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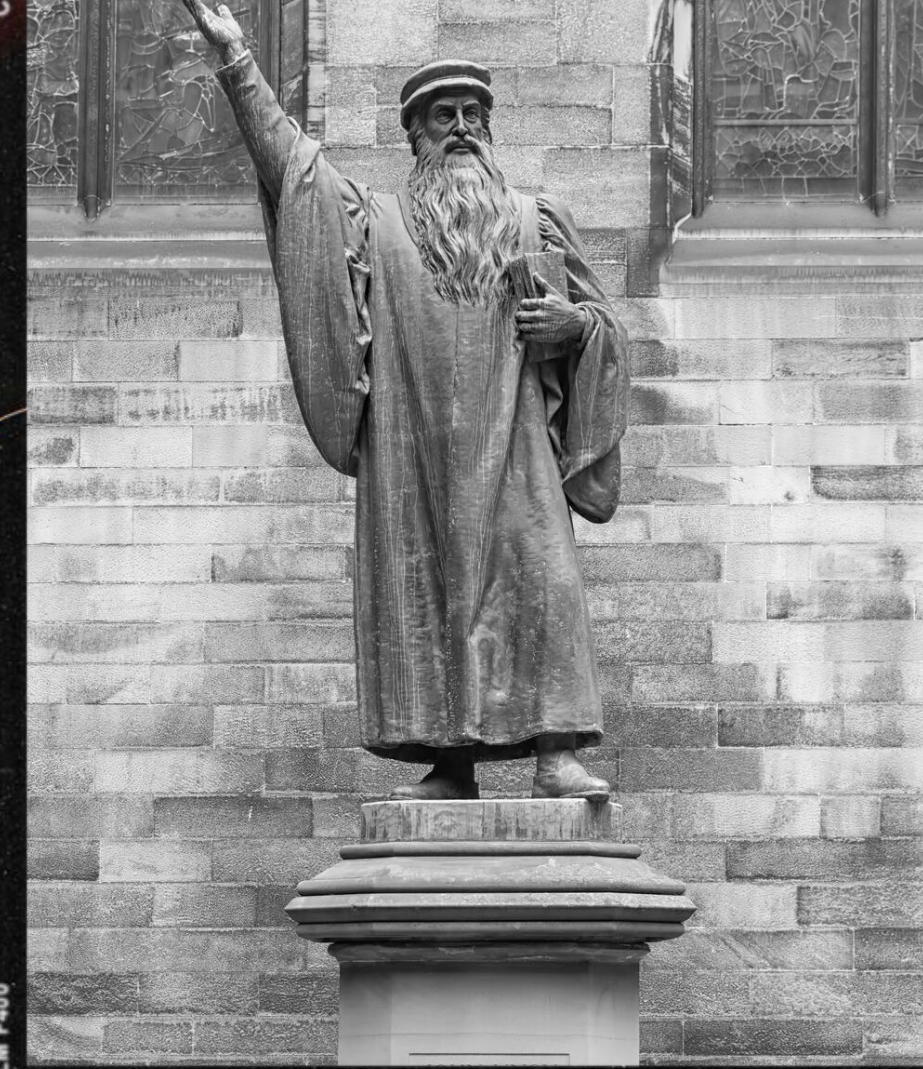
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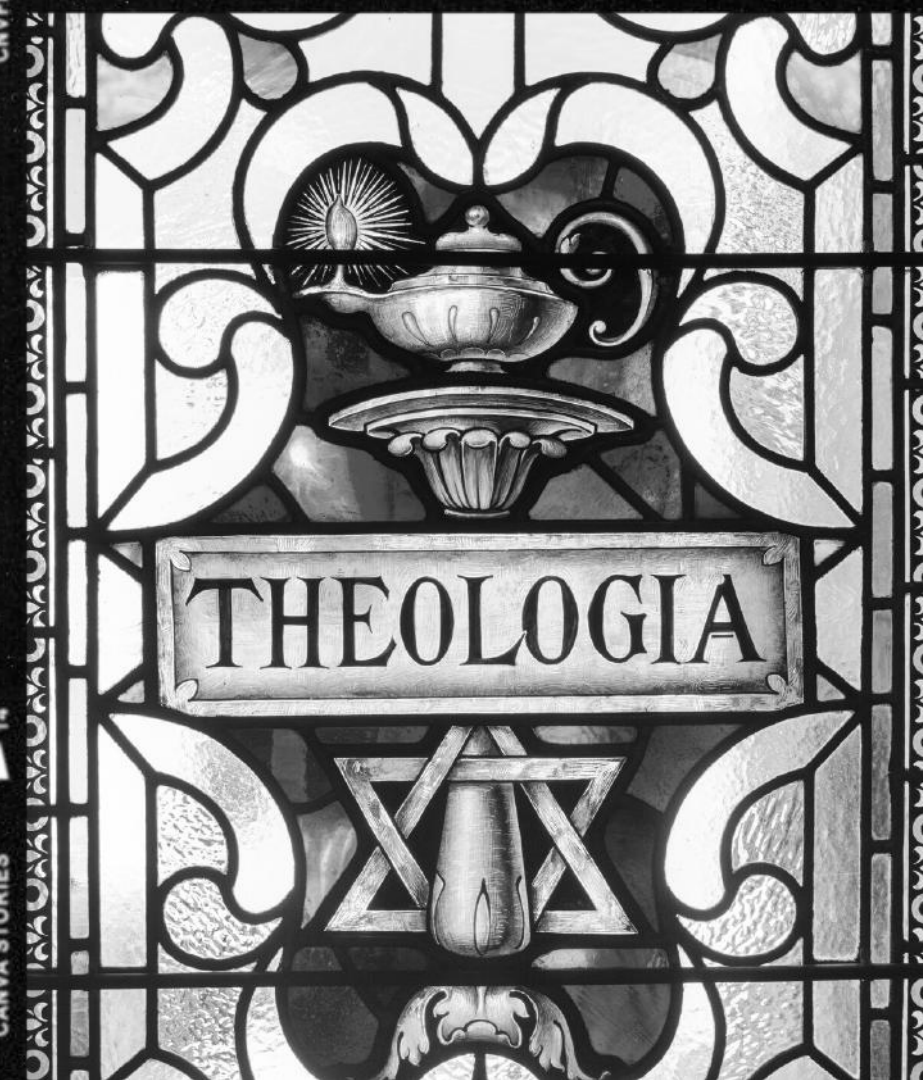
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# BIBLICAL DOCTRINE AND DISCERNMENT

How to Discern and Respond



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CANVA STORIES 14

Steadfast Believers and the Kingdom of God Grows

## Results of Sound Doctrine

*11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. -Ephesians 4:11-16*

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# Doctrinal Analysis



## Gospel

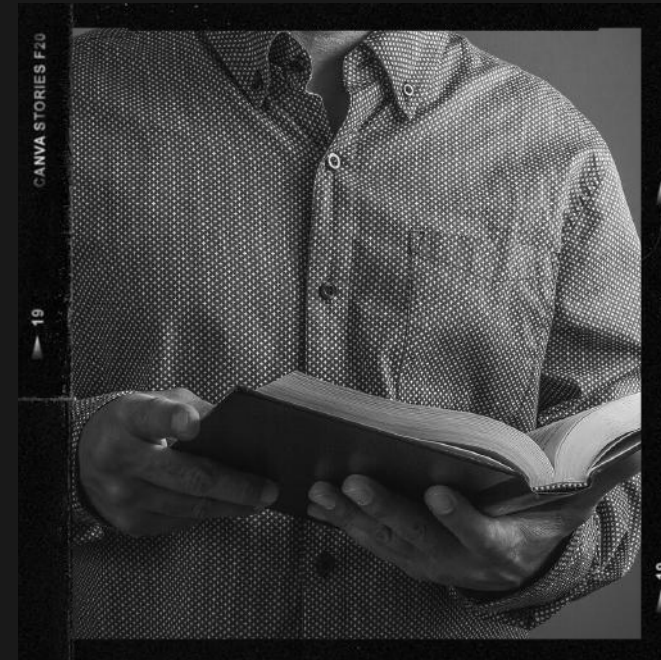
Jesus is fully God and fully man. He lived a perfect life, died to pay our sin debt, and rose from the dead to give us new life. Believing in His atoning death and resurrection and affirming His Lordship is essential for salvation (Romans 10:9-10).



## Essentials (Orthodoxy)

Doctrines such as the sinfulness of man, the Trinity, the Authority of Scripture, and other doctrines that are essential to the gospel cannot be denied if one is to remain a Christian.

Other doctrines may be very important if not essentials.



## Secondary (Important)

Issues like male elders, the doctrine of election, the use of spiritual gifts, and young earth theology are important because they involve theological consistency, but faithful Christians differ on them while remaining Christians.



## Non-Essential

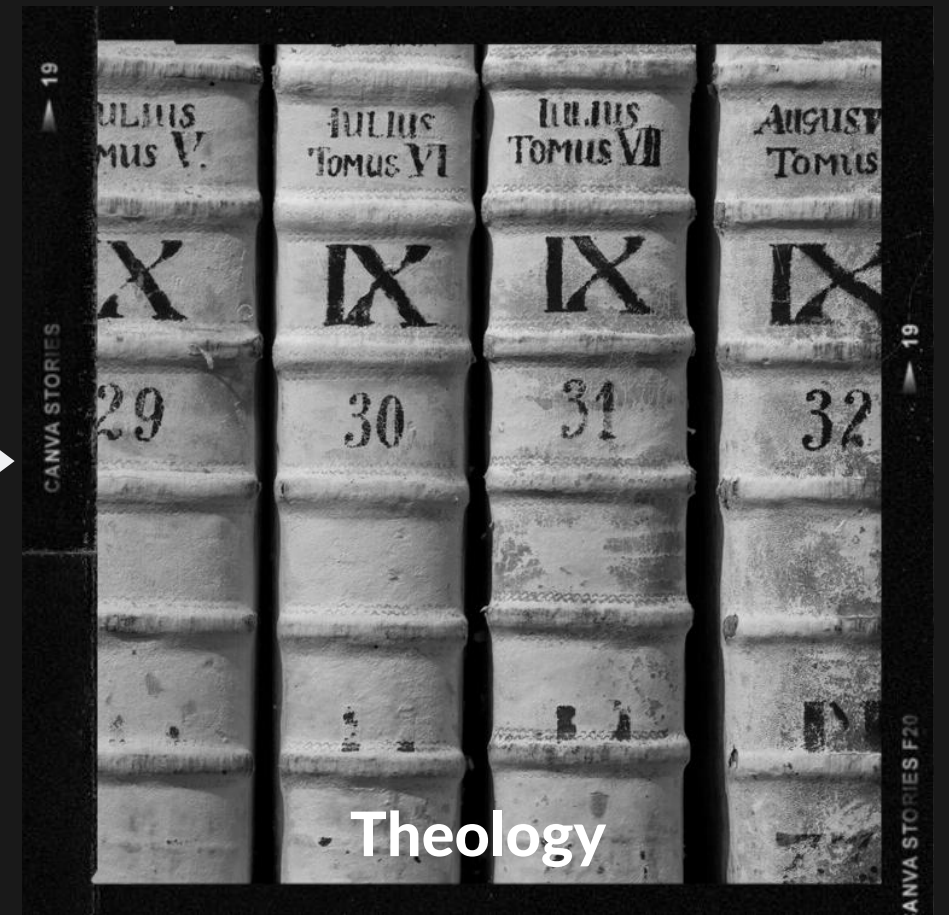
These are issues of eschatology such as views of the millennium, convictions such as the regulative principle, or preferences such as musical style that do not affect believers' ability to worship together.



**False Teaching**



**Apologetics**



**Theology**

## **False Teaching Necessitates Apologetics. Apologetics Drives Theology**

Most doctrinal statements came about because false teachers began questioning Christian beliefs. Faithful Christians responded with Scripture and logic to codify into doctrinal statements what was already believed. This is why "newer" doctrinal affirmations re-state the same beliefs in such a way as to clearly rule out new error.

# Creeds



## "Jesus is Lord" (30-33 AD)

The initial declaration that Jesus is God and Savior and is to be worshipped and obeyed.



## Apostles Creed (340 AD or earlier)

Affirms the Trinity, creation, the gospel, and the basics of eschatology.



## Other Early Creeds (30-45AD)

Creeds spread before the NT was written. They affirm Christ's deity, atoning death and resurrection, and the hope of our resurrection (Romans 10:9-10, 1 Cor. 15:1-6, etc.)



## Nicene Creed (Athanasian) (325AD)

Codified languages about the Triune nature of God, including the divinity of Christ.



## Old Roman Creed (100s AD)

The early version of the Apostles' Creed based on 2nd Century Rules of Faith involving declarations for baptism. Irenaeus includes a version in *Against Heresies* 1.9.4



## Chalcedonian Creed (451AD)

Codifies language related to the fact that Jesus is truly God and truly man, including issues related to his will and the fact that He is one Person with two natures.

# Confessions



## Augsburg (1530)

An an early collection of doctrinal statements by reformers in Germany.



## Belgic Confession (1561)

Addresses the Doctrine of God and some key doctrines related to His sovereignty and salvation.



## Articles of Religion (1552-1571)

Church of England's collection of reformation doctrines in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church.



## Canons of Dort (1619)

Reformed confession that includes the codified language of "the five points of Calvinism"



## Westminster Confession (1646)

A comprehensive confession of faith meant to unify English Christians. The confession is largely Presbyterian.



## London Baptist Confession (1677,1689)

An Adaptation of the Westminster Confession that substitutes credal baptism for paedobaptism.

# Orthodoxy

## Five Solas

1. Grace Alone (*sola gratia*) Salvation is by grace and not merit (Ephesians 2:8-9)
2. Faith Alone (*sola fide*) Salvation is by faith and not works (Ephesians 2:8-9)
3. Christ Alone (*sola Christo*) Salvation is in Christ and not in institutions or false religions (Acts 4:12).
4. Glory to God Alone (*solī Deo gloria*) God, not man, receives the glory for saving us (Romans 1:16-17)
5. Authority of Scripture Alone (*sola Scriptura*) Scripture, not institutions, is our ultimate revealed authority (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

## Five Fundamentals of the Faith

1. The Deity of Jesus Christ (John 1:1; John 20:28; Hebrews 1:8-9).
2. The Virgin Birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:27).
3. The Atonement (Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25, 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:12-14).
4. The Bodily Resurrection (Luke 24:36-46; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 15:14-15).
5. The Inerrancy Scripture (Psalms 12:6-7; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20).

## Essentials of the Faith

1. The Deity of Jesus Christ (John 1:1; John 20:28; Hebrews 1:8-9).
2. Salvation by Grace Alone (Ephesians 2:8-9)
3. Salvation in Christ Alone (Acts 4:12, John 14:6)
4. The Bodily Resurrection (Luke 24:36-46; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 15:14-15).
5. The Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4, Gal. 1:8-9)
6. Monotheism (Exodus 20:3, Is. 43:10, 1 Cor. 8:5-6)
7. The Trinity (Matthew 28:19, 1 Cor. 12:4-6)

# Minimal Orthodoxy or Semper Reformanda



## Minimal Orthodoxy

Focuses on the bare minimum beliefs to remain in the Christian faith, and affirms many people who are on the "fringe" of Christianity. Less concerned with doctrinal accuracy and obedience, more concerned with lukewarm belief. (Revelation 3:15-22)

OR



## Semper Reformanda (Always Reforming)

Always seeks to let the Word of God refine our beliefs and actions to ensure we are glorifying God and avoiding error. Always concerned with doctrinal accuracy and obedience to God. (Romans 8:28-30, 12:1-2, Titus 1:9, 2 Timothy 2:15)





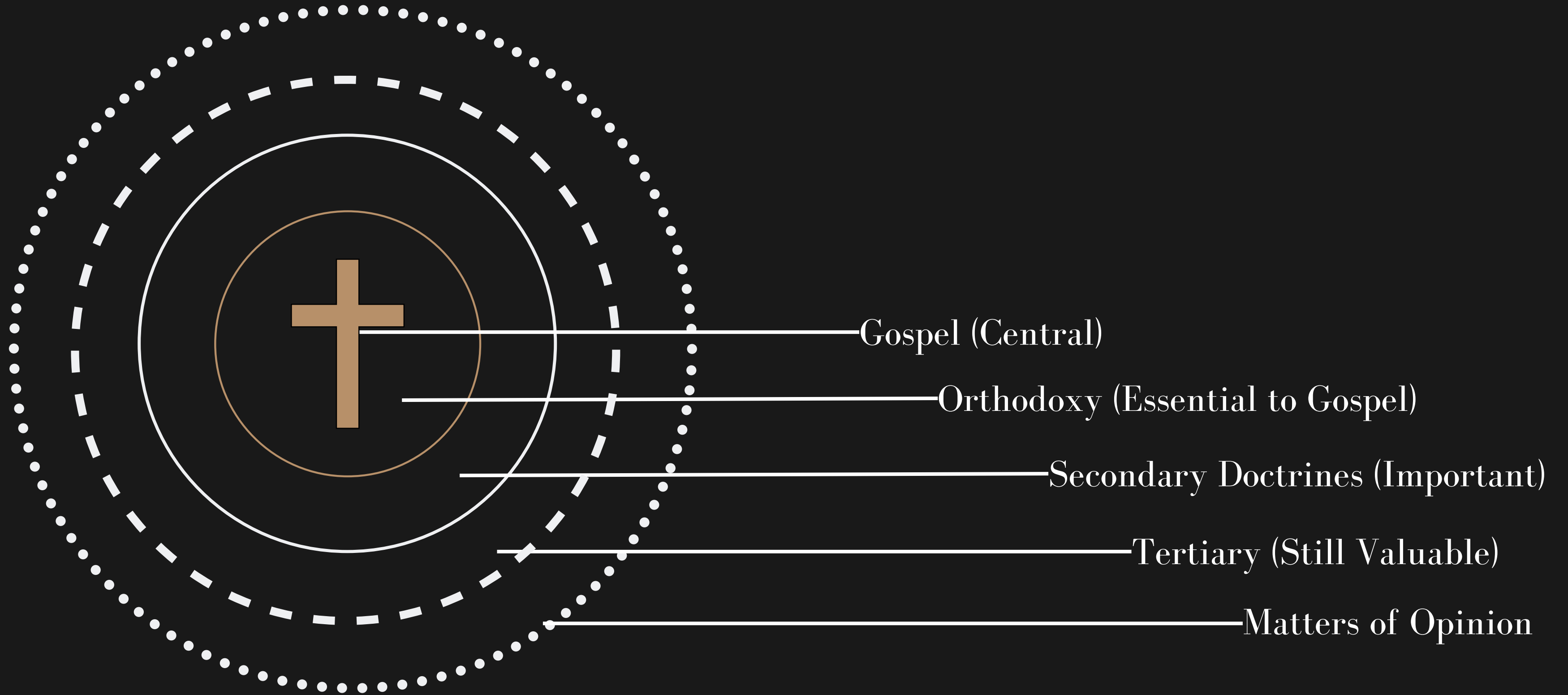
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## Gospel

**The facts of the Gospel are essential for salvation at conversion.**

*8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."*

*-Romans 10:8-11*





# Doctrine (Orthodoxy)

**The essentials of the Christian faith cannot be denied by true Christians.**

*Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. -1 Tim. 4:16*

*Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting. -2 John 1:10*

*Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. -2 Timothy 1:13*

God's Word (Scripture/Bible)

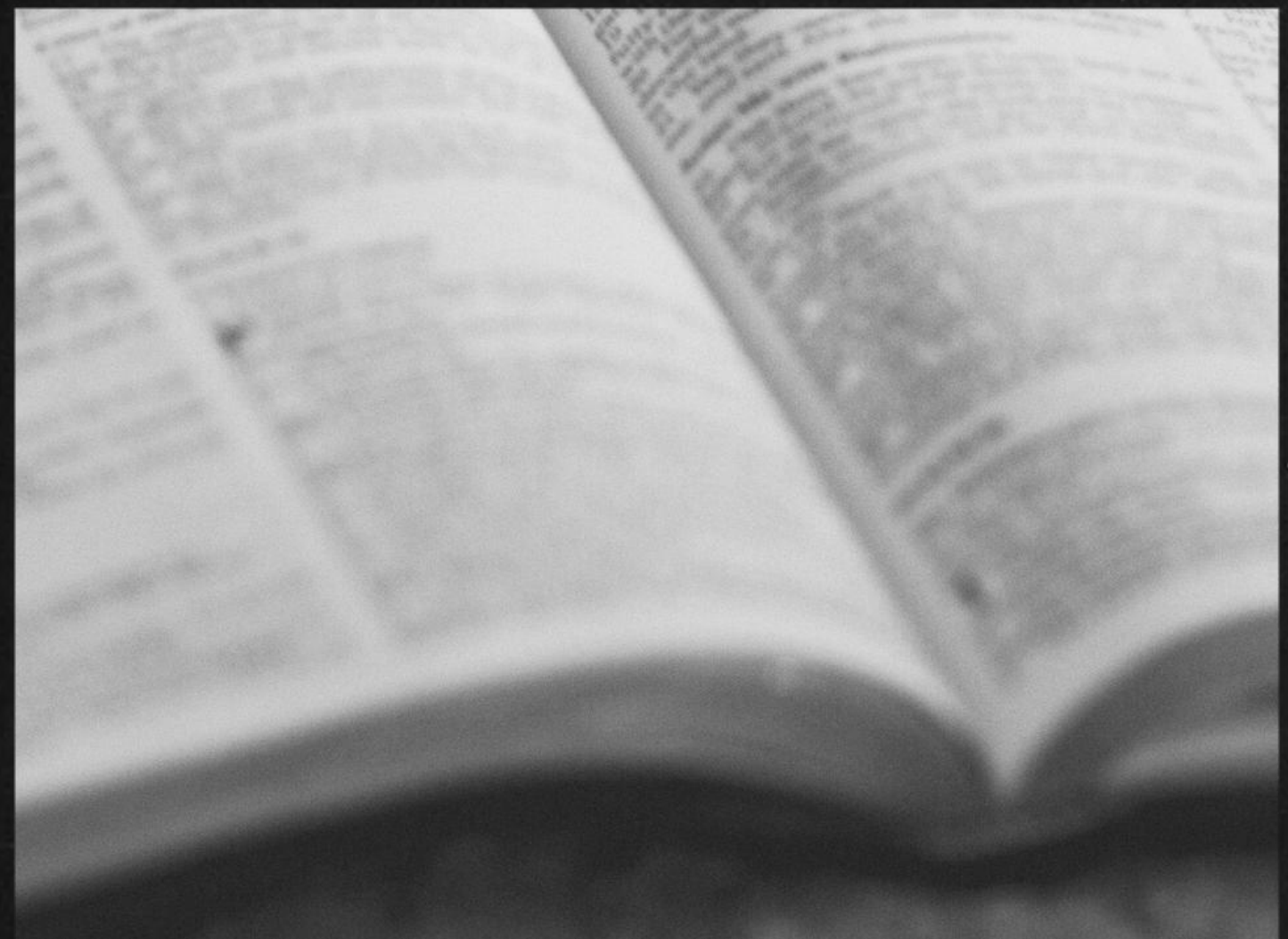
## Source of Doctrine

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete equipped for every good work. -2 Timothy 3:16-17*

**Note: Scripture is sufficient ("complete, equipped for every good work"). It speaks to all the essentials of doctrine and provides a grid for evaluating error.**

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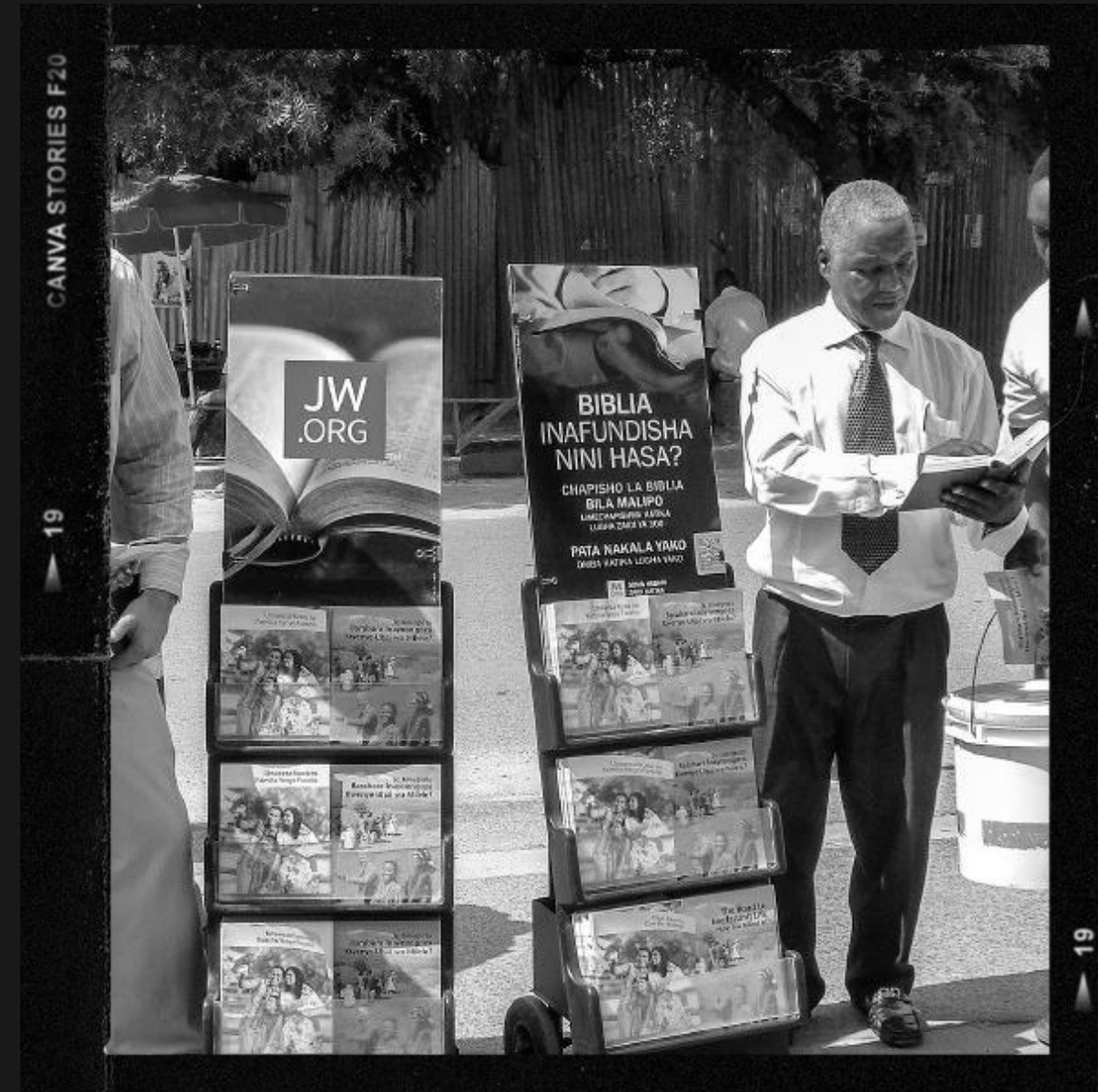
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# Error vs. Heresy



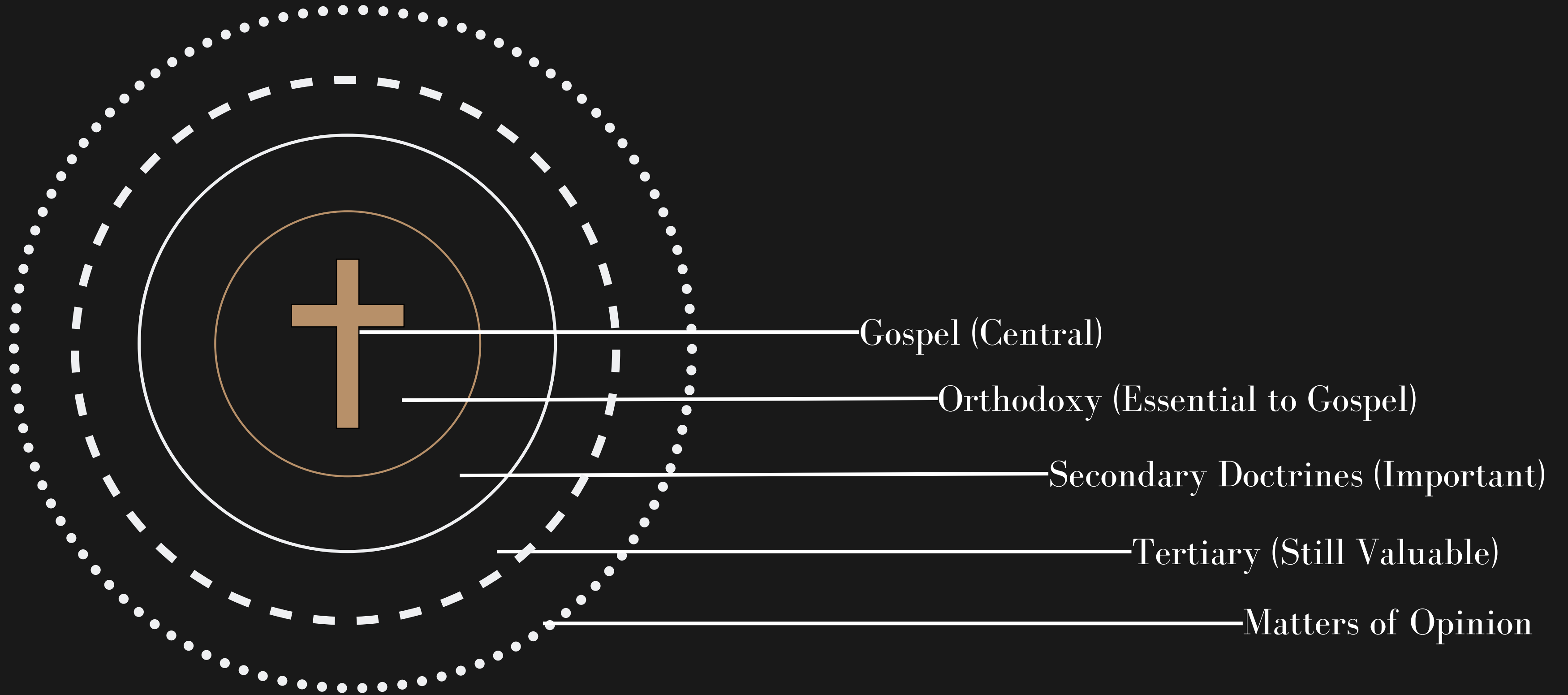
## **Error: Beliefs That Are False**

Error is any false doctrine, but it may not affect salvation. A false belief may not be heresy, though all heresy is false belief. Non-heretical error is the kind we might correct with Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17)



## **Heresy: False Beliefs that Affect Salvation**

Heresy is false doctrine related to essential doctrines that affect salvation (authority of Scripture, virgin birth, atoning death and resurrection of Christ, deity of Christ, etc.) Heresy must be firmly condemned and avoided (Galatians 1:9)





## Error (Heterodoxy)

Christians at times believe error that does not reach the level of "heresy," though it is still false.

**We are called to correct errors and heed biblical discipline.**

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for **correction**, and for training in righteousness. -2 Timothy 3:16*

*Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete **patience and teaching**. -2 Timothy 4:2*

*Behold, blessed is the one whom God **reproves**; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty. -Job 5:17*

*Whoever heeds **instruction** is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray. -Proverbs 10:17*



## Error (Heterodoxy)

**Doctrinal error is often speculative and distracts from the plain Gospel of salvation by faith.**

*As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. -1 Timothy 1:3-4*

**Even error related to non-essentials can distract from the Gospel. Such false teachers are to be warned and avoided if they continue.**

*9 But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. -Titus 3:9-11*





## False Doctrine (Heresy)

**Rejecting the essentials of the faith leads to condemnation and is warned against. False teachers are to be marked and avoided.**

*Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times **some will depart from the faith** by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, -1 Timothy 4:1*

*3 If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, 4 he is puffed up with **conceit and understands nothing**. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. -1 Tim. 6:3-5*

*I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; **avoid them**. -Romans 16:17*



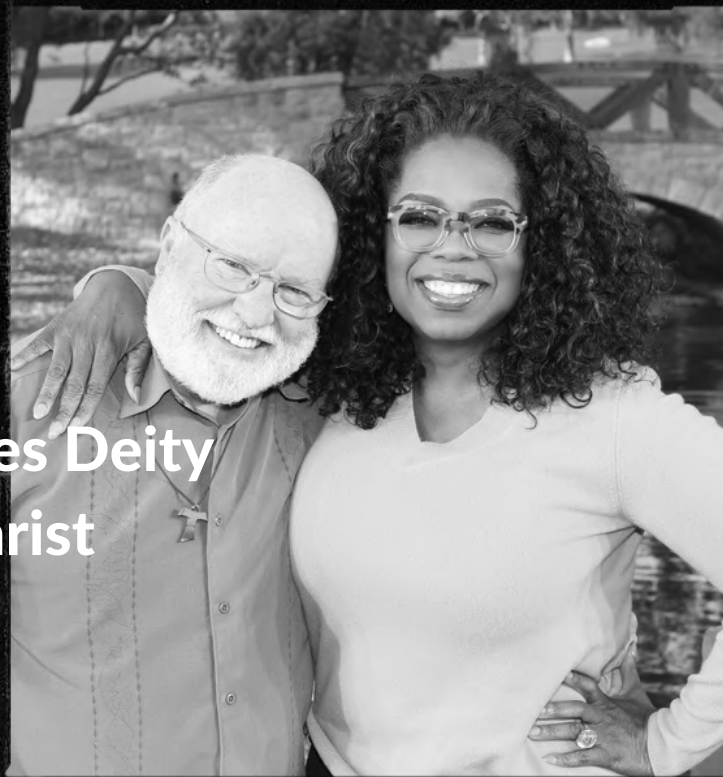
Denies Eternal  
Punishment of  
Unbelievers



Denies Salvation  
in Christ Aone



Denies Inerrancy



Denies Deity  
of Christ

### False Teachers are Guaranteed

*For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.  
-Mathew 24:24*

(Acts 20:28-30, 2 Tim. 4:3-4)

# Characteristics of False Teachers



## 01 They suit the passions of people who resist sound doctrine.

*"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths." -2 Timothy 4:3-4*



## 02 They twist Scripture

*"There are some things in [Paul's epistles] that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures." -2 Peter 3:16b*



## 03 They disguise themselves but can be known by their fruit.

*"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits." -Matt. 7:15-16a*

## 2 Peter 2

*But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will **secretly** bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their **sensuality**, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 And in their **greed** they will exploit you with **false words**. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*

*4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; 5 if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge[e] in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.*

# Characteristics of False Teachers

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**04 They are sensual (sexually immoral)**



**05 They are greedy**



**06 They are deceptive**

## 2 Peter 2

**Bold and willful**, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones,<sup>11</sup> whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. <sup>12</sup> But these, like **irrational** animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are **ignorant**, will also be destroyed in their destruction, <sup>13</sup> suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you.<sup>14</sup> They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! <sup>15</sup> Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, <sup>16</sup> but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

<sup>17</sup> These are **waterless springs** and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. <sup>18</sup> For, **speaking loud boasts of folly**, they entice by **sensual passions of the flesh** those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. <sup>19</sup> They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. <sup>20</sup> For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. <sup>21</sup> For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. <sup>22</sup> What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

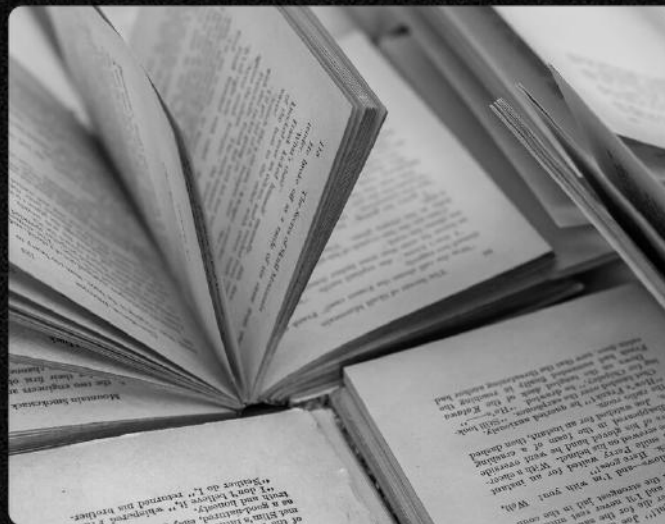
# Characteristics of False Teachers



**07 They are loud, bold, willful (proud).**



**08 They are irrational.**



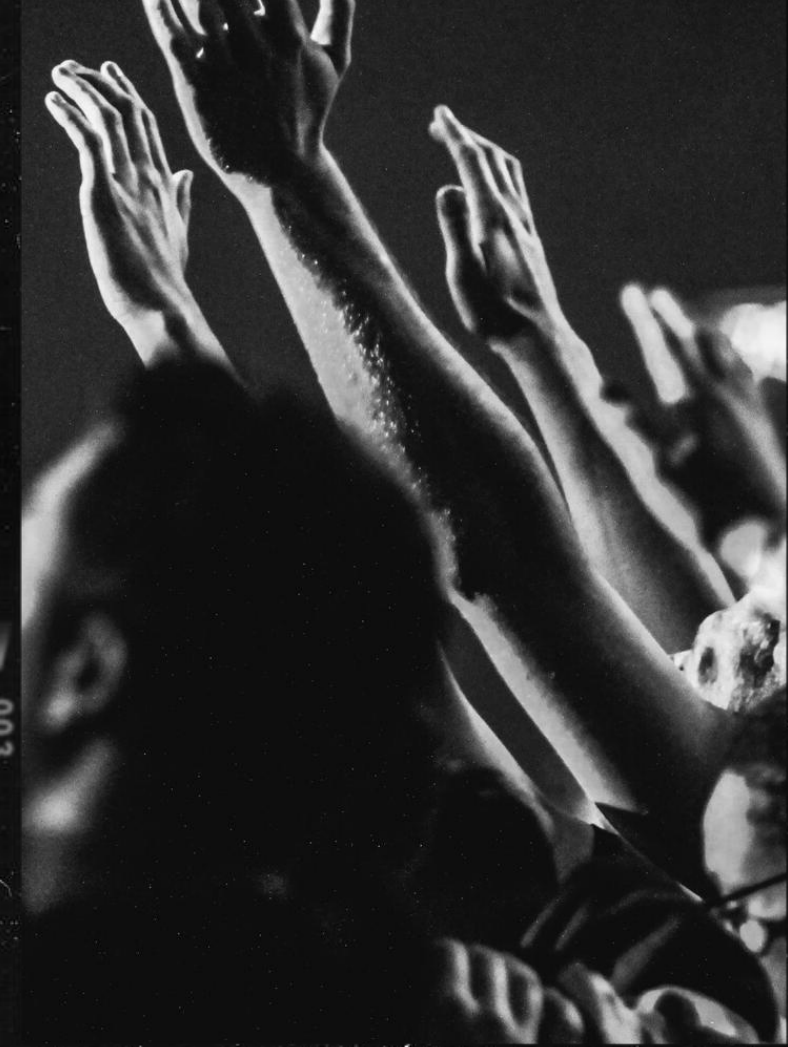
**09 They are ignorant.**



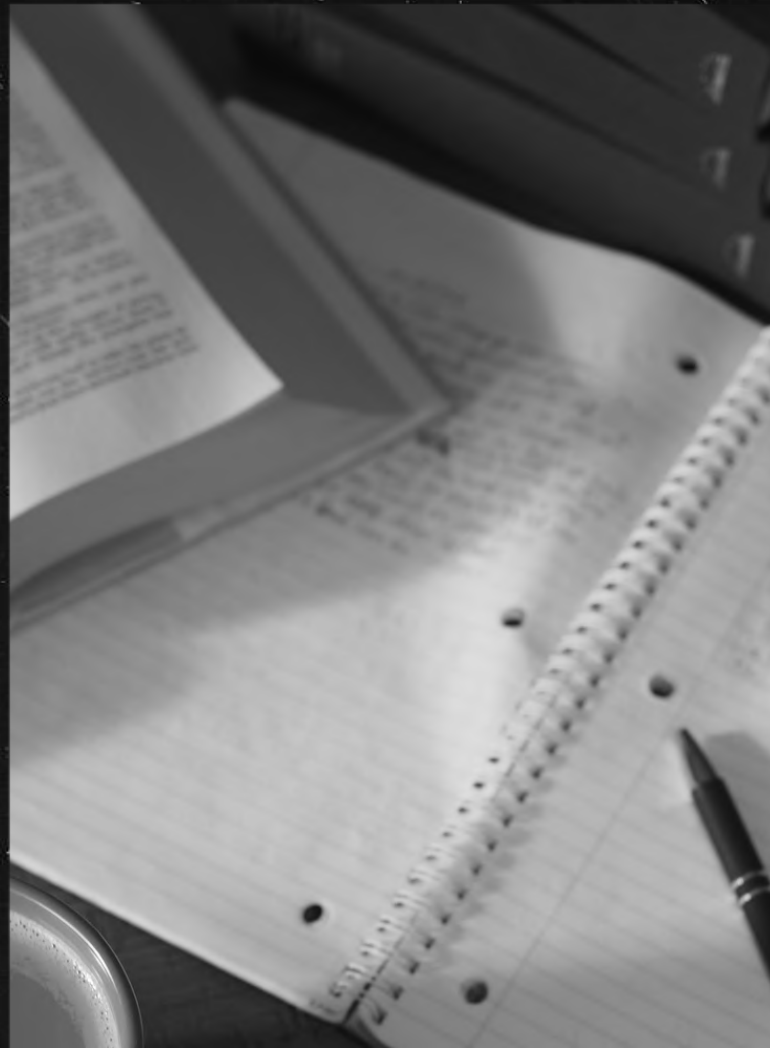
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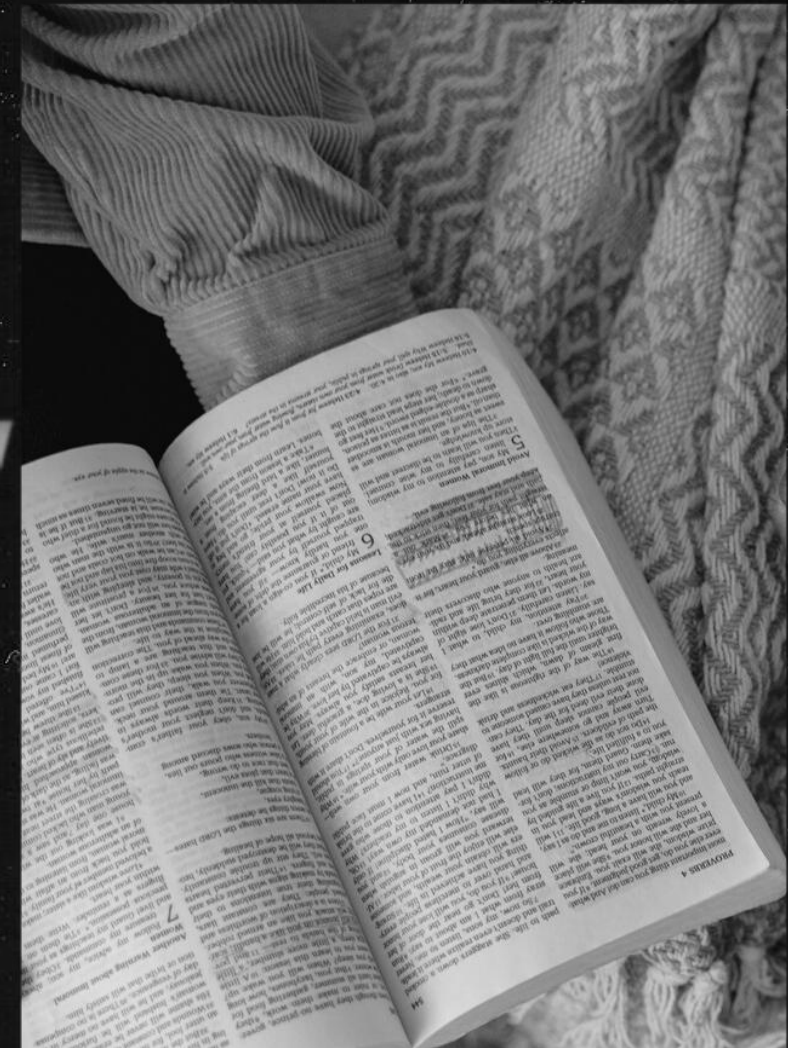


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# A Process for Discerning Truth from Error

- Does this contradict or affirm the gospel?
- Does this distract from the gospel?
- What does Scripture say on this issue?
- Does this function in harmony with Scripture if Scripture does not speak to it directly?
- Does this require an altered reading of Scripture?
- Does this elevate God or man?
- Does this lead to obedience (Loving God, Loving Others)?
- Is this internally consistent?
- Is this in keeping with how God reveals truth?
- What is the fruit of this?
- Does the application align with guidelines in Scripture?

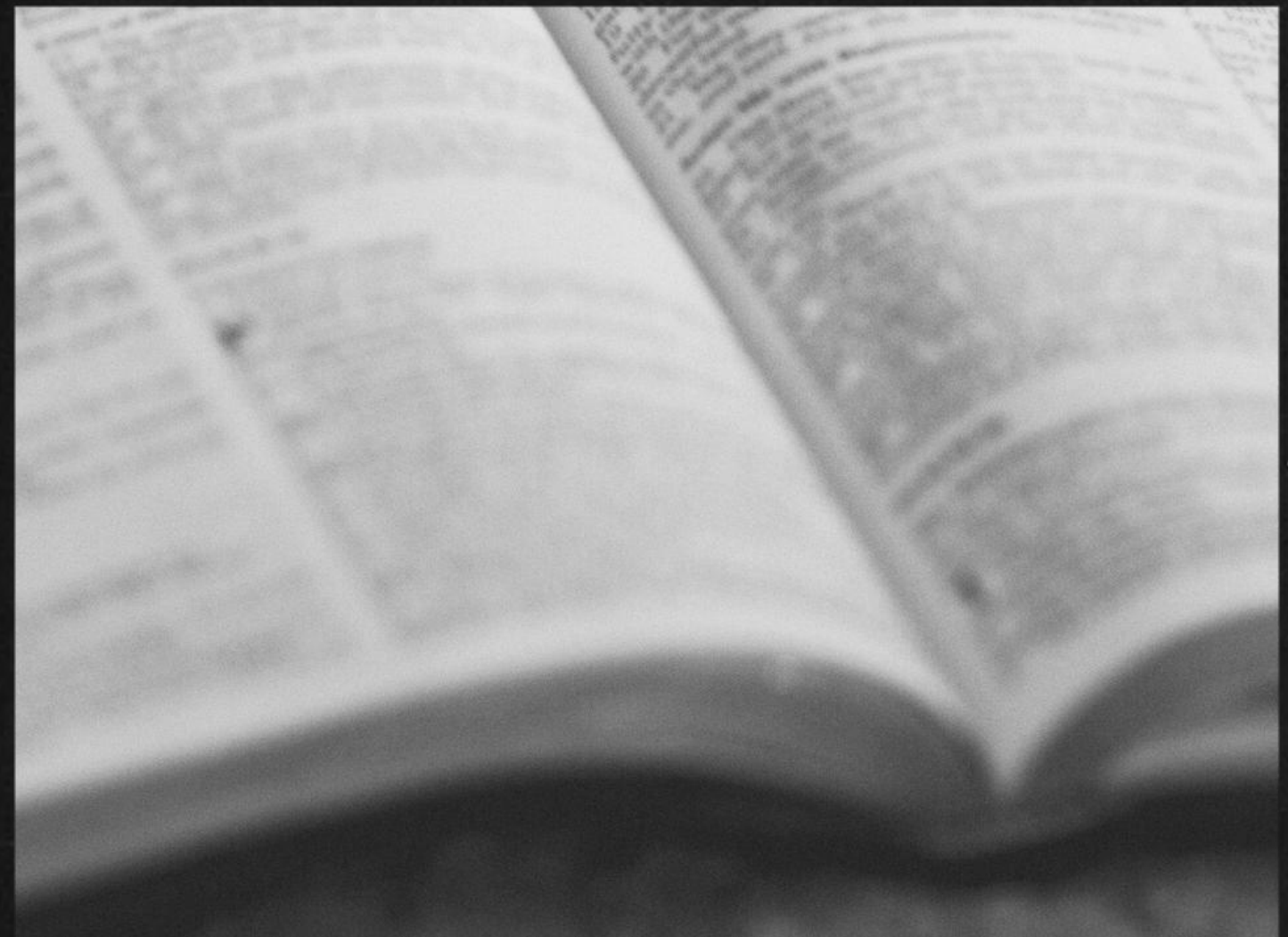


## 01 Response to False Doctrine Rebuke and Correct

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete equipped for every good work. -2 Timothy 3:16-17*

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# 02 Response to False Doctrine Expose False Teaching

*Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead **expose them.** -Ephesians 5:11*

*(Note: 2 Timothy 4:10, 2 Timothy 1:15, 1 Timothy 1:19-20, 2 Timothy 2:17 indicate they are to be listed).*



### 03 Response to False Teaching

## Give an Reasoned Answer

*...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, -1 Peter 3:15*

### Apologetics → Theology

- Creeds (Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, Chalcedonian Creed)
- Confessions (London Baptist Confession)
- Statements (Chicago Statement on Inerrancy, Statement on Social Justice)
- Apologetics and Theology



04 Response to False Doctrine  
Mark and Avoid

*I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; **avoid them.** -Romans 16:17*

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05 Response to False Doctrine

# Let Them Be Accursed

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. -Galatians 1:6-9

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# State of "Evangelical" Theology



## 48% Deny God's Immutability

Only 43% of evangelicals affirmed that God is unchanging (Malachi 3:6) as 48% claim He learns and adapts in circumstances.



## 71% Deny the Sin Nature

Only 21% affirm that humans are born with a sin nature, guilty in the sight of God. An overwhelming 71% believe we are born "innocent."



## 56% Affirm False Religions

Only 38% reject false religion as unacceptable to God while 56% believe that God accepts worship from other religions such as Islam.



## 43% Deny that Jesus is God

Only 54% of evangelicals affirm that Jesus is God whereas 43% say he was just a "good teacher."

# What about prophecy and "New Revelation"?

Scripture gives us clear rules for handling claims from prophets.

## Has the "prophet" contradicted Scripture in his teaching?

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' 3 **you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams.** For the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. -Deuteronomy 13:1-5

## Has the "prophet" ever predicted wrong?

20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.' 21 And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?'— 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. **You need not be afraid of him.** -Deuteronomy 18:20-22

## Is the "prophet" submitted to the authority of a church that weighs his prophecy?

29 **Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.** 30 If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. -1 Corinthians 14:29-33

**Note: A prophet can be accurate in prediction though people are mistaken in the application (Acts 21:10-15)**

What about advances in science and technology that are not addressed in Scripture, but do not contradict God's Word?

### Plunder the Egyptians

"Whatever has been rightly said by the heathen, we must appropriate to our uses....Moreover, if those who are called philosophers, and especially the Platonists, have said aught that is true and in harmony with our faith, we are not only not to shrink from it, but to claim it for our own use from those who have unlawful possession of it."

-St. Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, Book II, Ch. 40

*"but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians. -Exodus 3:22*

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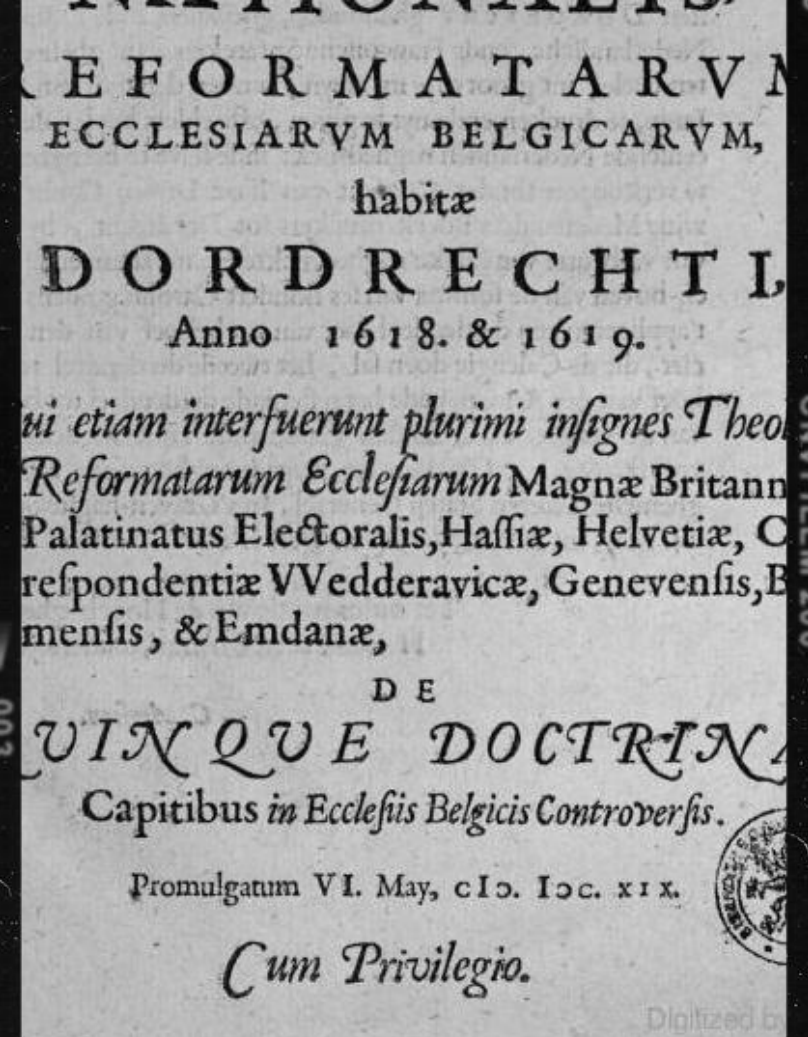


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BAPTIST  
CONFESSION  
OF FAITH  
1689



# What Does It Mean To Be "Confessional"?

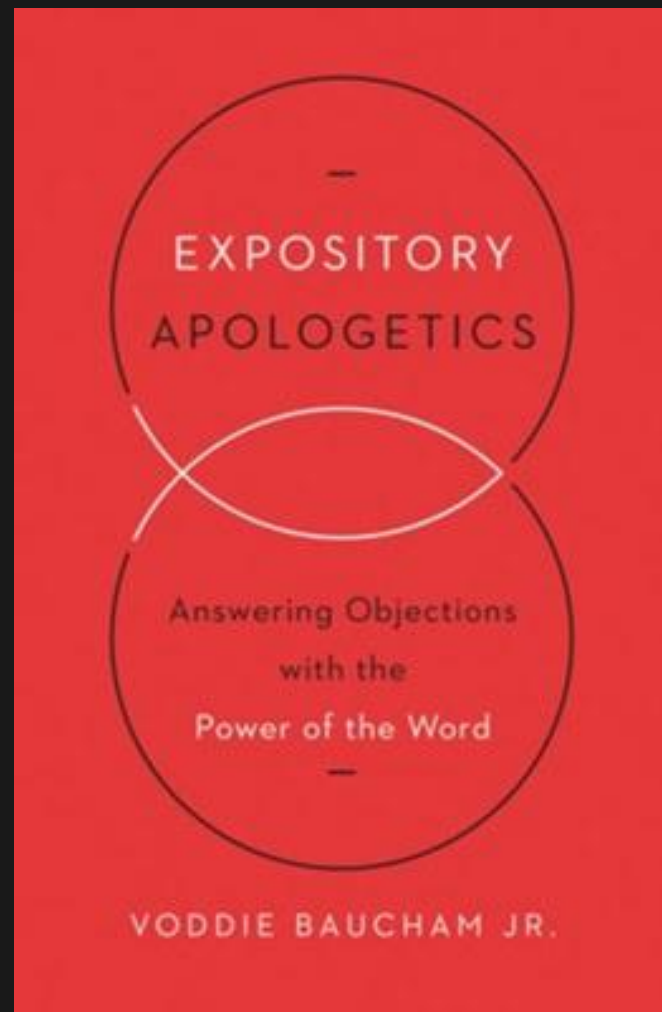
- Confessions of Faith should be based on Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and serve as organized, simplified statements of belief, not additions to Scripture.
- Churches that are confessional hold to a confession of faith, require affirmation of the confession for membership, and teach/recite the confession regularly.
- Confessional Churches usually also hold to ancient creeds alongside their confession of faith.

Those who say "I don't need doctrine, I just believe Jesus" are themselves making a doctrinal statement. Sadly, these are those who are often "tossed about" because they do not have a tacit knowledge of the Word.

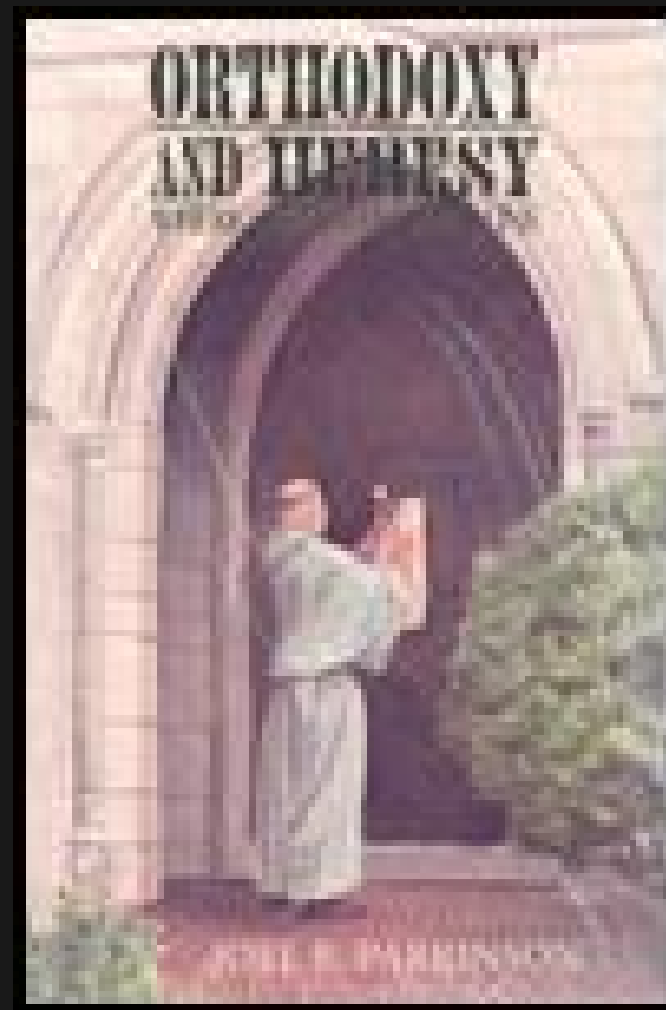
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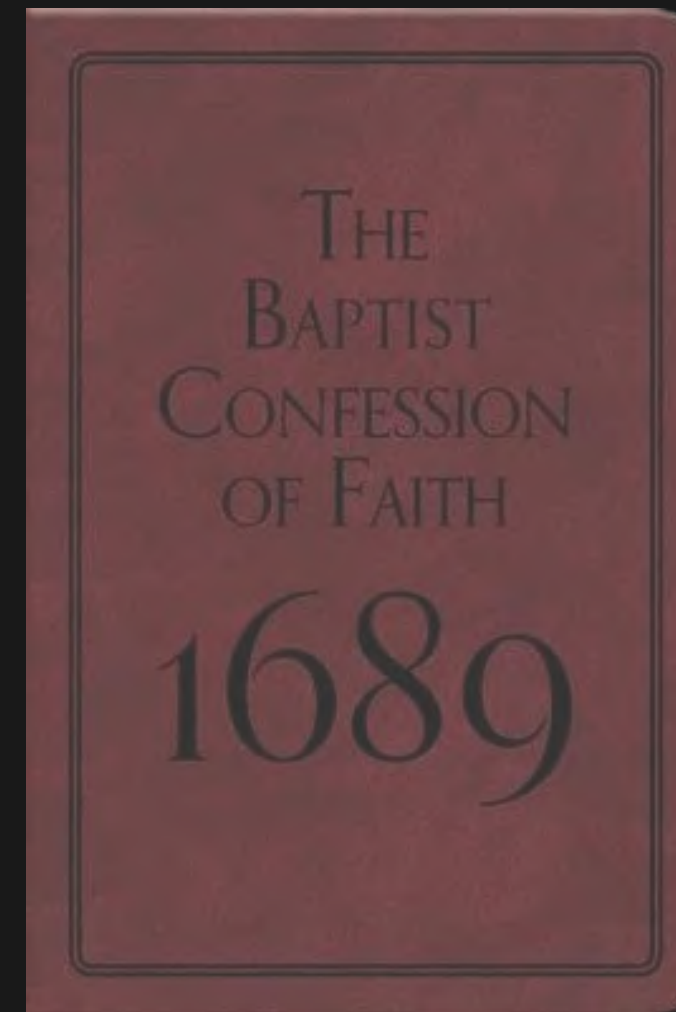
# Recommended Reading



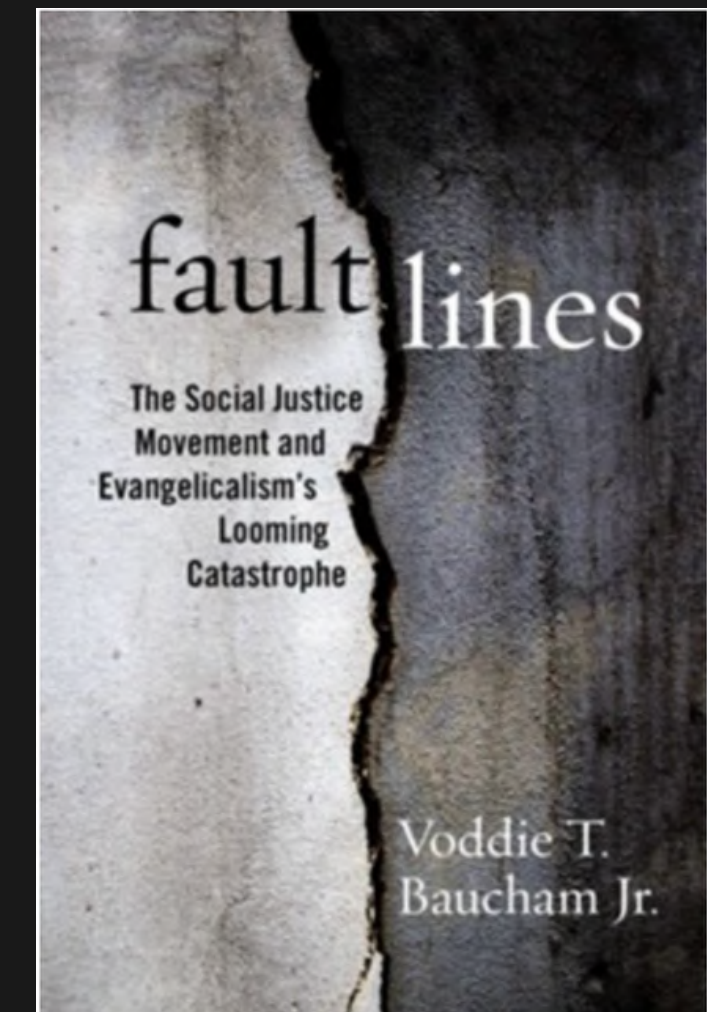
***Expository Apologetics***  
by Voddie Baucham



***Orthodoxy and Heresy***  
by Joel R. Parkinson



***London Baptist Confession***  
(1689)



***Fault Lines***  
by Voddie Baucham