



rtc

# TH002-612/712/812

## The Doctrine of God and the Work of Christ

### About this Unit Outline

This unit outline contains information essential to finding your way around the unit **The Doctrine of God and the Work of Christ**. It provides a structure for your learning, giving details of lecture topics, assessment requirements, and key resources.

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# 1. Introduction

## The Teacher

Dr Michael Flinn is a native New Zealander. He and his wife Tina have 5 children, four of whom are married and they have been blessed with 15 grand-children. Michael served in the pastoral ministry in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand for about 25 years. His ministry included church planting work in Pukekohe and Christchurch, and most recently Michael served a congregation in Palmerston North. Michael has a ThD in systematic theology through the University of South Africa.



## The RTC

The RTC is a reformed, evangelical theological college based in Melbourne, Australia. We offer flexible study options across a broad range of courses, providing high quality training for Christian life and ministry. The RTC values and strives for ministry training and theological education that is: Biblically Grounded, Theologically Robust, Gospel Hearted, Spiritually Rich, Culturally Relevant, and Winsomely Engaging. We are committed to a historic Reformed theological understanding of the gospel and biblical truth. The Reformed doctrinal position is stated fully in four documents that the Christian church developed in the 16th & 17th Centuries. RTC is committed to these four confessions of faith (The Heidelberg Catechism, The Belgic Confession, The Canons of Dort and The Westminster Confession of Faith). More information about the RTC can be found on its home page, [www.rtc.edu.au](http://www.rtc.edu.au). The courses provided by the RTC are accredited through the agency of the ACT, the Australian College of Theology (see pages 9-10 of the 2021 of the ACT Handbook).



## Is this unit right for you?

A right conception of God is not only basic to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well. Thus, the most important question before the church is always God Himself. This course reminds us of the centrality of the knowledge of the Trinity (including their Persons and work) so that we can live as image-bearers of the Triune God who created us.

## What you will learn



This course will explore the central reality of the Christian faith—how the Triune God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit—through His love and wisdom has masterminded the salvation of the world which has been accomplished by His grace, for His glory, and for our ultimate blessedness. Attention in this unit is given to the mystery of the Trinity, God's glorious attributes, and the person, two natures, and glory of Christ. Other topics include the atonement and the resurrection, as well as the ascension. By studying this unit, students will get a

better grasp of the nature of God and the work of Christ, learn to think theologically, and apply these lessons to our lives and ministries.

## 2. Unit Description

### Level 6 Learning Outcomes (TH002-612)

On successful completion of this unit, students will

#### A. Know and understand:

Demonstrate developing knowledge and understanding of the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.

#### B. Be able to:

1. Analyse the interrelationship of the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.
2. Identify methodological and theological issues in the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.
3. Present Analytical evidence-based perspectives on the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.

#### C. Be in a position to:

Apply perspectives from “The Doctrine of God and the Work of Christ” to contemporary Christian living and ministry contexts.

### Level 7 Learning Outcomes (TH002-712)

On successful completion of this unit, students will

#### A. Know and understand:

Demonstrate Functional knowledge and understanding of the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.

#### B. Be able to:

1. Explore the interrelationship of the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.
2. Discuss methodological and theological issues in the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.
3. Present critical evidence-based perspectives on the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.

#### C. Be in a position to:

Apply perspectives from “The Doctrine of God and the Work of Christ” to contemporary Christian living and ministry practice as a reflective practitioner.

### Level 8 Learning Outcomes (TH002-812)

On successful completion of this unit, students will

#### A. Know and understand:

Demonstrate Advanced knowledge and understanding of the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.

## **B. Be able to:**

1. Analyse the interrelationship of the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.
2. Examine methodological and theological issues in the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.
3. Present research-aware evidence-based perspectives on the doctrine of God and the work of Christ.

## **C. Be in a position to:**

Apply perspectives from “The Doctrine of God and the Work of Christ” to contemporary Christian living and ministry practice as a reflective practitioner.

# **Unit Content**

Students are required to cover the whole syllabus. But assessment procedures will allow for a certain amount of specialisation, so that students are not expected to study each topic in detail.

### **Section A: The Christian Doctrine of God**

1. The being and attributes of God;
2. The Person of Christ, his humanity and deity;
3. The Holy Spirit;
4. The Holy Trinity;

### **Section B: The Work of Christ**

1. His incarnation and ministry;
2. The death and resurrection of Jesus;
3. His ascension and session.

## **Teaching Aims**

1. Assist candidates in gaining a grounding in the triune nature of God;
2. Introduce candidates to the characteristics of each of the three “persons” and their work;
3. Help students develop an integrated understanding of the work of Christ; and
4. Deepen candidates’ understanding of what the work of Christ means for them.

## 3. Unit Overview

Date	Topic	Berkhof		
<i>Week 1</i> (26 Jul)	1. The Christian Study of God (Theology to Piety)	pp. 41 - 56		
	<b>PART 1: The Attributes of God</b>			
	2. Incommunicable Attributes of God: Part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Aseity: The Independence of God</li> <li>b. Simplicity: The Unity of God</li> </ul> 3. Incommunicable Attributes of God: Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Eternity: The Timelessness of God</li> <li>d. Immutability: The Unchangeableness of God</li> </ul>			
<i>Week 2</i> (2 Aug)	4. Incommunicable Attributes of God: Part 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Impassibility: The Affections of God</li> <li>f. Omnipresence: The Presence of God</li> </ul> 5. Incommunicable Attributes of God: Part 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. Omnipotence: God All-Powerful</li> <li>h. Omniscience: God All-Knowing</li> </ul> 6. Communicable Attributes of God: Part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Holiness of God</li> <li>j. The Righteousness of God</li> </ul>	pp. 57 - 63		
	<i>Week 3</i> (9 Aug)		7. Communicable Attributes of God: Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>k. The Goodness of God</li> <li>l. The Love of God</li> <li>m. Catchup Lecture</li> </ul>	pp. 64-81
			<b>PART 2: The Holy Trinity</b>	
<i>Week 4</i> (16 Aug)	8. The Holy Trinity: Part 1 (Exegetical)	pp. 82-99		
	9. The Holy Trinity: Part 2 (Historical)			
	10. The Holy Trinity: Part 3 (Theological)			
	11. The Holy Trinity: Part 4 (Experiential)			

### Intensive (22-26 Aug)

<i>Week 5</i> (30 Aug)	<b>PART 3: The Person of Christ</b>	pp. 312-330
	12. Jesus: God and Man: Part 1 (Exegetical)	
	13. Jesus: God and Man: Part 2 (Historical)	

	14. Jesus: God and Man: Part 3 (Theological & Experiential)	
<b>Week 6</b> (6 Sep)	<b>PART 4: The Person of the Holy Spirit</b>	pp. 95-98
	15. The Person of the Holy Spirit: Part 1 (Biblical) 16. The Person of the Holy Spirit: Part 2 (Theological) 17. The Person of the Holy Spirit: Part 3 (Experiential)	
<b>Week 7</b> (13 Sep)	<b>PART 5: Christ and the Plan of Salvation</b>	pp. 265-271 pp. 211-218 pp. 272-301
	18. Covenant of Redemption 19. Covenant of Works 20. Covenant of Grace	

**Semester Break (19 – 30 September)**

<b>Week 8</b> (4 Oct)	<b>PART 6: The Two States of Christ</b>	pp. 331-343
	21. The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ 22. The Humiliation of Christ (Part 1) 23. The Humiliation of Christ (Part 2)	
<b>Week 9</b> (11 Oct)	24. The Humiliation of Christ (Part 3) 25. The Exaltation of Christ (Part 1) 26. The Exaltation of Christ (Part 2)	pp. 344-55
	<b>PART 7: Prophet, Priest, and King</b>	pp. 357-60 pp. 361-66, 400-405 pp. 406-12
<b>Week 10</b> (18 Oct)	27. Christ as Prophet Priest and King 28. Christ as Prophet 29. Christ as Priest 30. Christ as King	
<b>Week 11</b> (25 Oct)	31. The Atonement (Part 1) 32. The Atonement (Part 2) 33. The Atonement (Part 3)	pp. 367-83
	<b>Week 12</b> (1 Nov)	34. The Atonement (Part 4) 35. The Atonement (Part 5) 36. The Atonement (Part 6)

## 4. Workload Guideline

The following guide indicates the hours we expect this unit to require, though this will vary from student to student. If you invest this amount of time we would expect an average student to get a reasonable grade. More time may be required for very high grades or for those who read or work more slowly. Much more time will be required if you frequently check Instagram or Snapchat or binge too much on Netflix are generally inclined to distraction or procrastination! Our guideline for study is that a full unit will equate to 36 hours in class and twice that out of class, for a total of about 110 hours.

Activity	Hours	Suggestion
<i>Lectures</i>	36	Lecture hours
<i>Assessment 1:</i> Essay	28	This is critical reading and research time for the topical essay. Allow for about 20 hours of reading. At 20pp/hour this allows for reading about 400 pages in various books, articles and systematic theologies. This will then allow you 10 hours to write up the final paper.
<i>Assessment 2:</i> Essay	28	This is critical reading and research time for the topical essay. Allow for about 20 hours of reading. At 20pp/hour this allows for reading about 400 pages in various books, articles and systematic theologies. This will then allow you 10 hours to write up the final paper.
<i>Weekly Reading</i>	18	Spend an hour and a half a week (on those weeks that we are working through a passage in John's Gospel) reading Carson's commentary and working through the questions in the handouts in preparation for class.



## 5. Textbooks

In all Theology units, in addition to the primary biblical documents, candidates will be expected to be familiar with the relevant sections of the three Creeds (the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed, and the Athanasian Creed) and of confessional documents such as the **Westminster Confession of Faith**, the **Belgic Confession** and the **Heidelberg Catechism**.

### 4.1. Required Reading

Berkhof, L. *Systematic Theology*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1958.

### 4.2. Highly Recommended

Beeke, Joel R., and Paul M. Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, *Revelation and God*, Vol 2, *Man and Christ*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2019, 2020.

Letham, Robert, *Systematic Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2019.

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol 2: *God and Creation*, Vol 3: *Sin and Salvation*. Edited by J. Bolt. Translated by J. Vriend. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004, 2006.

Frame, John. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2013.

### 4.3. Recommended Reading

**Students should become familiar with the following Reformed experiential theologies:**

À Brakel, Wilhelmus. *The Christian's Reasonable Service*. 4 vols. Translated by Bartel Elshout. Edited by Joel R. Beeke. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1992.

Beeke, Joel R., and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012.

Calvin, J. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. 2 vols. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Edited by John T. McNeill. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960.

Van Mastricht, Petrus. *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, Vol. 2, *Faith in the Trine God*. Translated by Todd M. Rester. Edited by Joel R. Beeke. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019.

Witsius, Herman. *Sacred Dissertations on the Apostles' Creed*. Translated by Donald Fraser. 2 vols.

### 4.4. Systematic Theology

Ames, William. *The Marrow of Theology*. Translated by John Dykstra Eusden. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968.

Bavinck, H. *Reformed Dogmatics*. 4 vols. Translated by John Vriend. Edited by John Bolt. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008.

Gerald Bray, *God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012.

- Brown, John. *Systematic Theology: A Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015.
- Dabney, R. L. *Systematic Theology*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1878.
- Erickson, M. *Christian Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.
- Frame, John. *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2006.
- Gerald Bray, *God Has Spoken: A History of Christian Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014. Part One, pp. 17-101.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. Ch. 18, “The Inspiration of Holy Scripture,” pp. 736-763.
- Gill, John. *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*. Paris: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1995.
- Grudem, W. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020.
- Heppe, H. *Reformed Dogmatics*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1950.
- Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology*. 3 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2011.
- Hoeksema, H. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing, 1966.
- Horton, Michael, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- Kelly, Douglas F. *Systematic Theology, Vol 1: The God Who Is: The Holy Trinity, Vol 2: The Beauty of Christ: A Trinitarian Vision*. Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2008, 2014.
- McGrath, A. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 6th ed.; London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.
- Muller, Richard A. *Post Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*. 4 vols. 2nd ed. Grand rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Murray, J. *Collected Writings of John Murray, vol. 2, Systematic Theology*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977.
- Reymond, Robert L. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. 2nd ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988.
- Shedd, W. G. T. *Dogmatic Theology*. Edited by Alan W. Gomes: Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2003.
- Turretin, Francis. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. 3 vols. Translated by George Musgrave Giger. Edited by James T. Dennison. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1992, 1994, 1997.
- van Mastricht, Petrus. *Theoretical-Practical Theology*. Translated by Todd M. Rester. Edited by Joel R. Beeke. 7 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018–.
- Van Dixhoorn. *Confessing the Faith: A Reader’s Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2014.
- Vos, Geerhardus. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Translated and edited by Richard B. Gaffin et al. 5 vols. Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2012–2016.

## 4.5. Edited Theologies

- Alexander, T. D. and Brian S. Rosner, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Downers Grove, IVP: 200
- Davie, Martin, Tim Grass, Stephen R. Holmes, John McDowell and T. A. Noble, *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*. Second Edition. Downers Grove, IVP: 20-16.
- Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1993.
- McClymond, Michael J., and Gerald R. McDermott. *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 212.
- Muller, Richard A. *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*. Second edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017.
- Stout, Harry S., Kenneth P. Minkema and Adriaan C. Neele (eds.) *The Jonathan Edwards Encyclopedia*. Grand rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.
- Thomas, Derek W. H. and John W. Tweedale. *John Calvin: For a New Reformation*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2019.
- Treier, Daniel J., and Water A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Third Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017.
- Zaspel, Fred G. *The Theology of B. B. Warfield*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

## 4.6. Select Bibliography

### 4.6.1. The Doctrine of God and Trinity

- Allberry, Sam. *Connected: Living in Light of the Trinity*. Nottingham: UVP, 2012.
- Chester, Tim. *Enjoying God: Experience the Power and Love of God in Everyday Life*. The Good Book Company, 2018.
- Bavinck, H. *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 2, God and Creation*. Edited by J. Bolt. Translated by J. Vriend. Baker Academic, 2004.
- Bray, Gerald. *The Doctrine of God*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1993.
- Erickson, M. J. *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009.
- Feinberg, John S. *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2001.
- Frame, J. *A Theology of Lordship, Vol. 2, The Doctrine of God*. Phillipsburg NJ: P&R, 2002.
- Giles, Kevin. *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God & the Contemporary Gender Debate*. Downers Grove: UIVP, 2002.
- Haykin, Michael A. G. *Giving Glory to the Consubstantial Trinity: An Essay on the Quintessence of the Christian Faith*. Greenbrier: Free Grace Press, 2018.

- Holmes, S. *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012.
- Kelly, Douglas F. *Systematic Theology*, Vol 1: *The God Who Is: The Holy Trinity*. Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2008.
- Letham Robert. *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, and Worship*. Revised and Expanded. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2019.
- McCormack, B.L. (ed). *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- McGraw, Ryan M. *Knowing the Trinity: Practical Thoughts for Daily Life*. Lancaster: Alliance, 2017
- Owen John. *Communion with the Triune God*. Edited by Kelly M. Kapic and Justin Taylor. Wheaton: Crossway, 2007
- Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973.
- Piper, John. *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God*. Revised and Expanded. Sisters: Multnomah: 2000.
- Reeves, Michael. *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012.
- Sanders, Fred. *The Triune God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "What Trinitarian Theology is For: Placing the Doctrine of the Trinity in Christian Theology and Life." Pages 21-41 in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology*. Edited by O. D. Crisp and F. Sanders. Zondervan, 2014.
- Soulen, R. K. *The Divine Name(s) and the Holy Trinity: Distinguishing the Voices* (Volume 1). Louisville: WJK, 2012.
- Torrance, Thomas F. *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being Three Persons*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2016.
- Torrance, James B. *Worship, Community & the Triune God of Grace*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1996.
- Vanhoozer, K. J. *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship*. Cambridge/New York: CUP, 2010.

#### 4.6.2. The Attributes of God

- Barrett, Matthew. *None Greater: The Undomesticated Attributes of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019.
- Charnock, Stephen. *Discourses Upon the Existence and Attributes of God*. 2 volumes. Grand Rapids: Baker 1979.
- Gunton, C. E. *Act and Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes*. SCM, 2002.
- Johnson, Terry L. *The Identity and Attributes of God*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2019.
- Jones, Mark. *God Is: A Devotional Guide to the Attributes of God*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2017.
- Lister, Rob. *God is Impassible and Impassioned: Toward a Theology of Divine Emotion*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2013.
- Pink, Arthur W. *The Attributes of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975.

Swinnock, George. *The Blessed and Boundless God*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014.

Weinandy, T. *Does God Suffer?* Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 2000

### 4.6.3. The Person of the Holy Spirit

Allison Greg R. and Andreas J. Köstenberger. *The Holy Spirit*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2020.

Beeke, Joel R. and Derek W, H, Thomas (eds). *The Holy Spirit and Reformed Spirituality*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013.

Beeke, Joel R. and Joseph A. Pipa (eds). *The Beauty and Glory of the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012.

Buchanan, James. *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1966.

Cole, Graham A. *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2007.

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Habets, Myk. *The Progressive Mystery: Tracing the Elusive Spirit in Scripture and Tradition*. Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2019.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The Holy Spirit*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1998.

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Webster, J. "The Identity of the Holy Spirit: A Problem in Trinitarian Theology." *Themelios*, 9.1 (Sept 1983): 4-7.

Warfield, B. B. *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*. Amityville: Calvary Press, 1997.

### 4.6.4. The Person of Christ

Bauckham, R. *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Berkouwer, G.C. *The Person of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954

Bloesch, D.G. *Jesus Christ: Saviour and Lord*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1997

- Bowman, Robert M. and J. Ed. Komoszewski. *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.
- Brown, Charles J. *The Divine Glory of Christ*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982.
- Daniels, Richard. *The Christology of John Owen*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014.
- Giles, Kevin. *The Eternal Generation of the Son: Maintaining Orthodoxy in Trinitarian Theology*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012.
- Goodwin, Thomas. *Christ Set Forth: As the Cause of Justification and as the Source of Justifying Faith*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2015.
- Houlden, L. (ed.). *Jesus: The Complete Guide*. London, Continuum: 2005.
- Kelly, Douglas F. *Systematic Theology, Vol 2: The Beauty of Christ: A Trinitarian Vision*. Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2014.
- Jones, Mark. *A Christian's Pocket Guide to Jesus Christ*. Fearn: Christian Focus, 2012.
- Macleod, Donald. *The Person of Christ*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1998.
- McGowan, A. B. *The Person and Work of Christ: Understanding Jesus*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012.
- Miles, Todd. *Superheroes Can't Save You: Epic Examples of Historic Heresies*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018.
- Morgan, Christopher and Robert Peterson (eds). *The Deity of Christ*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011
- Nichols, S. J. *For Us and for Our Salvation: The Doctrine of Christ in the Early Church*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2007.
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- Schaff, Phillip. *The Person of Christ: The Perfection of His Humanity Viewed as a Proof of His Divinity*. Hannibal: Granted Ministries Press, 2011.
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## 4.6.5. The Work of Christ

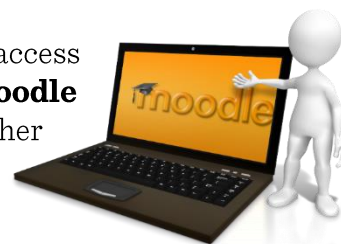
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- Beilby, James K. *The Nature of Atonement: Four Views*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
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## 6. Moodle

Each student will be assigned a user name and password in order to access the **RTC TH002 *The Doctrine of God and the Work of Christ* Moodle Page**. Please keep visiting this page as resources and other information will be uploaded to it periodically.



## 7. Guide to Assessments

All students are expected to read the guidelines for written assignments provided in the ACT Handbooks, available in the library or online. You should also read the relevant sections of the RTC Student Manual. All written work for this course should conform to the guidelines of the SBL Handbook of Style (with the exception of Australian spelling conventions.) The resources listed in this outline provide a beginning point for research for assessments for this course; students are expected to engage with the works listed there, but are not limited to these resources. The literature on these loci of theology is massive, and you are encouraged to consult widely.

## 8. Assessment

### Level 6 (TH002-612)

Essay	<b>Doctrine of God:</b> A <b>2,750 word</b> essay chosen from the topics from over the page.	<b>Friday, 16 Sept</b>	50%
Essay	<b>Work of Christ:</b> A <b>2,750 word</b> essay chosen from the topics from over the page.	<b>Friday, 7 Nov</b>	50%

### Level 7 (TH002-712)

Essay	<b>Doctrine of God:</b> A <b>3,000 word</b> essay chosen from the topics from over the page.	<b>Friday, 16 Sept</b>	50%
Essay	<b>Work of Christ:</b> A <b>3,000 word</b> essay chosen from the topics from over the page.	<b>Friday, 7 Nov</b>	50%

### Level 8 (TH002-812)

Essay	<b>Doctrine of God:</b> A <b>3,500 word</b> essay chosen from the topics from over the page.	<b>Friday, 16 Sept</b>	50%
Essay	<b>Work of Christ:</b> A <b>3,500 word</b> essay chosen from the topics from over the page.	<b>Friday, 7 Nov</b>	50%

## 9. Essay Topics

### 9.1. The Doctrine of God

#### 9.1.1. Level 6 Essay (TH002-612)

Choose one of the following topics below and write a **2,750 word** essay on it:

- Write a study of one of the incommunicable attributes of God dealing with the biblical presentation and theological significance of the attribute, showing how it relates to the incarnate Christ and engaging with at least one relevant contemporary theological debate. Apply it personally and practically.
- Is God impassible? What are the implications of your answer?
- Why is the doctrine of the Trinity so central to Christian faith and living?
- How does the Virgin Birth contribute to our understanding of the person of Christ and the work of the Spirit?

#### 9.1.2. Level 7 Essay (TH002-712)

Choose one of the following topics below and write a **3,000/3,500 word** essay on it:

- Write a study of one of the incommunicable attributes of God dealing with the biblical presentation and theological significance of the attribute, showing how it relates to the doctrine of the Trinity and engaging with at least one relevant contemporary theological debate. Apply it personally and practically.
- Discuss the significance and rationale for the adoption of the filioque clause. What have been the theological and spiritual implications for those on both sides of the argument?
- Assess the value of Chalcedonian Christology for the contemporary church.
- Is the Son eternally begotten of the Father? What are the implications of your answer for what it means to call the divine persons “Father” and “Son”?

#### 9.1.3. Level 8 Essay (TH002-812)

Choose one of the following topics below and write a **3,000/3,500 word** essay on it:

- Write a study of one of the incommunicable attributes of God dealing with the biblical presentation and theological significance of the attribute, showing how it relates to the doctrine of the Trinity and engaging with at least one relevant contemporary theological debate. Apply it personally and practically.

- Discuss the issues that arise in the use of reason in demonstrating the existence of God in a secular culture. Would it be appropriate to consider the use of the traditional proofs of God or employ any other use of reasoned persuasion as part of a strategy for Christian teaching and evangelism in Australia today?
- Bishop John Shelby Spong claims that the traditional doctrine of a literal virgin birth is a myth. Assess his claims that we must reinterpret the birth narratives of Jesus in a non-literal way if we want to understand the Virgin Birth.
- What does the Chalcedonian Definition seek to uphold? Are either Nestorianism, or alternatively a belief that there is only one will in Jesus Christ, compatible with this Definition?

## 9.2. The Work of Christ

### 9.2.1. Level 6 Essay (TH002-612)

Choose **one** of the following topics below and write a **2,750 word** essay on it:

- In what sense is Christ's death for our sins?
- Identify some post-reformation atonement theories and their proponents and critically assess them with reference to Scripture and the Reformed confessions.
- Is there a paradigm atonement metaphor in Scripture or are there multiple metaphors which each provide a part of the total picture?
- Explain and assess the differences between limited and unlimited atonement. In approximately 700 words evaluate the relevance of the debate for the church in Australia today.

### 9.2.2. Level 7 Essay (TH002-712)

Choose **one** of the following topics below and write a **3,000 word** essay on it:

- Are the incarnation, life and resurrection of Christ part of the atonement? What are the implications of your answer for our understanding of the atonement?
- Was the death of Christ penal and substitutionary? Discuss with reference to at least two different critiques of penal substitutionary atonement?
- What do Christians mean when they say that "Christ died for our sins"? How effectively do the various theories of the atonement contribute to our understanding of his death? Answer with reference to at least three accepted theories.
- Explain and assess the differences between limited and unlimited atonement. In approximately 800 words evaluate the relevance of the debate for the church in Australia today.

### 9.2.3. Level 8 Essay (TH002-812)

Choose one of the following topics below and write a **3,500 word** essay on it:

- What is meant by 'substitutionary atonement'? Critically evaluate arguments both for and against it being considered a central part of understanding the work of Christ.
- Discuss the implications of Jesus' resurrection for both personal and cosmic renewal and the relationship between the two.
- Explain and assess the differences between limited and unlimited atonement. Discuss with reference to at least two different critiques of limited atonement? In approximately 600 words evaluate the relevance of the debate for the church in Australia today.

#### Note:

- **Consider** how the topic bears upon wider issues in Christian life and thought. This should be between 300 to 400 words for TH002-612 students.
- **Demonstrate** an understanding of and some engagement (TH002-712 and TH002-812, critical engagement) with relevant primary and secondary literature. I.e. engage in exegesis of the biblical text as appropriate, and use commentaries and scholarly theological articles.

## 10. Assessment Criteria: Essay

Your essay will be evaluated on the following criteria (in descending order of importance):

- 1. Introduction (10%):** Clear introduction setting out the topic to be discussed and the approach taken.
- 2. Scholarly Literature (30%):** ability to engage with a number of contemporary books/articles, degree of engagement, level of critical evaluation and assessment of viewpoints.
- 3. Clarity and quality of argument (30%):** accurate reading of the question and what it requires, clear and well-argued answer.
- 4. Style (20%):** well-written, clearly structured, grammatically correct, interesting presentation, accurate referencing, footnotes and bibliography.
- 5. Conclusion and overall impression (10%):** clear summary, no new points in the conclusion but highlighting the central features of the essay's argument.

## 11. Last Word



“Religion, the fear of God, must therefore be the element which inspires and animates all theological investigation. That must be the pulse beat of the science. A theologian is a person who makes bold to speak about God because he speaks out of God and through God. To profess theology is to do holy work. It is a priestly ministration in the house of the Lord. It is itself a service of worship, a consecration of mind and heart to the honour of His name.”

Herman Bavinck

[From Herman Bavinck’s Inaugural Address as Professor of Systematic Theology in the Free University of Amsterdam.]

SAMPLE