothy Keller and Katherine Leary Alsdorf.

Every good encounter connects your work to God's work. God also reveals Himself to particular people at particular times and places, gradually and more clearly communicating Himself and His covenant relations. He displays Himself through historical actions, for example, the Exodus, divine speech, for example, the Ten Commandments, and His covenant people, whose holiness, love, and justice are to reflect His own character, Exodus 19:5, and 6, Revelation 19, Leviticus 19, sorry, 1 to 18.

God reveals Himself most fully in Jesus and His incarnation, sinless life, teaching, proclamation of His kingdom, miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, reign,

and promised return, John 1:1 to 18, Hebrews 1:1 to 4. God reveals Himself also through the inspired prophets, apostles, and holy scripture, which accurately records and interprets God's self-revelation. Moreover, the scriptures are called God's word and are themselves the most accessible form of God's self-revelation. Psalm 19: 7 to 14, Matthew 5:17 to 20, John 10:35, 2 Timothy 3:15 to 4:5, 1 Peter 1:22 to 25.

Because of this, theology begins with the fear of the Lord, Proverbs 1:1 to 7. It requires us to see ourselves as creatures seeking to know the Creator and His world through dependence on His self-revelation, communicated most clearly in the truthful and authoritative scriptures—creation in our theology. God's creation also functions as a component for our theology.

The infinite, self-existent, personal, sovereign, holy, and good Lord spoke powerfully and created a good cosmos, evidenced by the steady refrain, as we have seen, and God saw that it was good. Goodness was highlighted on the sixth day of creation when God said it was very good. Genesis 1:31.

God's generous provisions of light, land, vegetation, and animals are blessings given for our benefit, as are our abilities to know God, marry, procreate, and work. Thus, the good God creates a good world for believers, good, and the good of others. Creation testifies to God and His goodness and power.

Truth, goodness, beauty, and peace abound. As a result, it's fitting that we seek to understand all of creation, all of life, in light of God's revelation. Humanity in our theology.

Who we are as humans also guides our theology. As creatures, we naturally bear all the marks of finitude. Oh, our knowledge as humans is limited, reflective of the God-of-the-creator-creature distinction.

Even more, we are created by God in His image to love Him, reflect His character, and serve His mission. As such, knowledge is not merely a nice additive to pursue, but relates to God's original and fundamental purposes for us, to love and serve God, others, and their creation. Genesis 1:26-28.

Such love and service require our knowledge of God, self, culture, and creation. Knowing God, and therefore knowing theology as part of knowing God, is thus significant for fulfilling our purpose. As we increasingly know God in these truths, we can appropriately pursue truth, goodness, beauty, and peace as noble ends in themselves, and as ways of glorifying God by knowing, reflecting, and serving Him.

Sin and our theology. Unfortunately, the reality of our sin distorts our knowledge of God, and thus our theology. Humans rebel against God, disrupting our relationship to Him, others, ourselves, and creation.

Genesis 3, Romans 5:12-21. We are now characterized both by the image of God and by sin. We appropriately long for justice, peace, and beauty, but we tend to distort these things or seek them for self-interest alone rather than for God's glory and the good of others.

Indeed, sin infects and affects our minds, affections, attitudes, will, and actions. Scripture explains this corruption in various ways, using such images as spiritual death, darkness, hardness, bondage, and blindness. Mark 7:20-23.

Romans 1:18-32. Romans 3:9-20. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.

Ephesians 2:1-3. Ephesians 4:17-19. As such, our theology is too often marked by finitude, bias, and cultural myopia and may be driven by selfishness, pride, prestige, greed, or thirst for power.

Even our Christian scholarship reflects these problems. Christ and our theology. Thankfully, Christ is greater than we are, and He sheds light on how we are to grow in theology.

Jesus is the Word, the fullest and clearest revelation of God. John 1:1-18. Hebrews 1:1-4.

Jesus is the truth and the light to the world, darkened as it is by sin. John 1:4-18. 8-12.

14:6. Jesus is the Lord, the preeminent authority who deserves and demands our allegiance and submission in all of life, including our thinking. Philippians 2:5-11.

He is also a teacher who molds us as His disciples and invests in us, teaching us about the kingdom of God and building His church and His community. Further, Jesus proclaims that true worship is in spirit and in truth, urges us to search the scriptures that testify of Him, and expects us to examine our identity, examine His identity, miracles, teachings, and works to see that He is from God. Jesus links Himself to the truth, corrects error, and sends the Holy Spirit as one who will guide us in the truth.

Jesus also defines eternal life as knowing God and praying that God would make us holy by the Word, which He characterizes as truth. Matthew 5:7. John 1:15-18.

John 14:6. And 17:3-17. In Christ, the Apostle asserts, quote, are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Colossians 2:3. As a result, all truth, and thus all theology, finds its focus and source in Christ Himself. Indeed, all of creation, including all our knowledge, teaching, and vocations, is by Christ, held together in Christ, and for Christ, Colossians 1:15-20.

Salvation in our theology. Wonderfully, our theology is not an abstract attempt to dissect or probe God. Theology is covenantal.

That is, God creates us in His image, patiently endures our rebellion, and sends His Son to save us so that we might know Him and be in a covenant relationship with Him. Theology is intensely personal because it is about God and about us in our relationship with God. The doctrine of salvation in the biblical story highlights this truth and defines Christian identity in light of it.

We are joined spiritually to Christ and are recipients of new life. We are believers in Christ and accepted as righteous in Him. We are God's children and are being transformed into holy people in the image of Christ.

We are in Christ. We have nothing to fear, nothing to prove, nothing to hide. So the task of theology enables and fosters our pursuit of our identity, our growth, and our security.

Theology offers us wisdom to walk in God's ways, according to God's word, and by God's power. The Holy Spirit in our theology. Jesus' work for us is applied to us through the Spirit, uniting us to Christ.

The Holy Spirit has inspired the scriptures and enables us to now understand it. He indwells us, empowers us, and produces fruit in us. He guides our church leaders and enables our worship.

He grants us spiritual gifts in order to bless the church through us. As a result, our theology is dependent on the Spirit for its content. He inspired the Bible.

Our theology is dependent on the Spirit for its insight. We study hard, but He enables us to interpret the word rightly. Our theology is dependent on the Spirit for its church context.

He inaugurated and indwelt the church. Our theology is dependent on the Spirit for its fruitfulness. He empowers our church teachers and catapults us and our theology into service of God and others.

In the church, in our theology, through His sinless life, substitutionary death, and bodily resurrection, Jesus redeems us as a people for Himself. As a church, we are marked by truth. We are shaped by the Apostle's teaching.

We oppose error, and we share life together as a community of His word. Through our union with Christ, we even display the goodness of God, particularly His oneness, holiness, love, and truth. Acts 2:41 to 47, Ephesians 2:4 to 10, and 4:1 to 24.

As the people of God, we worship God by yielding ourselves to Him as living, holy, and acceptable sacrifices, in part through being transformed by the renewing of our minds and the discernment of God's will. Romans 12:1 and 2, Ephesians 4:17 to 24. As such, our theology is not merely our own individualistic endeavor, but it is integrated into the whole of life and pursued in the community as the people of God under the authoritative word of God.

It requires things of us, too: calling for humanity, faith, dependence on grace, respect for others, diligence, patience, carefulness, and persistence. As Christians, we need each other and learn theology together in community under the word as we share life together. Lastly, the future in our theology.

God's ultimate purposes for history also guide our approach to theology. Jesus' return, triumph, and judgment declare His Lordship, vindicate us as His people, and permanently establish cosmic justice and peace. 2 Thessalonians 1:5 to 10, Revelation 20:10 to 15.

All falsehood will be overthrown, and all who practice falsehood will be banished into an eternal hell. Revelation 20 through 22. The last three chapters of the Bible each have their focus on new heavens and new earth, but each of the Bible's last three chapters contains references to hell.

The new heaven and the new earth will be characterized by God's personal presence with His people. And because we have new life in Christ, the new earth will be characterized by His glory and ours, His holiness and ours, His love and ours, His goodness and ours. I speak reverently.

So, history is linear, purposeful, eschatological for our good, and preeminently for God's glory. Romans 8, 18 to 39, Ephesians 1:3 to 14. As such, theology is a worthy process in which we seek to understand God and His goodness, love, justice, and peace in order to serve one another and glorify God.

Even more, our theological pursuit accepts that we know, in part, grow in the knowledge of God over time and long for the day when faith shall be sight. 1 Corinthians 13:9 through 12. As Christians, we rightly value theology.

It glorifies God and naturally grows out of the biblical story. God, His self-revelation, creation, our identity as humans created in His image, Jesus, Jesus' work, salvation, the Holy Spirit, the church, and last things all guide how we study theology. Wonderfully, each part of the biblical story and each truth in the Christian faith shapes our faith, hope, and love, indeed, every aspect of our daily lives.

In our next lecture, we'll turn our attention to knowing God and our sources in theology, which include tradition, reason, experience, and, supremely, Holy Scripture.

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Revelation and Holy Scripture. This is session 3, Knowing God and the Biblical Story and Knowing God and our Theology.