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Reformed Doctrines in a Nutshell

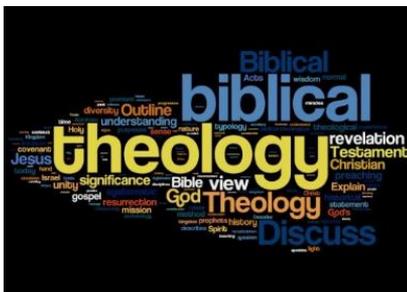


Some have asked me for a basic doctrinal or theological stand that a conservative or Reformed christian or church should adhere to. Reformed theologians and pastors may differ from one another but this answer will not be a complicated or complex systematic theological course that we would teach to our students in our Bible colleges with much doctrinal and biblical insights and theological substantiation.

1. It has to do with the Bible or **Bibliology**. The Reformed tradition (as taught also by John Calvin, Knox, Tyndale, Zwingli and others during the 16th century Reformation) believes in the inspiration, sufficiency, canonicity, perspicuity and inerrancy of the scriptures. It is God's only indestructible, infallible, revelation to mankind and is our rule of faith and practice and deserves our total trust and full obedience to it. A high view of the Bible is required as contrasted with a low view of a limited or uninspired or incomplete Bible as espoused by some (2Tim 3:16,17; Rev 22:18-20, Isa 40:8).

Bibliology

*What Every Christian Should Know
About the Origins, Composition,
Inspiration, Interpretation, Canonicity,
and the Transmission of the Bible*



2. It is about God or **Theology**. We believe in the triune God of the Bible: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and His absolute sovereignty and providence, and the unity of the triune Godhead. It is triune monotheism that we believe as it is supported in the scriptures. The God of the Bible who is merciful, gracious, holy, just, kind, but He will also judge

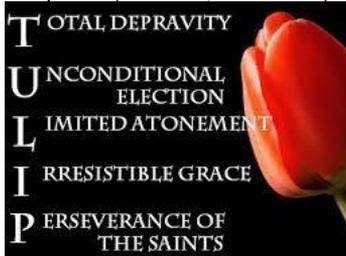
sin righteously (see *Q4 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism*). Our God is sovereign and He has foreordained all things that have or will come to pass for His good pleasure (1 Pet 1:2, 2Cor13:14).

3. It is about the origins of the world or **Biblical Cosmology**. We believe in supernatural creationism and catastrophism that God out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) created the world in six literal, 24-hour days. We do not believe in man-made evolution or the big bang over billions of years, nor in the theory of theistic evolution which is an incoherent compromised system of cosmology that is not supported by the Bible (Heb 11:3; Gen 1 and 2). That the universal (ie not local or regional) flood of Noah is a real historical event recorded in Genesis and not a myth or parable which affected the face of whole earth and not part of it is also important (read Gen 7-9).

Biblical Cosmology

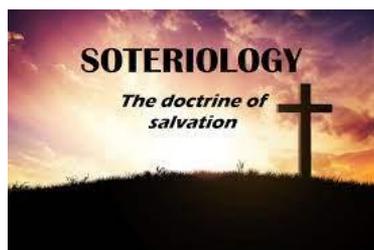


4. It has to do with the understanding of the concept of sin or **Hamartiology**. We believe that Adam and Eve fell with their act of rebellion in the first sin in the Garden of Eden and that original sin affected all mankind without exception. (Gen 3:6, Rom 5:12) As a result of this, all of mankind is totally depraved and death sets in, as sin affects all of us and we are all objects of God's holy wrath. Total depravity is central to Reformed anthropology as much as it is in its soteriology which is represented by the acronym, **TULIP** which is a consistent biblical soteriological system (Rom 3:10-14; Gen 6:5).

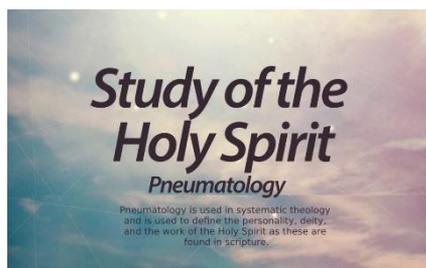


5. We believe that after death or the coming of the Lord, souls in eternity who will face **Divine Justice and Judgment**, by the holy and just God who requires just satisfaction for all sinful behaviour, thoughts and actions. We believe in a literal hell of eternal torment for the unredeemed, a place of God's justice for all the unrepentant sinners and fallen angels and Satan for all eternity and a glorious heaven for the elect of God (Rev 21:6-10 and 2Cor 5:10, Rev 22).
6. It has to do with **Christology** or the doctrine of Jesus Christ. We hold to the view that Christ is fully God and fully man and He was born of a virgin, the sinless Son of God, who condescended to dwell among men (1Tim 3:16). He lived a perfect and sinless life. He died literally, was buried and three days later arose from the grave literally and this was attested to by more than 500 people, ascended to heaven and is coming back again (Isa 7:14; 1Tim 3:16; 1Cor 15:1-6, Acts 1:11, Heb 12:1,2).

7. We believe in Reformed **Soteriology** which is the particular and substitutionary atonement. Jesus Christ gave of himself and died on the cross on behalf of his chosen people, the elect (though it is sufficient hypothetically to save all if He wants to) (Mt 1:21; Jn 10:11). Through this sacrificial act at



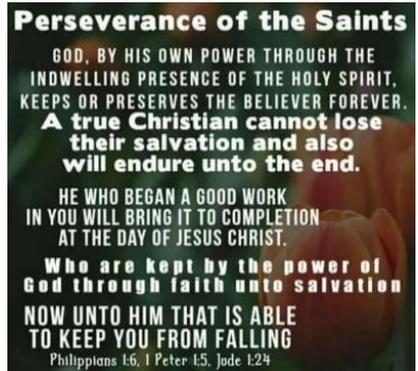
- Calvary's Cross, all the sins of His people were imputed to Him and His righteousness was imputed to them (2Cor 5:21). We also believe in divine election or predestination that God chose some to be saved and not by man's personal preference or choice and that whosoever God chooses and calls will definitely be saved (Eph 1:3-5; Jn 15:16, Rom 8: 28-30.)
8. We believe in the **Glorious and Pure Gospel of Christ**, the preaching of the pure gospel of good news of the life of Jesus, His substitutionary death, and glorious resurrection. The gospel is that salvation comes by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone and not by works or any other human means. God has freely offered this gospel to all without discrimination and whoever will believe and repent will be saved. We believe in total depravity of man in our anthropology. Man is totally incapable of saving himself and he can never please God in the way he ought to. There is no other way at all (Rom 5:1-11,10:9,10).
9. We believe that (see WSC Q1) man's chief purpose is to **Glorify God** (ie. not self or the world) **and Enjoy Him forever** (i.e. in worship, prayer, fellowship, service etc.). Our lives' total aim is to bring honour and glory to God alone in all that we do or say, in all of our being (1Cor 10:31).
10. We believe in a Reformed **Pneumatology**, that the Person (not a thing or a force) of the indwelling Holy Spirit, is God Himself and is able to indwell, convince and sanctify hearts and convict sinners to faith and repentance and hence receive the imputed righteousness of Christ (Jn 14:16, 15:26, 16:7,13). The Holy Spirit indwell the believers in the Old Testament just as in the New Testament and is actively present in the work of redemption in the OT and the NT, though latent in the former and blatant in the latter.
11. We believe in the Biblical **Ecclesiology**, in the practice of the 2 sacraments, namely baptism (ie. which includes infant baptism of redeemed parents as taught in the covenant theology of the OT and NT, Gen 17, Acts 2:38-39) and the proper observance of the Lord's Supper administered by an ordained minister. We believe in the rulership by a



plurality of elected elders (of whom the pastor is one of them) supported by deacons, the concept of responsible and faithful membership (normally through baptism or transfer of membership), in the sound bible believing and defending local church with sound evangelical preaching and biblical church discipline, and the declaration of the pure gospel to the community to the saving of souls as the Lord wills. It is the church's duty and privilege to share this good news with all to fulfil the great commission as the Lord leads. We also believe and practice God honouring biblical sabbath gathered corporate worship in the church as sanctioned in the Bible (Mat 28:1-20; Acts 2:42-47, Heb 10:24,25).

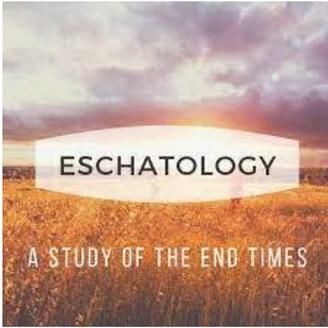
12. We believe in **Monogamous Heterosexual Marriage** of one man to one woman, an institution created by God and that it is for life (ie. till death us do part). This means the Bible is against homosexuality, polygamy, polyandry, adultery and other forms of immorality that is contrary to the will of God ordained for mankind (Gen 2:21-25, Rom 1:24-32).

13. We believe in the **Perseverance**, or some will call it the **Preservation of the Saints**; that God, by His enabling grace, will never leave those whom He has chosen unto everlasting life and that salvation is totally secured In Christ. No one who is truly saved will ever lose his salvation but we need to examine ourselves to see if we are truly regenerated in the first place (Jude 20-25, 2Cor 13:5, Matt 7:21-23).



14. We believe in the reality of an eternal place of bliss called **Heaven**, that is a literal, physical place (called paradise or Abraham's bosom or heaven in the Bible), that is far superior compared to this temporal earth and is beyond what we can ask or imagine. Heaven is the eternal abode of the redeemed: past, present and future, together with God where there is no pain, suffering, death, tears, sun or moon or sorrow. (Rev 21:4) Hell, on the other hand, is a literal place of eternal torment of the unregenerate and the evil angels and Satan are real too and there is no way out once we are sentenced there (see Rev 21 and 22).

15. We believe in an **Eschatology** that is the belief in the imminent second coming of Christ that in the fullness of time, God will return again visibly (Acts 1:11) and He will rule and judge the world on earth (Rev 5:10) and will bring about a new heaven and a new earth. Some Reformed churches also believed in a millennial kingdom of 1000 years of the reign of Christ on earth which can be supported by the Word of God (Rev 21:1-6)



although this is not held by most Reformed churches which are mostly amillennial or even postmillennial. Some are covenantal or historic premillennial in that they see no difference between spiritual Israel and the church today. Those who have been saved by Christ will be resurrected one day and will live together forever, with an immortal celestial body that will not decay or perish and will be in the presence of the most-high God unto all eternity in heaven (2Pet 3:9-14; 1Cor 15:51- 58).

Finally, there could be other theological tenets that some Reformed theologians (and I respect them) may add (or even subtract) but generally I think this should suffice.

Jack Sin

**Lessons in Godly Prudence
from a Wise King**

Studies into Ecclesiastes

06
JUNE 2021

- 6 The Intervention of God (Eccl 9:7-18)
- 13* Speech and Danger of Laziness (Eccl 10 :12-20)
- 20 Wise Counsel for Young and Old (Eccl 11:1-10)
- 27 Gospel Sunday: Fruitful Aging and the Chief Purpose of Man (Eccl 12:1-13)

My Testimony

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:” Eccl 3:1

In August 2020, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, I was diagnosed with the dreaded disease cancer of the breast involving the lymph nodes. What followed naturally was I was sent for a battery of medical tests.



“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:” 1 Pet 1 :6-7

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” Heb 12:5-6

I took the bad news rather calmly at first but soon a range of emotions flooded in. Fear, anxiety, worries, sadness, grief, guilt, discouragement, confusing and condemning thoughts.

The medical tests results showed there was no spread by God’s mercy and Sovereign will. The doctors concern was microscopic cancer cells too small to be detected by the big machines. In early October 2020, I had a mastectomy and removal of lymph nodes. I rested for about a month for the surgery wound to be healed. In early November 2020, I started my chemotherapy followed by radiotherapy in April 2021. On my second chemo, I was advised to do a procedure “Port-A-Cath” and it was removed after my treatment ended. I am now on oral medication which has its own issue.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.” Ps 139 23-24.

“In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins;” Col 1:14

During this period of treatment, I can only look to Creator God in Jesus Christ, mediator, and Prince of Peace for comfort in my pain and suffering. It was a time of reflection, repentance and confession of sins known and unknown.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” 1 Pet 5:8-10

I had to put on the full armour of God (Eph 6:11) with much prayer to fight off the confusing and condemning thoughts. Some days I was just too weak to even pray.

“Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Rm 8:29

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” Heb 13:15

“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And he fell down on his face at his feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan” Lk 17 : 15-16

There are many to thank God for - from the small & insignificant to the big & important things that He has graciously provided during my surgery and the 6 months cancer treatment. God is the ultimate healer.

God gave me His strength when I am so weak, especially strength to get out of the house so that I could go for the treatments. God gave me His grace when I am weak. Each time before I proceed with the chemo



treatment, I had to take a blood test. I am amazed and so grateful that although my appetite was poor and small due to the side effects, my blood count was good enough to proceed with the treatment. Thank you for good weather and travelling mercies whenever I go for my treatments. Thank God for my mom, my nieces Kait & Rachel, my bro-in-law Pat, my sister Deb for their much love, care, help and support. Thank God for watching over my elderly mom who is 85 years old. God sustains and gives her health and strength to cook our daily meals. Thank God for Sean, Shuan Chou, Chui Yien and Jasmine and pastor Jack and Angie for fetching and accompanying me. Thank God for giving wisdom to the doctors and the nurses, vigilance when they administered drugs during each treatment (IV drip). The side effects of chemo were undeniably nasty. I thank God for His mercy & grace to help me pull through. Some of the side effects are still lingering like I get tired easily, pain & tightness in my fingers and toes, I pray in God's time they will fade away. Thank God for sending an insurance agent to help me settle my insurance claims. Thank God for an understanding boss and I could keep my job.

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Col 4:2

Thank God for sis Kin Kheng, Say Poe, Kin Hoong, Nancy, Jasmine, Cindy, Chan Ping, Agnes, Irene Tan and others too! Thanks brothers and sisters-in-Christ for your gifts & fellowship and most of all your prayers to God for me and my family! Each of us has our own concerns too!



"What time (whenever) I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." Ps 56:3

"Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O lord.: Ps 70:1

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Ps 27:14

By God's mercy and grace, I am now under remission. As I walk the next phase of my uncharted journey here, I am reminded of Phil 1:21 & Gal 2:20

"For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain" Phil 1:21

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal 2:20.

I give thanks to God for His endless mercy and unceasing grace not only to me but to all of us who are called by Him.

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; They are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22-23

All praise and honour and glory unto God in Jesus Christ.

Sis Pit Yuen



Memory Verse

Ecc1 10:18 By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Pastors speaks today on “**Speech and Danger of Laziness (Eccl 10:12-20)**”, continuing the quarterly sermon series on “Lessons on Godly Prudence from a Wise King – Studies in Ecclesiastes”. The Lord’s Supper will be commemorated.
3. Pastor Jack speaks next Sunday on “**Wise Counsel for Young and Old (Eccl 11:1-10)**”.
4. The following Sunday School classes will resume on Sunday 20 Jun 2021 as allowed under the Covid19 Phase 3 (Heightened Alert);
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - New Testament Survey – Dn Choo Siang
 - Studies in Numbers – Dr Kwong Leen
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren.
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The Jun prayer list is available from Dn Choo Siang.
7. Monthly Neighbourhood Bible Class meets on the first Friday of each month in church on the study of 2 Samuel. The next class will be held on 2 Jul in church.
8. The Pandemic book can be purchased through Dn Yue Kay (Hp: +65 97450311) or via email at sovereignhopebpc@gmail.com.
9. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
10. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**
