Soteriology: Using The Classroom To Develop A Theology Of The Gospel

A Thesis Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to Rhonda and Taylor. Rhonda, you are a wonderful, kind, and godly wife. You have been a constant source of joy, love, and purpose in my life. I am grateful to you! “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.” ~Proverbs 18:22

Taylor, you are a precious gift, and I am proud to be your dad. God has endowed you with beauty, intellect, wit, and strength. Most of all, you exhibit what it means to be a godly young lady. “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” ~Philippians 1:3
Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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The purpose of this project is to confront and correct the level of gospel misunderstanding found within the project director’s ministry context at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Through Anonymously surveying a group of ministry students at CCBBC regarding their understanding of the gospel, their level of gospel misunderstanding was assessed. The project director constructed lectures to articulate a theology of the gospel curriculum that he presented to this same group of ministry students. Then, he anonymously surveyed this same group of ministry students again to determine the amount of growth the students acquired as a result of engaging with a specific theology of the gospel curriculum. Ultimately this project was intended to determine if the ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College would gain gospel understanding and develop a complete theology of the gospel as a result of being exposed to a curriculum that aims to foster the student’s grasp on the totality of the gospel. This project made clear whether or not Clear Creek Baptist Bible College should offer a class on the subject of the theology of the gospel. The results of this research endeavor proved that the undergraduate ministry students who participated in this project experienced remarkable growth in their understanding of the theology of the gospel. Moreover, this project affirmed with empirical data that CCBBC should offer an elective on the theology of the gospel in their undergraduate course catalog.

Keywords: theology, gospel, soteriology, classroom, Bible, college.
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Abbreviations

DMIN  Doctor of Ministry
LUSOD  Liberty University School of Divinity
CCBBC  Clear Creek Baptist Bible College
IRB    Institutional Review Board
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

What renders one’s faith unfulfilling to them and unattractive to others? Could it be a misunderstanding and misappropriation of the theology of the gospel? In this chapter, the project director will articulate several aspects of this thesis project including his ministry context, the problem that will be addressed, the purpose of the project, and his thesis regarding the project. In general, this work will focus on the theology of the gospel and how some students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College do not possess a complete understanding of the totality of the gospel. This lack of theological comprehension ultimately reduces their faith walk to a dissatisfying endeavor and severely hampers their prospect for an effective enduring ministry. This project will seek to articulate that there is a need for CCBBC to offer a course that focuses entirely upon the theology of the gospel. The project director anticipates that such a course would give the students a mooring from which they can both find greater peace and purpose in their personal faith walk, as well as a platform from which they can minister to others in such a way, that produces a hunger within them for a deep abiding relationship with Christ. This appetite for a deep walk with Christ will extend beyond the initial point of salvation and reveal the incessant power of the gospel that works in the believer.

Ministry Context

The project director’s journey into the Christian life began at his earliest memory. From the beginning of his cognitive recognition, he recalls his family taking him to church. He grew up in a medium-size country church. While he had a magnitude of Christian influence around him, he ascertained through his early years that the testimony and lifestyle of many Christians did not match up. Looking back on those years he realizes that what he observed was individuals
systematically compartmentalizing their lives in a way which only allowed their Christianity to reside in a secluded compartment. However, he came to understand through the truth of the preached Word and the convicting, revealing power of the Holy Ghost that comes from this Word that God intended for sinful man to be born again. The act of reconciliation which Christ provided on the cross of Calvary cannot be contained in a compartment of one’s life, but rather it must permeate the totality of their being.

Therefore, it was through these shallow examples of faith that the Lord exposed to the project director that allowed him to observe at a young age his own sinfulness and desperate need for a deep and abiding relationship with the living Lord. The project director’s life-changing experience with God transpired on a Wednesday night when he was a nine-year-old boy. On that night, the illuminating work of God the Holy Spirit allowed him to see his salvific need and respond to God’s call of salvation. On that night he became more than a Christian. On that night, he was born again. On that night, his journey of discipleship had its inauguration.

Furthermore, it was that journey of discipleship and the unconditional love of God that not only anchored the project director but also enabled him to navigate through some rough and difficult teenage years. The truth of the matter is that when he looks back upon his life, he sees the hand of God that pursued him, protected him, and provided for him through a childhood that, at times, was traumatic. The progression of his journey as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ led him to a place in which he would make a decision that would affect the rest of his life. At the age of eighteen, he began to sense a call of God upon his life. Like many others he tried to satisfy that call by trying to do a myriad of good and godly things. However, the call upon his life did not find fulfillment by any of those endeavors. The God of all grace and mercy for reasons that he cannot explain, called the project director to preach His Word and lead His people. As a
nineteen-year-old young man, the project director stood before a congregation of the Lord’s people and declared that he had been clearly called and commissioned by the Great I Am to preach the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The project director has served the majority of his ministry as a senior or lead pastor of Southern Baptist Churches. Serving in this capacity, he has worked with four churches in three states over the course of twenty-one years. However, the project director’s primary ministry began to change a little over seven years ago when he became the Dean of Students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville, Kentucky. Moreover, about two years ago, he made the decision to leave the administrative staff of the college and accept an opportunity to serve as a full-time faculty member for the college. In this capacity the project director’s ministry context is in the classroom of the college as the Assistant Professor of Theology at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. He also teaches some Bible and ministry courses as well. The opportunity to interact with students of the college in a consistent classroom setting is what prompted this researcher to notice that some students do not have a complete theology of the gospel, and led him to believe that the students of the college would benefit from being exposed to a class that focused upon the theology of the gospel. It is within the context of the college in which the project director will conduct the totality of his research.

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College is the Bible college of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. While Clear Creek is now commonly known in the state and beyond as a small conservative Bible college, which only trains students for ministry, it certainly had inauspicious beginnings. It was Leon Simpson, the third president of the college who said that he believed that
Clear Creek Baptist Bible College was born in the heart of God. Without a doubt, God ordained the existence of the college; and God chose to work through a man named Lloyd C. Kelly to bring this institution into being. Lloyd Caswell Kelly, who would become the founding president of the institution, was better known as L. C. Kelly. Kelly was born in Choctaw County, Alabama in 1874 to his parents Solomon and Sarah Jane Kelly. He was one of twenty-five children, and he grew up working in the cotton fields alongside his family. L. C. began his formal college education at Howard College in Alabama, which is now known as Samford University. However, he later transferred from Howard College to Georgetown College in Georgetown, Kentucky where he would finish his undergraduate education. This move to Kentucky would change the course of Kelly’s life. He would go on to pastor many churches in the state and attend the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

L. C. Kelly would become the pastor of Campbellsville Baptist in 1913, and while serving there, Kelly worked hard to help save a struggling school overcome their crippling debt. Kelly’s work was successful, and this school is now known as Campbellsville University. This foray into working with an educational institution would prove prophetic in Kelly’s life. In 1920, he accepted the call to serve First Baptist Church Pineville, Kentucky, and it was here that Kelly began to sense that there was a great need for a place where mountain preachers could receive an

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2 Bryant, *Voice in the Mountains*, 17.

3 Ibid., 18.


5 Ibid., 22-23.
education.⁶ In 1926, Kelly began his mountain preacher’s school with the help of R. P. Mahon. Mahon was a professor at a Baptist school that would become known as the New Orleans Baptist Seminary.⁷ With only twelve students and a two-week course of study, what would become known as Clear Creek Baptist Bible College was born in the summer of 1926. In the early 1930s, R. P. Mahon left Louisiana to work permanently with Kelly at Clear Creek in Pineville, Kentucky; Mahon also pastored the First Baptist Church of London during this time as well.⁸

Today Clear Creek Baptist Bible College remains a conservative Bible-believing Baptist school that continues in a covenant relationship with the Kentucky Baptist Convention which began in the 1940s.⁹ As Clear Creek Baptist Bible College approaches one-hundred years of existence, it is still a very small college by anyone’s standard. However, it certainly has grown from its twelve students and the initial two-week course of study which birthed the college’s existence in 1926. In September of 2020, Clear Creek launched its first graduate endeavor, a master’s in ministry program. This program was conceived and facilitated into reality under the leadership of Donnie Fox, the current president and Jay Sulfridge, the current academic dean.

The project director currently serves Clear Creek Baptist Bible College as the Assistant Professor of Theology. In this capacity, he teaches theology, Bible, and ministry courses both physically in the campus classrooms and online via distance educational platforms. The interaction with students and the opportunity to see them grow in their biblical and theological understanding is what drives the project director. It was also through encounters with students that he began to ascertain that some students did not have a complete theology of the gospel.

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⁷ Ibid., 34.
⁸ Ibid., 42.
⁹ Ibid., 52.
Many of them fail to recognize the uninterrupted power of the gospel that works in perpetuity in a believer’s life. This lack of understanding often causes the student to be dissatisfied and unfulfilled in their faith walk. The projector director desires to use his primary ministry context of the classroom to both confront and attempt to correct this problem. The projector director loves students and desires to see them grow into servants of the Lord who are thoroughly equipped and faithfully committed to the call of God upon their lives. However, he understands that unless they first understand the totality of the gospel’s power and walk in a deep abiding relationship with Christ, they will not find fulfillment in the work of the ministry.

**Problem Presented**

The problem this project will address is that some students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College do not have a complete theology of the gospel. This is not to say that these students who all profess a call to ministry do not love and appreciate the gospel, nor is it to suggest that these students are unaware of the earthly and eternal changing power which the marvelous gospel of Jesus brings to the repentant life. These ministry students do love the gospel, and they desire to propagate it effectively. Student age individuals have been born and raised in a world where everything directly or indirectly has been called the gospel. When the gospel becomes everything, in reality, it is nothing. Many of these ministry students would be hard-pressed to define the gospel succinctly and accurately. The gospel is one word that means so much to Christianity.

Often underestimated is the power of a word; the saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words” is a prime example of this undervaluing. Words are important; words are pregnant with illustrative and communicative power. It is words that articulate one’s thoughts and ideas, and it is words that reveal the truth, instruction, direction, and love. It is with long-planned and thought
out words that lives are often changed. For example, the marriage proposal, which changes the lives of two people regardless of the response, is often mulled over, rehearsed, reworked, and recited many times before the actual moment of proposition. For those in ministry, the reality is, preachers and teachers are those who deal in words. A rudimentary Google search will reveal that the average person speaks approximately 150 words per minute.\(^\text{10}\) With this number in mind, some basic math will reveal some startling truths. A thirty-minute sermon or lesson will generally consist of 4500 words, so one who engages in the ministry of the spoken word three times per week is using 13,500 words. Imagine this transpiring weekly for 52 weeks, that comes to 702,000 words spoken annually by the minister while performing their calling to preach and teach.

The reality of the power of words, ascertained when one comprehends a single overarching and paramount truth, all those words which the minister speaks annually, are a result of one single and simple word, the word gospel. Because of this one simple, yet powerful word, an innumerable number of words are spoken daily in an attempt to communicate the truth housed within the gospel. Well established is the importance and power of the gospel, but the totality of the gospel is often misunderstood and woefully undervalued. The ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College must have a complete theology of the gospel. Currently, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College does not have a specific theology of the gospel class in its catalog.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry study is to confront and correct the level of gospel misunderstanding found within the project director’s ministry context at Clear Creek Baptist

Bible College. Anonymously surveying a group of ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College regarding their understanding of the gospel will determine the level of gospel misunderstanding. From there, the project director plans to articulate a theology of the gospel curriculum which he will build and present to this same group of ministry students. Then, anonymously surveying this same group of ministry students again to determine what amount of growth, if any, the students acquired as a result of engaging with a specific theology of the gospel curriculum. Ultimately this project is intended to determine if the ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College would gain gospel understanding and develop a complete theology of the gospel as a result of being exposed to a curriculum that aims to foster the student’s grasp on the totality of the gospel. This project will make clear whether or not Clear Creek Baptist Bible College should offer a class on the subject of the theology of the gospel.

**Basic Assumptions**

There is a myriad of basic assumptions that will serve as a foundation from which the project director will work from as he strives to articulate this research thesis. In this section, the author will examine the key assumptions that will prove paramount to this project. First, this writer is working from the rudimentary premise that the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God. Thus, the Bible is a perfect delineation of truth and is without any semblance of error, just as the divine author, God, is holy and without contradiction. The apostle Paul reminded Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” The word translated “all” comes from the Greek word *pas*, which communicates the whole of the whole. As a result, the Bible

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11 Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).
testifies of itself that God breathed out the totality of the contents and is not merely a book in which God has breathed into certain passages.

This thesis project assumes that the gospel is the good news of God’s salvific work provided on the cross, where Jesus died as a righteous and holy substitutionary sacrifice for sinful man. Moreover, the project director contends that God has extended His offer of salvation to all humanity, through the means of repentance of their personal sin, and allegiance to Jesus as their personal and eternal Savior and King. However, the action and power of the gospel are not relegated to a measly moment of time in which the salvific transaction takes place. The gospel intends to work with uninterrupted power in the life of a believer. The gospel works in such a way that it enables the redeemed to live a life of perpetually active and functioning faith. The apostle Paul said it this way in Romans 1:16-17, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’”

The project director also assumes that the Lord’s disciples are enabled by God to understand His Word. In Luke 24:45 one reads “Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” In the context of this passage, Jesus is explaining to his disciples that his death and resurrection were the fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture. Thus, it is the work of God to give His followers understanding of His Word. This author believes that the totality of the gospel is understandable because God desires that man grasp this truth. God has also housed the metanarrative of the Scripture as good news. How is news good if it cannot be comprehended? Jesus taught in John 8:31-32, that the believer who continues in the Word would know the truth,
and that the truth of the gospel would render His disciples freedom from the bondage of sin through the work of Jesus Himself.

   The project director also assumes that an understanding of the totality of the gospel produces comprehension of God’s exclusive path for sinful man to be reconciled with Himself. The deep and abiding relationship that man inherently desires to experience with God, even if sinful man does not understand this longing within himself, is only facilitated and perpetuated by the work of the gospel. Thus, the gospel is not a derisory transaction that alters one’s eternal destination while leaving their earthly identity unchanged; the gospel is a total transformation of the repentant sinner from the inside out through the work and power of Jesus as it presented in the message of God’s good news, the gospel. Paul in his writing to the church at Corinth, presented the following words to them.

   For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:14-19).

   Lastly, the author of this dissertation assumes that, biblically speaking, there is one gospel and only one gospel. The apostle Paul delineated this fact when he wrote to the churches in the region of Galatia, specifically he said in Galatians 1:6-9,

   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— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 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. 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. (Gal. 1:6-9)
While the world often hears a myriad of things referred to as the gospel, the gospel is a unilateral message which centers on the person of the gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is not a catch-all compartment which the church can use to house anything and everything it desires to be perceived as spiritual. The gospel is Jesus, the good news that the promised and long-awaited Messiah has come, the arrival of God in the flesh, the presence of the King of Kings in the form of humanity; the message of the finished work, the sinless life, substitutionary death, documented burial, and physical resurrection of Christ; the promise that through this manifold and magnificent work, the sinner can be made right with God, and live in Christ’s righteousness now and forevermore.

**Definitions**

In the context of this project, the group of students who will complete the surveys for this research will consist solely of students enrolled at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. The survey which will be utilized, will focus on determining the student’s grasp of the theology of the gospel. Thus, there are a few words that will require a full and functioning definition in order for this thesis project to be both understandable and applicable. These definitions will serve as foundational pillars which the project can build upon. It will prove beneficial if the reader ascertains that the definitions articulated in this section have not merely been created by the author, but rather, they are results of research conducted by the project director in current literature pertinent to the topic at hand.

The term theology is a familiar word for most believers; however, it is also often cloaked in ambiguities in regard to a specific intended meaning. When the term is used in both written and spoken communication, one often looks for context clues to ascertain what is implied by the use of the word theology. However, such semantic excavating and exploration would prove
consternating and disconcerting in a setting such as this dissertation. Wayne Grudem defines systematic theology as “any study that answers the question, what does the whole Bible teach us today about any given topic?”12 Thus, in a similar vein, for this thesis, the project director is using the term theology as it pertains to unveiling what the totality of the theology of the gospel truly is as it is presented in the parameters of the Bible, God’s Holy Word.

Similar to the word theology, the term gospel is a word in which most individuals who comprise the church of the Lord Jesus Christ are extremely acquainted. However, if one asked them to define exactly what the gospel is, the response will often come with an extended and awkward period of silence followed by a confused and unsure look. It seems as if the word gospel is so familiar to the church that it has lost the possession of a clearly articulated meaning in modern culture. Darrell Bock describes the gospel as “the good news of God’s love and initiative not only to save us from hell, but also to bring us into a healthy relationship Himself.”13 Bock’s description will serve this thesis project well in the realm of defining exactly what the project director is describing when he speaks of the gospel. In this definition, the salvific, relational, and discipleship aspects of the totality of a complete theology of the gospel is clearly and succinctly articulated.

Limitations

The research for this project will transpire in the confines of an educational setting. Specifically, the author will be conducting his research among a group of students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. As a result of this situation, and the fact that the project director serves as


a professor to these students, he understands this could cause some students to potentially make responses on the survey in which they anticipate that the professor is desiring. However, the project director is also keenly aware that the responses which the students provide are outside of his control, as it must be with good independent research. The project director has also pondered the thought that the students could possibly provide responses that are less than forthcoming out of a fear that this research could ultimately result in their theology course work becoming more difficult and extensive.

Additionally, this research will not be a part of a class. Thus, the completion of the surveys will not result in a grade for the students involved. This could cause some of the participants to not take the process as serious as they should, and a lackadaisical attitude on behalf of the student has the potential to alter their responses. The lack of accountability in regard to the student creates the distinct possibility that some students will not invest themselves in the research to the degree they should and the level the project director desires. Again, the responses and investment of the students in this project are out of the projector’s hands.

Since this research is taking place in a particular institution, CCBBC, the project director understands that the research he conducts will only apply to Clear Creek and not Bible colleges in general. As a result, no assumptions should be made regarding Bible college students in general, or students of any other specific institution of theological academic training. However, it is the intention and desire of the project director to research the issue of gospel understanding in his specific ministry context of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Thus, the results will convey whether or not CCBBC should offer a specific course in the theology of the gospel.
Delimitations

As Sensing alluded to, this thesis could not possibly even attempt to exhaustively engage all of the potential aspects of the theology of the gospel and the ramifications that it has upon a believer’s life. As a result, the final scope of this project is sharply focused upon evaluating the level of gospel understanding among ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist College to determine if an entire class should be offered on the theology of the gospel. This narrow approach to the research at hand will provide some clear boundaries to this project pointed in a correct and effective direction.

The project director will focus his research on a group of undergraduate ministry students. This group will constitute more than twenty percent of the full-time undergraduate ministry students enrolled at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. The project director will attempt to recruit a balanced number of male and female ministry students. These boundaries are in tune with what Sensing propagates in his research book. This group of ministry students will complete both a pre-project and post-project survey. The students will also be asked to watch a series of pre-recorded lectures presented by the project director on the subject of a complete theology of the gospel in between the completion of the two surveys. The pre-project survey will be used to determine the level of gospel understanding of the group of ministry students. The post-project survey will delineate the effect the focused series of lectures on the theology had on the students. While the project director understands that some aspects of this project are beyond the scope of his control, he has attempted to place adequate delimitations upon this research to produce accurate and usable data.

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15 Ibid.
Thesis Statement

If Clear Creek Baptist Bible College offers a class that teaches a comprehensive theology of the gospel, then the student’s theology of the gospel will become complete. The thesis behind this project is the project director’s conviction that the ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College would gain an in-depth gospel understanding as well as develop a complete theology of the gospel if they were offered a specific and comprehensive class on the subject of the gospel. Anonymously surveying a group of ministry students before and after they engage in a study of the gospel with the project director will prove the thesis.

This thesis will examine the level of gospel understanding among a group of students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and formulate a teachable curriculum to rectify any gospel misunderstanding discovered from this project. When the ministry students obtain a clear and thorough understanding of the gospel, they will find their faith walk fulfilling, as they can delineate the totality of the gospel.

The gospel may be understood as a two-sided coin, with both a salvational side and a relational side. The salvational side of the gospel brings the good news that man can receive forgiveness for his sins, and thus man is redeemed from the slavery of sin. Through the salvific work of God, He reconciles man to God through the blood of Christ. The wrath of God propitiated by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on the cross allows for this act of reconciliation. This salvation that God offers on His initiative, and which man receives by faith, is not simply a ticket to heaven. The relational side of the gospel reveals that Christ is the Messiah, and thus provided the promise of the Holy Spirit to believers. Through this gift of God’s presence, His Spirit, the salvific work of God, is evident within the believer’s life.
The message and promise of the gospel of Christ contain much more than merely a ticket to heaven when this short and troubled earthly life has ended like a vapor of fog burned off by the risen sun on a cool morning. The gospel contains a guarantee of total transformation, a metamorphosis that will ultimately allow the redeemed to become a perfect representation of God. Bates refers to this as the people of God becoming “true idols, perfectly imbued with the presence of God.” This kind of absolute renovation can only transpire through the gospel of Jesus Christ, for Christ is the perfect and complete representation of God in the flesh. The final and eternal transformation of the believer comes through and by the gospel of Jesus Christ. The timing of this definitive and final augmentation of the believer will happen eschatologically.

One can recognize that the message and meaning of the gospel reach far beyond a personalistic salvific experience. The church must come to the place where they see the gospel as it truly is, an act of salvation that involves a total transformation into Christlikeness through the process of discipleship. While the believer is earthbound currently, they will be ultimately and finally delivered as the redeemed, fully sanctified, at a future point when they are with the Lord eternally. Two mere moments cannot house the promise of the gospel, the moment of a salvific experience, and the moment of realizing eternal ecstasy in heaven. The promise of the gospel permeates the totality of the born again. It works perceptually within them without interruption from the inauguration point of the salvation experience all the way to realization of the final

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17 Ibid., 162-163.

18 Ibid., 156.

19 Ibid., 162.

20 Ibid., 206.
eternal state. A biblical view of the gospel, such as has been presented within this written propagation, allows one to see the unity of the salvific-discipleship narrative of the Bible as portrayed within the pages of both the Old and New Testaments. As a result, understanding the gospel in this vein will equip the students with the ability to offer a clear definition and presentation of the gospel.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this project is derived from the project director’s thesis regarding ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College not having a complete grasp on the totality of the theology of the gospel. As a result, the project director has engaged in researching this subject, including theological scholarship specifically pertaining to the theology of the gospel. This endeavoring to research the available literature on the subject at hand is intended to provide the project director with a foundation from which to build a plan of intervention that may rectify the level of gospel misunderstanding found among the students. The project director believes that this is a worthwhile avenue of research because he considers that the proficiency of gospel understanding among ministry students will have a profound impact on how they communicate the gospel. He also contends that the ministry student’s personal walk with the Lord will be greatly aided by a deep understanding of the totality of the gospel’s uninterrupted power in their life.

Literature Review

When it comes to a study of the gospel, the diligent researcher is rewarded with a plethora of published books written by many different individuals from wide-ranging perspectives. Not all of the authors one discovers nor the resources they have produced are considered to be excellent material articulated by either a scholar or an expert in this particular field of study. The project director has attempted to relegate the focus of his attention on resources that have been written by scholars and or experts on the content of the gospel. It will become apparent that not all the authors agree on what the gospel is, nor on the main components that comprise a theology of the gospel. The project director did not restrict his research to merely
books published on the subject, but he also engaged both theological journal articles and dissertations as well.

**What is the Gospel?**

Darrell L. Bock propagates that the good news which Jesus provided was essentially the announcement that God’s promised deliverer and deliverance had arrived.\(^2\) This is a seminal understanding of a biblical perspective of the gospel. One must understand that Jesus not only provided and proclaimed the gospel, but in reality, Jesus is the gospel. This is not to say that Bock dismisses or overlooks the completion of Christ’s salvific work on the cross as paramount, for he goes on to convey that he sees Christ’s work on the cross as the synecdoche of the gospel.\(^3\) Bock bases his view on what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 1:23 and 1 Corinthians 15:3-5.\(^4\) Bock further clarifies his point when he moves on to articulate that the death of Jesus is not the whole of the gospel, but merely a component of it.\(^5\) Bock unabashedly proclaims that while the gospel could not exist without the death of Christ, he also unequivocally contends that the totality of the gospel goes beyond the death and resurrection of Jesus.\(^6\)

According to Bock, an understanding of the gospel that goes beyond the first Easter weekend is only attained by one grasping the significance of that the Lord’s Supper and Baptism. He contends that it is through these two events in which a comprehensive and panoramic picture

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\(^3\) Ibid., 3.

\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) Ibid., 4.

\(^6\) Ibid.
of the gospel comes into focus. The meal of the Eucharist should remind the believer of not only the death in which Christ died in their place but also of the fellowship with God which it provided. Through the death of Christ, the regenerate has been provided with a place at the Lord’s table, and this communicates not only the belonging of the believer to the family of God but also of the perpetual relationship that the follower of Christ enjoys. Secondly, Bock focuses upon baptism as a picture of what the gospel is and what the gospel accomplishes within the believer. Bock understands baptism as a picture of cleansing. He goes on to articulate that the cleansing work of the gospel in an individual provides new life, a life in which the presence of God dwells. Thus, Bock postulates that through the cleansing power of the gospel, which baptism represents, God does not merely credential the regenerate individual to go to Him, but rather, through the cleansing work of the gospel, God goes to them. Through this active and working power that is contained within the gospel, God makes the one who has saving faith alive to Him.

In summary, Bock sees the washing power of the gospel as an act that enables God to come into the believer’s life. This produces a new, spiritual, and eternal life within the individual, and the gift of God’s continual presence in the form of the Holy Spirit authenticates the new life. Bock presents the promise of the Spirit as one of the starting points for

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27 Bock, Recovering The Real Lost Gospel, 30.

28 Ibid., 28-29.

29 Ibid., 37.


31 Ibid., 37-38.

32 Ibid., 37.
understanding the gospel.\textsuperscript{33} This entry into new life with God also allows one to sit at the table of God in fellowship with Him.\textsuperscript{34} In Bock’s understanding of the gospel the power and work of the gospel extend beyond the moment of a decision; it continues in uninterrupted power promoting both purity before God and right relationship with Him. This displays God’s love which Bock presents as being at the core of the gospel.\textsuperscript{35}

Matthew W. Bates makes a statement that is sure to cause some eyebrows within Christianity to rise; he unambiguously contends that justification by faith is not the heart of the gospel.\textsuperscript{36} Bates in a similar vein as Bock is not saying that the salvific work of Christ is not a paramount component of the gospel, but rather that the sacrifice of Christ and faith in His saving work are only a portion of the true gospel.\textsuperscript{37} Bates further clarifies his position when he delineates that while he sees repentance and faith as imperative responses for salvation, he also understands them as peripheral to the gospel and not at its heart.\textsuperscript{38} Bates presents the climax of the gospel as the enthronement of Jesus.\textsuperscript{39} Bates suggests that this pivotal aspect of the gospel is often overlooked within Christendom.

Bates postulates that when one includes the enthronement of Jesus as a central theme of the gospel, it will become apparent that faith in Christ, as the Bible intends it, truly means

\textsuperscript{33} Bock, \textit{Recovering The Real Lost Gospel}, 5.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 37-38.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 42.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 18.
audacious and perpetual allegiance to Jesus as King. Bates goes on to communicate that the true gospel is found within what God has done in and through Jesus the King. In Bates's writings, he propagates the understanding that the truly comprehensive nature of the gospel will not be ascertained unless one grasps the fact that the gospel relates to the arrival of the anticipated king, which is Jesus, the Christ. Bates articulates the gospel as being connected to the fulfillment of time and the looming arrival of God’s Kingdom. Bates again presents the gospel as good news, and chiefly, the good news that King Jesus, the Messiah has come. Bates also contends that the gospel which Jesus gave to the church is an unchangeable gospel. According to Bates, two of the passages where the apostle Paul clearly presents the gospel, 2 Tim. 2:8, and Romans 1:3-4, both communicate that Jesus is tied to David through His lineage. It is clearly seen that Bates describes Jesus, the Messiah King, whose long-awaited arrival finally came as it is delineated within the pages of the New Testament lies at the heart of the gospel, the good news.

Chris Seay describes the gospel in a vein that is almost entirely focused upon the act of redemption. This is in sharp contrast to Bates. Seay explains the gospel as predominantly being good news, the good news that God is calling everyone to be regenerated by the power within the

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41 Ibid., 33.
42 Ibid., 47.
43 Ibid., 42.
46 Ibid., 55.
life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the King who liberates those who come to Him in faith. While both Bock and Bates certainly include the salvific nature of the gospel, neither zoom in on that particular element as exclusively as Seay does. Bates and Bock postulate a more comprehensive articulation of the gospel that includes the salvific act, the sanctification process, and the fellowship with God which the gospel provides. Ray Ortlund inaugurates his explanation of the gospel in a similar way as Seay, but he will not land there exclusively. Ortlund first presents the gospel simply as good news. In order to understand exactly what Ortlund is saying, one has to determine precisely what according to Ortlund, the good news the gospel of Jesus conveys actually is. Ortlund declares that the good news is summed up in the opening words of John 3:16, “for God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son.” While Ortlund starts with the redemptive implications of the gospel of God towards the individual, he does not end his explanation there. He goes on to articulate that the promise of the gospel includes God’s pledged ultimate restoration of His creation along with the imputing of peace with God into believers. According to Ortlund, the work of God through the gospel is not limited to the individual, but it works in and through them to create a community of faith, which is commonly known as the church. Thus, Ortlund sees the gospel in a multifaceted way that is comparable to Bock and Bates’s understanding, while arriving at a place of contention with Seay’s grasp of the gospel as being principally housed in a personalistic salvific experience.

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49 Ibid., 24.

50 Ibid., 65.
Ken Hemphill delineates his perspective of what the gospel really is, and in doing so, his position lands in a similar location as Darrell Bock. According to Hemphill, the gospel is only truly defined through Jesus. Hemphill propagates that Jesus not only proclaimed the gospel, He also performed the gospel; however, for Hemphill, the most important aspect, is that Jesus personified the gospel. Hemphill also postulates that the understanding of Jesus being the Gospel, should motivate believers to follow Him as a disciple in a practical way in an effort to be more like Him every day. According to Hemphill and Bock, one of the foundational building blocks for understanding and defining the gospel is the fact that Jesus is the gospel. An element of Hemphill’s delineation of the gospel that must be noted and highlighted is his understanding of the intersectionality of the gospel and discipleship. Scot McKnight is ultimately going to echo one of the main points of both Hemphill and Bock’s position, but he first turns to the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Corinthians as he begins to articulate a definition of the gospel. McKnight presents that in 1 Corinthians 15:1-5, 20-28, Paul states that the apostolic gospel which he had received and passed on to the Corinthians focused upon the life, death, burial, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. McKnight goes on to say that the gospel is, in essence, a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. McKnight also presents that the plotline of the totality of the Biblical canon revolves around the Messiah. This perspective reverberates what many others have said, including Bock and Hemphill, that Jesus is the gospel.

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52 Ibid., 21.
53 Scot McKnight, The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 48-49.
54 Ibid., 106.
55 Ibid., 106-107.
McKnight also pronounces that the manifold pages of the Old Testament drip with anticipation for the coming one, and the New Testament announces that Jesus is the one who was to come and indeed has come in all the glory and splendor of God, yet incarnate with human flesh.\textsuperscript{56} All of this wonderful majesty and mystery is contained within the hypostatic union of the two natures which Christ the Messiah possesses. According to McKnight, one must ascertain that the gospel announcement of the New Testament is unequivocally linked to the anticipation for the gospel as it is found throughout the Old Testament.\textsuperscript{57} McKnight conveys that when one comes to this eureka moment of understanding, the unity of the gospel story and the gospel message as the apostles proclaim it throughout the treatise of the Holy Scriptures becomes crystal clear regarding the uniformity of the foundational precepts of their gospel proclamations.\textsuperscript{58} McKnight articulates that he sees the fact that Jesus is the gospel as being at the heartbeat of his gospel comprehension; this is much like the starting point for both Bock and Hemphill. McKnight then moves to clarify that he also sees a multidimensional aspect to the gospels that builds deeply upon Jesus as being the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. This is a position which is similar to Bates’s viewpoint, and yet this multifarious perspective of the gospel which McKnight and Bates propagate is antithetical to the singular focused viewpoint of Seay.

Greg Gilbert clearly and unashamedly places the Scripture as the measuring stick, which he uses to outline the gospel. Gilbert’s extensive exegesis of the Scripture is reminiscent of the way in which Bock, McKnight and Bates delineate their interpretation of what the gospel is.

\textsuperscript{56} McKnight, \textit{The King Jesus Gospel}, 35.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 35-37.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 130.
Throughout Gilbert’s work he labors to keep the cross at the center of the discussion. Gilbert postulates that he sees the greatest peril that the church is facing in regards to the gospel, is seeing the cross removed from being understood as its hub.59 With Gilbert’s passionate position in mind, it makes sense that he would define the gospel as twin proclamations of Jesus, first, the message that God’s promised Kingdom has arrived in King Jesus. This is remarkably similar to what Bates communicates in his description of the gospel. Secondly, that through the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ, the Kingdom of God has been made available to the world.60 This second aspect of Gilbert’s gospel explanation is in concert with one of the primary points that McKnight articulates in his comprehension of the gospel. J.B. Hixson is another in a long line to tackle the difficult task of attempting to articulate what the gospel really is. Hixson contends that three questions must be answered in order to understand the gospel. First, what does the word gospel mean? And like many others including Ortlund, Hixson presents a simple and straightforward answer that the gospel is the good news. Secondly, Hixson believes that one must determine what the good news is referring to. Thirdly, Hixson says one must discover exactly what one must do in order to be saved.61 After positing his three questions, Hixson articulates that the basic meaning of the gospel is the content of what must be believed to establish saving faith.62 Hixson’s position is clearly one dimensional just as is Seay’s. Hixson communicates that the gospel is predominantly salvific in nature, and its chief components are


60 Ibid., 18-20.


62 Ibid., 57.
the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. This explanation is akin to Gilbert’s second point of elucidation regarding the gospel, as well as the starting point for McKnight’s description of what the gospel truly is.

John MacArthur explains the gospel as two sides of a coin, much like Gilbert; however, he explains it differently. MacArthur explicates the gospel as being an invitation for the slave of sin to find liberation in the life and salvific work of Jesus, the Christ. Secondly, MacArthur sees the other side of the coin to be that the one who is liberated from sin in Christ, must become a surrendered slave of Christ. MacArthur goes on to explain that the gospel is, in essence, an invitation for one to become a slave of Christ. MacArthur’s perception regarding the intersectionality of the salvific power of the gospel and its fundamental connection with discipleship is harmonious with the perspective which Hemphill outlined. John MacArthur bases his delineation of the gospel upon what he understands to be the two purest declarations regarding the path to salvation in the totality of the Scripture, Acts 16:31, and Romans 10:9, centering upon the Lordship of Christ. This concentration upon the exegesis of the Scripture is closely related to the approach one sees in Gilbert, Bock, McKnight, and Bates.

MacArthur, like Ortlund, Seay, and Hixson, also sees the gospel as good news, and as such, MacArthur says the gospel is a message, a message about Jesus, the Messiah, the king. This clarification on the gospel as good news emphasizes Jesus as the gospel just as in the

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63 J.B. Hixson, *Getting the Gospel Wrong: The Evangelical Crisis that No One is Talking About*, 56-60.


65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid., 43.
perspectives of Hemphill, McKnight, and Bock. MacArthur also pronounces an adamant contention that any announcement of the good news which removes the necessity of repentance, cannot, and must not be declared to be the missive of the gospel.\(^{68}\) MacArthur’s understanding of the gospel does not end as merely the message of Christ. He also sees the gospel as the story of the Messiah, which is laid out in the entirety of the Scripture.\(^{69}\) MacArthur’s ascertaining of the gospel as the metanarrative of the Scripture is extremely similar to what Scot McKnight postulated. The gospel, then seen and understood as the story of Jesus, as MacArthur does, reveals that the story of the Bible is truly the story of the gospel (Jesus) from beginning to end. Thus, the Bible is a story with only one gospel and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ.\(^{70}\)

N.T. Wright declares that the gospel is first a message or an announcement; this is in tune with what MacArthur, Hixson, Ortlund, and Seay presented. Wright goes on to postulate that the gospel, from the first century forward, has always been understood as good news.\(^{71}\) Wright also sees the gospel which Jesus brought as an announcement that heaven had come to earth in the form of the Messiah.\(^{72}\) According to Wright’s perspective, Jesus the King, who has come and the Kingdom He promised is a vital aspect of the true meaning of the gospel. The zooming in on Jesus as King and an emphasis on His Kingdom as pertaining to the gospel is very much in step with both McKnight and Bates. Wright even proposes that the Apostle Paul understood the gospel in a similar vein, and he says Paul perceived the gospel as more of a coronation than a


\(^{70}\) Ibid., 3-4.


\(^{72}\) Ibid., 7.
sacrifice.\textsuperscript{73} This assertion by Wright which minimizes the sacrifice of Christ battles with the position of many scholars including MacArthur, McKnight, and Gilbert. Wright goes on to explain that he believes the gospel has eternal implications, but that most people overlook the earthly implications the gospel has upon the cosmos.\textsuperscript{74} Wright’s contention that the gospel has an impact upon the earth is cohesive with Ortlund’s assertion that the gospel holds the promise of God restoring His creation. Michael J. Gorman suggests that Paul reveals the origin of the gospel of God to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 1:3. This gospel, he contends is a triad of virtues, faith, hope, and love. According to Gorman, the reason faith, love, and hope are so central, is that they reflect the missional character of God, the missional narrative of Christ, and the apostolic message and missional identity.\textsuperscript{75} Gorman’s highlighting of love as a central component of the gospel is in unison with what Bock presented as the core of the gospel.\textsuperscript{76} According to Gorman, an understanding of the gospel of God and comprehending the mission of God are deeply interconnected.\textsuperscript{77} The fact that Gorman perceives the meaning of the gospel in a missional sense is analogous to Ortlund’s propagation that the gospel is observable through the Lord’s Church.\textsuperscript{78} Gorman also presents that the mission of God can be seen as His desire to bring salvation to the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{73} Wright, \textit{Simply Good News}, 73.
\footnote{74} Ibid., 72.
\footnote{77} Gorman, \textit{Becoming the Gospel}, 298.
\footnote{78} Ortlund, \textit{The Gospel}, 16
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world. This redemptive aspect of the gospel as presented by Gorman is worded in a similar way as to how John MacArthur declared it.

According to Dustin W. Ellington, the gospel addresses the relationship between God’s righteousness and human righteousness. Ellington does not discount the salvific act of justification as an aspect of the gospel, as Bates does in his work. Ellington focuses upon the establishment of a transformed and world-restoring community through the gospel and the believer’s union with Christ. This restorative understanding of the gospel which Ellington espouses is reminiscent of aspects found in the propagations of both N.T. Wright and Ray Ortlund. Richard G. Hutchinson like many others including, Hemphill, McKnight, and Bock, understands that the center of the gospel is Jesus. However, Hutchinson sees the gospel in a much more salvific vein than Ellington does. Hutchinson presents the gospel as being housed in the redemptive work of Christ.

Even with his clear focus on the salvational components of the gospel, Hutchinson also acknowledges that there are eschatological implications in the gospel. He propagates that the gospel also provides the believer with the promise of the future appearing of Christ. This understanding contains elements of what is explained by McKnight, Bates, and Wright. While Hutchinson recognizes the eschatological impact of the gospel, he clearly perceives the gospel

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81 Ibid., 176.


83 Ibid., 38.
predominantly as redemptive in nature, just not as strongly as Seay does. Josh Chatraw presents the gospel as primarily salvific as does Hutchinson and Seay. Chatraw specifically sees it as God calling individuals to repentance. In this understanding of the gospel, Chatraw highlights what MacArthur says is paramount to the message of the gospel and that is repentance. J. Todd Billings propagates that the gospel can at its basic sum be understood as the offer of reconciliation with God and newness of life, which is received free from Christ through faith. Billings also contends that this explanation of the gospel is based upon how John Calvin understood the gospel as well. Billings again, like Seay and Hutchinson, presents the gospel as unilaterally salvific in nature.

Theologically Speaking

A study of the gospel stands unequivocally housed within the realm of theology. As a result, the project director believes that it serves an examination of this topic well to explore how theologians delineate gospel within their written works that are purely theological in nature. While this section will include a few theological treatises not titled as systematic theologies, this segment's primary focus will center upon the gospel as it is presented by theologians in their published systematic theologies. This strategic approach to the study at hand will provide this literature review with a panoramic perspective since the project director began with works that, 

87 Ibid.
while they are overtly scholarly, they are more practical in application. He is now finishing the review with publications that are more in the lane of classical theological writings.

Thomas C. Oden postulates that if one does not understand the heart of the gospel as presented in the New Testament, they will likely find the remainder of the scripture to be very perplexing. According to Graeme Goldsworthy, the heart of the gospel profoundly exists in what God accomplished through Christ for believers. Goldsworthy goes on to explain that this accomplishment is primarily salvific in nature and centers on the sinner’s salvation from sin, the devil, and death. Goldsworthy also succinctly and emphatically presents that the gospel is what one must believe in order to receive salvation. He continues to anchor his position regarding the gospel only being that which Jesus did two thousand years ago, and that one cannot equate it to the mere activity that the gospel produces, such as preaching and teaching, or even faith and repentance.

Paul Wells takes a different approach, he propagates that the gospel not only centers on Christ’s salvific accomplishments, but it also reveals that God is a God of grace.

James Leo Garrett seems to travel down a similar theological path as Paul Wells when it comes to recognizing that the tenets of the gospel exacerbate the noticeability of God’s grace. Garrett communicates that God’s gracious action of offering forgiveness through the gospel toward sinful man is not an expected action, but instead that it is entirely unexpected.


90 Ibid., 59.

91 Ibid.


also points out that the salvific power of the gospel is a work that promises to ultimately make the saved whole in every facet of their being when the process of salvation reaches completion with the final act of glorification.\(^9^4\) Millard J. Erickson postulates that God is concerned with every human need. However, he also makes a pointed assertion that based upon the teaching of the New Testament, Jesus is much more concerned with the spiritual need of humanity above all else.\(^9^5\) This perspective brings how Erickson primarily describes the gospel as salvific in nature into clear focus. However, Erickson agrees with Garrett regarding the culmination of salvation, which is man’s glorification, the passing from the earthly to the eternal, and ultimately brings about the rendering of the saved, absolutely complete in every way.\(^9^6\)

Norman L. Geisler communicates the graciousness of God’s offer of salvation to humanity through the gospel as an act of God’s unmerited favor and a display of His nature of grace and mercy.\(^9^7\) Geisler’s propagation places him in agreement with both Garrett and Wells regarding how the gospel highlights the gracious nature of God. Geisler also delineates salvation as transpiring in three stages, justification, sanctification, and glorification.\(^9^8\) Thus, in the theological vein regarding the stages of salvation, Geisler is in tune with both Ericson and Garrett. Geisler goes on to present that one can discern the attributes of God through the salvific results that transpire when one receives the gospel. Chiefly, Geisler points out that one can


\(^9^6\) Ibid., 913.


\(^9^8\) Ibid., 235.
ascertain the holiness of God in how that God affords man holy standing before Him through the gospel.99

In his writing, Henry Clarence Thiessen announces that the gospel must be responded to, that repentance and faith are the only adequate response that leads to life, full and eternal as the gospel promises.100 Thiessen continues his explanation by pointing out that the gospel promises the regeneration of sinful man by means of repentance and faith towards Christ. Thiessen explains that the act of regeneration provides man with a new life, a new nature, and a new standing in Christ.101 According to Thiessen, this regeneration, which transpires through the work of the gospel, brings the repentant and redeemed into a place of holiness before God. Moreover, Thiessen declares that imputed holiness is the way that God brings man into the right fellowship with Himself, and imputed holiness from Christ is an exclusive aspect of the gospel.102 Thus, Thiessen’s position on holiness is akin to Geisler’s propagation on the topic, even though Thiessen does approach it from a different angle.

Lewis Sperry Chafer taught that the finished work of Christ as presented in the gospel provided redemption towards sin, reconciliation toward man, and propitiation toward God.103 Loraine Boettner presented that Christ was the only fitting substitutionary sacrifice who could atone man's sin and provide ultimate propitiation.104 Thus, Chafer and Boettner agree regarding


101 Ibid., 275.

102 Ibid., 279.


what the finished work of Christ, as taught in the gospel, truly accomplished. Furthermore, Boettner presents that God's chief attribute, His holiness, can be ascertained through His salvific work. Boettner's position is reminiscent of the positions presented by both Geisler and Thiessen regarding the fact that God’s holiness is on display through the gospel.

Charles C. Ryrie presented in his writing that the thrust of the gospel from God’s perspective centers entirely upon the total work of salvation. According to Ryrie, God's total work in the gospel can be understood as bringing the redeemed sinner from condemnation to justification and from spiritual death to eternal life. Ryrie also presents justification as one of the direct results of the gospel, as well as the fundamental doctrine in all of Christianity. Ryrie seems to focus on justification more than sanctification and glorification; this highlighting of justification above the other phases of salvation appears to be out of step with what is presented by Garrett, Erickson, and Geisler. However, Ryrie is in agreement with Boettner and Chafer regarding the exclusiveness of Christ’s atoning sacrifice in bringing rightness between Holy God and sinful man.

Paul P. Enns propagates a view regarding how Christ is the exclusive means to rightness between man and God and that it is solely through the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on the cross that sinful man experiences transformation and becomes the redeemed who lives in God’s imputed righteousness.

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107 Ibid., 343.

108 Ibid., 323.

contemplates why the atoning work of Christ was essential, one discovers the answer by examining both the love and justice of God.\textsuperscript{110} However, Enns' position on this subject is in perfect harmony with Chafer, Boettner, and Ryrie's stance. Enns also places a premium on the doctrine of redemption in the theology of the gospel. As a result, Enns reminds his readers that the born again truly belong to God as the redeemed.\textsuperscript{111} This position, which Enns propagates, is a good prompt for the believer to recall the fact that the thrust of the gospel is found in the reality that man can be totally and unequivocally changed as a result of the redeeming work of Christ as presented in soteriology. James M. Hamilton echoes Enns's position; Hamilton asserts that the death of Christ satisfied God’s demand for justice regarding sin. Then Hamilton goes on to contend that this brings complete joy to the believer and moves them into right standing before God, their sovereign Lord.\textsuperscript{112} Hamilton’s position communicates a vital aspect of the teaching of the gospel.

\textbf{Theological Foundations}

The study of the gospel will usually cause one the turn to the New Testament Scriptures. This author projects that if one were to ask Christians where they find the gospel in the Bible, the Old or New Testament, the response would be overwhelmingly the New Testament. While this author concedes that it is a trick question, the correct answer is yes! One discovers the gospel in both the Old and New Testament. In reality, the gospel is the metanarrative of the Bible. As a

\textsuperscript{110} Wayne A. Grudem, \textit{Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 569.

\textsuperscript{111} Enns, \textit{The Moody Handbook of Theology}, 323-325.

result, one must go back to the beginning, the book of Genesis, to begin to understand and define the gospel.

To further establish the fact that the gospel is inestimably anchored in the Old Testament, notice what is discovered in the first seventeen verses of the book of Matthew. While many skip to verse 18 in Matthew chapter one to avoid the extensive genealogy that Mathew presents as the launching point of his writing, it is within the first seventeen verses that Mathew connects the gospel with the Old Testament. It is through this comprehensive genealogy which is presented as the very opening words at the beginning of the New Testament that takes the reader back to the Old Testament. The genealogy of the Christ, which Matthew provided proves that Jesus is the rightful heir to the throne of David, and it also reveals that the lineage of Jesus can be traced to Abraham. Moreover, according to Bates, two of the passages where the apostle Paul clearly presents the gospel, 2 Tim. 2:8, and Romans 1:3-4 communicate that Jesus is tied to David through His lineage. Thus, the gospel is rooted in the Old Testament. Furthermore, the gospel is a person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The necessity for the euangelion was first made evident through the fall of man, which transpired within the confines of the Garden of Eden in Genesis chapter three. The promise of the gospel first is revealed within the protoevangelium of Gen. 3:15, where God provides the first prophecy found within the biblical Canon with the following words. “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” Moreover, when one arrives at Genesis 12:3, they ascertain the progress of the promise of the gospel, for it is here that God promises to bless all the families

113 Bates, Gospel Allegiance, 55.

114 Christopher J. H. Wright, Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1992), 27.
of the earth through Abram. Moving on to Genesis chapter twenty-two, the reader encounters a clearer picture of the gospel. While the entirety of the chapter has rich connectivity to the gospel, it is the words of verses six through eight which stands out to this author.

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together (Genesis 22:6-8).

In these verses, one can see that the gospel is first about a sacrifice, ultimately the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on the cross for the sins of mankind. Secondly, in this passage, the presence of faith is evident, first in Abraham believing and obeying God, and in Isaac placing faith in what his father told him about God and going with his father in obedience to God. Notice that the response to God by both Abraham and Isaac included both faith and obedience. While one is not saved by action, they are saved to action. Thus, it is within the first book of the Bible, Genesis, in which the reader is first introduced to the prerequisite of the gospel, the promise of the gospel, the progress of the gospel, and a picture of the gospel.

The story of the gospel serves as the metanarrative of the scripture. Thus, since the gospel is, in essence, a person, the Lord Jesus Christ, the plotline of the totality of the Biblical canon revolves around the Messiah. The manifold pages of the Old Testament drip with anticipation for the coming one, and the New Testament announces that Jesus is the one who was to come and indeed has come in all the glory and splendor of God, yet incarnate with human flesh. All of this wonderful majesty and mystery is contained within the hypostatic union of the two

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116 Ibid., 35.
natures which Christ the Messiah possesses. As a result, one must ascertain that the gospel announcement of the New Testament is unequivocally linked to the anticipation for the gospel as it is found throughout the Old Testament. When one comes to this eureka moment of understanding, the unity of the gospel story and the gospel message as the apostles proclaim it throughout the treatise of the Holy Scriptures becomes crystal clear regarding the uniformity of the foundational precepts of their gospel proclamations.\textsuperscript{117} In short, the Bible, the words which are God-breathed according to the testimony of the apostle Paul, presents and proclaims a single amalgamated gospel, which is found in both the Old Testament and New Testament.

The gospel, then seen and understood as the story of Jesus, reveals that the story of the Bible is truly the story of the gospel (Jesus) from beginning to end. A story of the one true gospel, and that is the gospel of Jesus, the Christ.\textsuperscript{118} Therefore, the Old Testament narrative is intractably connected to the gospel of the New Testament, which serves as the theme of the entire Biblical canon. Thus, it is ascertained that God’s story as it is seen within the characters and chapters of the Old Testament canon is a story of God bringing the opportunity of perpetual rightness of relationship or, as McKnight puts it, “consummation” between God and His people through the work of Christ.\textsuperscript{119} The simply profound gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ reveals the glory of God in the Messiah.\textsuperscript{120}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[117] McKnight, \textit{The King Jesus Gospel}, 130.
\item[119] McKnight, \textit{The King Jesus Gospel}, 36.
\item[120] John Piper, \textit{God is the Gospel: Meditations on God’s Love as the Gift of Himself} (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 65.
\end{footnotes}
Understanding the Gospel Beyond a Mere Transaction

One must endeavor to make sure that there is not a hole in their gospel understanding, which will lead to both an incomplete understanding and presentation of the gospel of Jesus. The most glaring hole in the gospel conversation of many is reducing the salvific experience to a mere transaction.¹²¹ Bock says that “the gospel is not about a business deal.”¹²² For others, they present an easy cheap grace, and cheap grace is one of the chief enemies of the church.¹²³ Those who peddle in cheap grace propagate the idea that one can be born again by simply believing the right things, and to them, this is apart from showing evidence of a transformed life or a passion for the transformation God promises through salvation. The reality is Christ expects much more from us than simply believing the rights things.¹²⁴ This truth fills many of the standard holes found in the gospel of the modern church. The following words of the apostle John should be considered.

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything (1 John 3:16-20).

It is evident that the apostle John is communicating a gospel that permeates the individual and transforms them continually in such a way that it is manifest in how they love and respond to

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God as well as how they love and respond to each other. According to Metzger, 1 John was written to illustrate the genuine marks and evidence of salvation.\textsuperscript{125}

Moreover, the framework of the gospel story being revealed through the entire Bible starting in Genesis and running all the way through the book of Revelation, illustrates that the whole gospel is only seen through the whole Bible. In that same vein, the whole gospel has as its goal the transformation of the whole person. The total transformation of a believer, which comes through discipleship, must be a part of the gospel conversation. However, the sad reality is that for many Christians the idea of introducing the gospel through conversation is a foreign thought. This is often a result of one systematically compartmentalizing their life and relegating their relationship with Christ to one compartment.\textsuperscript{126} Therefore, before one can lead others to embrace Christ as the Lord of the totality of their life, they must first see that the gospel cannot be compartmentalized in their own life. Discipleship requires instant obedience, and it always comes with a cost; this obedience must be present within the believer before they can effectively communicate the cost of discipleship to others.\textsuperscript{127} Falling to remind folks that the gospel cannot be housed within a compartment, or to allow them to believe that transforming grace can come without a cost, is to cheapen the grace that Christ provided on the cross which cost Him His life.

Thus, the gospel is not a transaction that is housed within a moment of time; rather, it is an invitation into a deep and abiding relationship with God through His Son. Moreover, this relationship which the gospel provides restores a sinful man with a holy God. Notice the words of John the Baptist as recorded by Luke, “John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Will Metzger, \textit{Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel Wholly by Grace Communicated Truthfully & Lovingly} (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 59.}

\footnote{Ibid., 220.}

\footnote{Tony Evans, \textit{Kingdom Disciples: Heaven’s Representatives on Earth} (Chicago: IL: Moody Publishers, 2017), 80-81.}
\end{footnotes}
water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” This passage presents a paramount picture of the promise, provision, and position of the gospel. As it is through this verse that one may ascertain the provision of Christ, the position of Christ, and the promise of Christ regarding the giving of the Holy Spirit. Luke continues to present this truth as a connection between the Old and New Testament in the second chapter of the book of Acts when Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, ties the promise and provision of the gospel back to the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32. It would do the student of scripture well to go back and remember the context of Luke 3:16, for this verse is a part of Luke’s account of the baptism of Jesus. This event points the believer to one of the two celebrations of obedience and remembrance that is practiced within the church. As the church of the living Lord, those born again participate in believer’s baptism specifically, and only after their salvific experience. However, from that point forward, they have the opportunity to participate in the celebration and remembrance of the Lord’s Supper perpetually. Through the gospel, the repentant responder in faith becomes washed by the blood of Christ. It is this washing of regeneration that provides the believer with a place at the Lord’s Table. A place at the Lord’s table is provided only for those who have become part of the family of God through His Son, and who have received His Spirit. This fact points the student of the scripture back to the promise that God gave through Ezekiel when he said “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place My Spirit within you.” Thus, it can be seen and must be conceded that a gospel conversation which leaves out the fact that God wants a deep abiding relationship with individuals, and that He will progressively be active in sanctifying the believer through
discipleship, just as is seen in both the Old and New Testaments, is an articulation of cheap grace and is in reality not the gospel at all.

The Conundrum of Teaching the Gospel in a Postmodern World

Postmodernism and the ideologies which are derived from it seem to envelop the current mindset found within modern culture. Moreover, the fact that the church is faced with presenting the exclusive gospel to an inclusive world which has been indoctrinated with a postmodern worldview often reveals the fact that the church is woefully under prepared to face that challenge. As a result, the church frequently feels defeated and adrift in its current culture. However, when armed with an understanding of postmodernism as presented below, the church as a whole, and the ministers who lead in it, can be confident in their ability to share a complete theology of the gospel to a postmodern world.

Truth is still true, even in the late modern world. Without question, the world has changed since the dawn of the age often referred to as pre-modernism to the point today, which can be understood as the period of late post-modernism. Technology looks vastly different today as compared to the cutting edge in the time of the Greek philosophers. The language in which men use to communicate has evolved greatly as well, even to the point where many words simply do not convey what they used to communicate years ago. And, even more importantly, how people think and view the world around them has become audaciously augmented to the point where skepticism and apathy walk hand in hand in this overtly secular age. However, regardless of the period, questions need answers, even questions that may not be asked as frequently as they once were; and truth remains the most adequate answer, even in a late modern world where skepticism and apathy cohabitate. This oxymoronic mindset seems to be a result of the postmodern mentality which has attempted to redefine the meaning and nature of truth many
times. However, the question regarding truth is not new nor was it invented by postmodern thinkers. Pilate asked Jesus “what is truth” in John 18:38.

Moreover, it is apparent that this question regarding truth still haunts our world today. Chad Meister put it this way, “in philosophy these days the nature of truth is currently one of the major enigmas, and widely divergent and contrary views on the subject have emerged.”128 Postmodernism offers a plethora of ideas regarding truth; however, most of them fall under the category of subjectivism. Understanding and adhering to subjective truth is akin to attempting to nail jelly to the wall, nothing sticks or stays where it was originally placed. Thus, postmodernism’s view of truth is woefully flawed and void of substance. In contrast, a biblical understanding of truth is one in which truth must be understood as objective and not subjective.

Delineating exactly what postmodernism is, presents a very arduous problem that causes the would-be definer some level of consternation as it is difficult to accurately articulate.129 Postmodernism is sometimes also referred to as late modernism. However, in this work, the ideology at hand will be referred to simply as postmodernism. Even many who proclaim to embrace postmodernism fail to define the philosophy. Postmodernism at its core is a worldview. A worldview can be understood as how someone views the world around them. Thus, one’s worldview is determined by the lens in which they see and interpret their surroundings. A launching point for comprehending postmodernism probably should begin with an introduction to the atheistic French philosopher Jacques Derrida. Derrida, known as the father of


deconstructionism, understood a hermeneutical approach that seeks to deconstruct and then
reconstruct meaning.\textsuperscript{130} Deconstructionism embraces conventionalism, which propagates that
meaning is relative to both cultures and situations.\textsuperscript{131} Jacques Derrida also endorsed
perspectivism, which says that all truth is conditioned based upon an individual’s perspective.\textsuperscript{132}
Derrida’s deconstructionism and his views have played a major role in forming what is now
called postmodernism.

Moreover, the worldview of postmodernism is marked by several precepts which need to
be ascertained in order to understand postmodernism. In the realm of postmodernism, truth is not
understood as a buried treasure which is discoverable, but rather, the postmodern thinker
perceives that truth is created by the individual.\textsuperscript{133} This mindset is a challenge to the philosophy of
Descartes, who propagated that truth existed before human beings. However, this is not to say
that Descartes was an enemy of postmodernism, but more on that later. Also, postmodernism
believes that individuals are merely a product of their environment for lack of better verbiage.
Thus, the idea that the apple does not fall far from the tree. Thus, to the postmodernist, a person’s
situatedness determines how they think and view the world around them.\textsuperscript{134} Postmoderns also
understand language to be very fluid and insufficient to represent and communicate external
realities accurately.\textsuperscript{135} It is also interesting to note that the postmodern perspective rejects

\textsuperscript{130} Norman Geisler, \textit{The Big Book Of Christian Apologetics: An A to Z Guide} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker
Books, 2012), 120-121.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 121.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 121-122.

\textsuperscript{133} Stewart E. Kelly, and James K. Dew, \textit{Understanding Postmodernism: A Christian Perspective} (Downers

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 5.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 5.
methodological objectivity, which is not surprising when one remembers the postmodern proclivity for subjective truth. The postmodern worldview often openly employs the ideology of pragmatism, which only propagates that the value of action only lies in the ascertainable and observable outcome.\textsuperscript{136}

Moreover, postmodernism recognizes truth as more of a therapeutic subjective entity and not as a static objective reality.\textsuperscript{137} In this same vein, the postmodern mindset rejects the idea that North America and the United States are somehow morally superior to other areas such as Asia.\textsuperscript{138} This ideological reality is currently evident in American culture, and it is seen in the desire for so many to see America fall or at least be radically changed from the nation of democracy that it has been for over two hundred years. This author finds it strange that the postmodernist can be so sure that something like American democracy, the Bible, or anything else is so wrong. Especially in light of the fact that postmodernism rejects the ideas of certainty and expressly discards the notion that humanity has the ability to know something for sure.\textsuperscript{139} Even the well-known postmodern advocate Richard Rorty rejects the modern idea of universal human reason but still contends to absolutely be an atheist.\textsuperscript{140} Which seems like two incompatible beliefs to this author. However, with the previous precepts of postmodernism stated above, it is evident that the postmodern worldview is a difficult proposition to comprehend fully.


\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 6.

\textsuperscript{139} Kelly and Dew, \textit{Understanding Postmodernism}, 8.

It is also apparent that postmodernism is an enemy of biblical Christianity. This enmity between the Christian worldview and the philosophy of postmodernism is succinctly seen in the reality that if the postmodern view of subjective truth is accepted, then the objective truth of Christianity is immediately ruled out from possessing any genuine value and actual validity.\(^{141}\) Groothuis said that “the problem with postmoderns is that they have made peace with a poisonous view of truth.”\(^{142}\) The question as to how postmodernism became so prevalent in the current cultural climate can be summed up by understanding that this ideology is all around society in both cultural influences and social structures; in reality, postmodernism is simply in the air that our world is breathing.\(^{143}\)

According to an old Russian proverb, one word of truth outweighs the world.\(^{144}\) The heartbeat of that Russian proverb speaks to the issue at hand. In reality, the challenge that postmodernism presents to Christianity revolves around truth, the nature of truth, the validity of truth, the certainty of truth, the value of truth, and the ability to recognize the truth. As a result of the influence of postmodernism, truth has been in a state of decay in the current culture. This decay is evident in the prevailing contemporary thinking that proclaims that the concept of absolute objective truth is implausible, impractical, and irrational.\(^{145}\) Thus, clearly, the most


\(^{144}\) Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, 17.

\(^{145}\) Ibid., 22.
alarming challenge in which postmodernism presents is housed in how this flawed worldview has altered how the masses approach truth and knowledge.\footnote{146}

The challenge that postmodernism posits towards Christianity is further articulated in the way in which this secular worldview presents various religious convictions as a buffet to be chosen from or ignored altogether. In the postmodern mindset, religion becomes a consumer commodity to be selected or rejected based upon personal preferences and not on facts, truth, and or rigorous validity.\footnote{147} This lack of substance in which postmodernism utilizes to evaluate religious propagations such as Christianity is probably based on the thick vein of deconstructionism, which is an ever-present hermeneutical ideology housed within postmodernism. This deconstructive hermeneutical element of the postmodern world is often presented as one of the most dangerous rudiments of postmodernism in relation to Christianity.\footnote{148} This truth is ascertained by understanding that in the postmodern view, words and language not to mean what they mean, but rather language is a cavern containing a myriad of meanings and a plethora of interpretations. Postmodernism truly contends that humans are completely incapable of viewing the world in an objectively impartial manner.\footnote{149} Thomas Howe articulated this quandary when he presented the following statement.

“\textquote{The prevailing view among theorists of hermeneutics is that no one comes to the text without a set of presuppositions. One author of a text on biblical interpretation asserts, \textquote{All understanding and interpretation proceed from a prior understanding or a system of making sense of reality.} Another prevailing view among hermeneutic theorists is that because of the apparent unavoidability of one’s presuppositions, objectivity is not possible. The rejection of the possibility of objectivity in interpretation is not confined to

\footnote{146} Benjamin K. Forrest, Joshua D. Chatraw, and Alister E. McGrath, eds. \textit{The History of Apologetics: A Biographical and Methodological Introduction} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020), 641.
\footnote{147} Groothuis, \textit{Truth Decay}, 28.
\footnote{148} Ibid., 111.
\footnote{149} Kelly, and Dew, \textit{Understanding Postmodernism}, 215.
those theorists who fall outside the evangelical camp. The flight from objectivity is rampant among evangelical theorists also, evidenced by such characteristic assertions as, ‘There is no such thing as a pure reading or a truly objective interpretation.’”\(^{150}\)

This flawed view of postmodernism is not only void of a foundation on which one can build, but it also robs Christianity of biblical validity and value in the eyes of the postmodernist. The disregard for the possibility of genuine objective truth being found in the pages of the Holy Scripture by the postmodernist should be seen as a shot across the bow of biblical Christianity. However, the reality is that a community of faith void of revealed truth would be both pointless and pathetic.\(^{151}\)

The postmodern world also places a ridiculously high value on personal freedom and individuality, even to the point where the individual’s freedom is not seen as being accountable to the Lordship of God. In essence, this tenet of the postmodern worldview says that God is not one to which humanity must surrender, but rather, mankind is only truly responsible for surrendering to himself.\(^{152}\) Thus, it is ascertained that postmodernism also peddles humanism, even to the point where man, the individual himself, is the truest measure of all things.\(^{153}\) From here, it is easy for even the casual reader to connect the dots between this precept of postmodernism with the notion of subjective relativism, which permeates the totality of the postmodernist’s worldview. It is also easy to see the dangerousness this mentality presents to the belief system in which one may refer to as biblically orthodox Christianity, a worldview that


\(^{151}\) Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, 115.


\(^{153}\) Khaldoun A. Sweis, and Chad V. Meister, eds. *Christian Apologetics: An Anthology of Prime Sources* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 519.
touts its religious convictions as being anchored in the eternal immoveable objective truth of the Holy Bible.

Postmodernism also postulates that Christianity cannot keep the promises that it makes, especially in the realm of offering individuals true and lasting satisfaction through a relationship with Jesus Christ, as offered in the gospel. Moreover, postmodernism denies that the Holy Scripture can answer man’s nagging questions regarding humanity's reason for existence. Phil Fernandes summed up the popular mindset of current culture in the following statement.

"Today, unfortunately, many people are not concerned about finding rational truth. But, they are very concerned about their existential experience. Many people seek meaning in life; they also want their deepest desires to be satisfied. At the same time, many people are reluctant to admit their faults."\textsuperscript{154}

The prevalence of the postmodern secular society to seek fulfillment in themselves, and at the same time reject the idea that there is the capacity for fallacy and blatant sinfulness in their thoughts and actions is seen as an especially egregious and dangerous mindset when viewed through the lens of biblical Christianity. Thus, this self-fulfilling and self-righteous mentality place even more enmity between the postmodernist philosophy and the Christian objective perspective.

While it is evident that postmodernism attempts to present a myriad of challenges to any propagation of objective truth in general, and especially the gospel of Christianity specifically, there are simply too many of these challenging nuances of postmodernism to flesh out and unpack in this short section. However, this author will close this section by presenting one final

challenge from postmodernism regarding truth. In the realm of postmodern thinking, one
discovers that this secular system vehemently rejects the concept of critical realism. In short,
critical realism is an ideology which concedes that man’s grasp of is partial and influenced by
experiences.\textsuperscript{155} However, critical realism rejects any presentation of subjective truth. Some
postmodern thinkers go as far as to claim that any attempt to establish objective truth as reality is
in actuality a failed attempt to prove realism, which is the thought that reality can truly be
described in the confines of language.\textsuperscript{156} Again, this proposition, which yields the text as
impotent and void of validity, calls everything housed within the pages of the Holy Scripture into
question. And this anchorless mindset lends itself to the doubting of the miraculous claims of the
Bible. Thus, the light that postmodernism casts attempts to places complete doubt upon the
religious supernatural. Norman Geisler posited the following in an article regarding the
philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

The problem, then, with the liberalism that springs from Kant is not factual but
philosophical. It is not exegetical but ideological. It imports an alien metaphysics and
methodology into biblical studies. Kant himself concluded that the Christian religion
should operate without a belief in miracles, declaring that, “If a moral religion (which
consists not in dogmas and rites but in the heart’s disposition to fulfill all human duties as
divine commands) is to be established, all miracles which history connects with its
inauguration must themselves, in the end, render superfluous the belief in miracles in
general.” Considering the immense influence of Kant on the modern world, we see once
more the importance of our thesis to ‘beware of philosophy.’\textsuperscript{157}

With Geisler’s statement and the previous section of this work in mind, it is ascertained
that the philosophy of postmodernism is not merely relegated to postmodernist, however,
regardless of the name tag this ideology wears, it still presents an important challenge to the

\textsuperscript{155} Groothuis, \textit{Truth Decay}, 131-132.

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 131.

\textsuperscript{157} Norman L. Geisler, “Beware of Philosophy: A Warning to Biblical Scholars,” \textit{Christian Apologetics
heartbeat of Christianity. Moreover, the tenets of postmodernism are thus seen as a secular philosophy for which Christianity needs to be ready to offer a gentle yet thoroughly apologetic answer.

It must be conceded from the embryonic stages of this section that in the confines of the space limitations of a mere portion of a thesis such as this, it is impossible to offer a completely adequate response to the ideology of postmodernism. As a result, this section will simply offer a brief response and suggest a proper starting place regarding the mounting of a Christian apologetic defense in light of the challenges that postmodernism presents. Moreover, the reader must be reminded that as believers, the church should not be surprised by the challenges with which the belief system of Christianity has to endure and defend itself from. Jeffery Spencer summed up this notion exquisitely when he posited the following.

Every Christian doctrine has its day to be attacked - and defended. The Christian Church, from its conception, has believed in such magnificent teachings as the existence of a theistic God, the possibility of miracles, the uniqueness of Christ, the truth of His inerrant and infallible Word, the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the necessity of God’s eternal judgment of those who do not accept His offer of eternal life in Jesus. Yet, all of these doctrines have been attacked by skeptics, critics, cultists, and even those within the Christian faith. It is natural to question why all of these beliefs have become so unbelievable in this modern day.\textsuperscript{158}

With Spencer’s statement in mind, may the church see these challenges as an opportunity to present the gospel of Christ and engage a desperate and starving world with the satisfying mana of the transforming power which is housed within the message of grace.

This author contends that any Christian response to postmodernism must have at its foundation a biblical understanding of truth. Call to mind once again that Pilate asked Jesus, “what is truth” in John 18:38. As a result, the journey at hand is an expedition to discover the

true truth. That statement calls to mind what William Nix said regarding finding the true church. Nix said, “seeking the true church and its teaching in history is akin to trying to follow a single noodle in a bowl of spaghetti.” Thus, finding true truth in a secular postmodern world may seem like someone trying to find a needle in a haystack. However, truth is understood as such once context is established, and when seen in the proper context, absolute objective truth is established. The Bible unashamedly and continually uses words that communicate the reality of absolute truth with its pages. The primary Old Testament word that is translated as the truth comes from the Hebrew word emet. This word conveys the meaning of both stability and support. Moreover, the Hebrew Word emet communicates faithfulness and conformity to that which is fact. There is no room in the Hebrew word for truth to bear the idea of truth being relegated to culture or a social setting. In a similar vein, the Greek word aletheia, which is often used in the New Testament and is translated as truth, also has at the core of its meaning the concept of conformity to fact. Thus, it is an entirely biblical perspective to contend that God reveals true truth. The Bible also presents that God is truth; as a result, absolute objective truth is knowable as God reveals it.

The apostle Paul wrote regarding this truth in his letter to the Romans; he said, “What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief would not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

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161 Groothuis, Truth Decay, 60-61.

162 Ibid., 62.
May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, ‘THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.’” Romans 3:3-4 (NASB). The statement “let God be found true” is an absolute statement. Thus again, the Christian perspective of truth is that of absolutely absolute truth.\textsuperscript{163}

In conclusion, the postmodern philosophy is a difficult mindset to define, and at times it seems to be difficult for Christianity to stand up to the challenges that its secular ideology presents. However, once postmodernism is understood, it becomes apparent that the primary aspect of this worldview is how it deconstructs and then reconstructs truth. From here, the believer can start to see the logical inconsistencies in which postmodernism houses within its precepts. Moreover, when the starting point is truth, the believer can be well-armed for the discussion since the Bible speaks verbosely about the subject of truth. Postmodernism is here, and it is everywhere; it is in the very air that the current culture is breathing.

As a result, the church must seek to understand the postmodern mindset regardless of the title the adherent claims, and then use that opportunity to offer an answer, an absolutely better answer, for Christ is always the answer. Additionally, the reader must be mindful that postmodern thinkers are not going to come to Christ through mere debate and argument. But rather, faith and truth are the work of God, may the church pray for the culture in which it finds itself, may they pray for the salvation of the desperately lost, even for those who do not yet realize that they are lost. Lastly as the church engages this postmodern culture, may they be mindful that while men can change a man’s mind, only God can change a man’s heart. And may the church realize that the matter of engaging the postmodernist and defending Christianity against the challenges of postmodernism, is at its core, a salvific mission, one where hearts, lives, 

\textsuperscript{163} Groothuis, \textit{Truth Decay}, 69.
and eternity hangs in the balance. Thus, the church must engage the postmodern world with the depth and truth that is only found in a complete theology of the gospel.

**Theoretical Foundations**

The theoretical framework behind this dissertation lies in a belief that one’s understanding of the gospel will dictate the satisfaction and fulfillment they find in their relationship with the Lord. Moreover, a deep and complete understanding of the gospel will also afford the ministry student a solid foundation from which to minister and thus, should afford them both longevity and satisfaction in the ministry God has called them. On the contrary, this thesis presupposes that a defective grasp on the gospel will result in a dysfunctional approach to ministry, with a high propensity for abandoning the ministry altogether. Thus, this project aims to communicate a thoroughly biblical theology of the gospel to aid the ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in their preparation to fulfill the ministry God has called them to perform while both finding fulfillment in their call and endurance of tenure.

The ministry dropout rate of ministerial students after graduation is alarming. According to Calvin Miller, 80 percent of those who graduate with a ministry degree will do something besides ministry within twenty years of their graduation.\(^{164}\) Moreover, every year 2.7 million church members fall into the category of inactive members in their respective churches.\(^ {165}\) According to Thom Rainer, Southern Baptist churches who are dying have at least one thing in common, and that is the fact that their position of the senior pastor has been a revolving door;


\(^{165}\) Ibid., 29.
more specifically, their pastors averaged a tenure of fewer than thirty-six months. Rainer also discovered that the churches were often in a death spiral, which led to the inability to adequately compensate their pastors, which further led to the pastor’s discontentment and even more pastoral turnover for the church. Rainer also states that statistically speaking, the vast majority of churches that enter the death spiral continue in the cycle of deterioration and changing of pastors until they finally close their doors.

The difficulty of pastoral ministry is well documented and even more frequently voiced by pastors. When one begins to wade through current research, it is easy to ascertain that ministers and their ministries are in trouble. According to LifeWay, 84 percent of pastors attest to being on call 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. The same study goes on to highlight the fact that 80 percent of those serving as a pastor experience conflict in their churches. These elements and probably a myriad more factor into the frightening statistic that articulates that 90 percent of churches are either declining or growing at a slower rate than the population of the community in which the church resides. Many have asked the question, what can the church do to reverse these alarming trends? Others have formulated programs and propagated specific modern and traditional growth strategies for the church. However, all of these efforts have primarily proven fruitless in the face of churches that continue to shrink and ministers who


167 Ibid., 57.

168 Ibid., 60.


170 Ibid.

171 Thom Rainer, *I am a Church Member: Discovering the Attitude that Makes a Difference* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2013), 4-5.
frequently find themselves either out of ministry altogether or severely frustrated as they trudge along trying to fulfill the call of God upon their lives faithfully.

Could it be that a clear and complete comprehension of the gospel would so positively impact and affect ministry students that it would solidify their potential for both an enduring lifelong ministry and a satisfying faith walk with their Lord? The project director strongly suggests that this could very well be the case. Moreover, that hypothesis serves as the theoretical thesis of this particular research project. The uniqueness of this project lies in the fact that according to the best research in which the author could conduct, there has not been any published research that aims to suggest that increasing the gospel understanding of ministry students would accomplish so much both in the ministers themselves and the churches they will serve. Thus, this research project is genuinely attempting to break new ground regarding the power and impact of the gospel in the life and ministry of ministry students serving churches in the future. Furthermore, this author contends that the gospel's impact will have a positive trickle-down effect upon the church members whom the ministry student will minister to and lead in their churches.

Thus, the project director hopes to discover data through this research project which can speak into both the academic and practical void regarding the impact a complete theology of the gospel can have upon ministry students and their future ministries. The correlation of one’s understanding and reliance upon the gospel could prove to be monumental to both the satisfaction and tenure of those in ministry. In the same vein, this author presupposes that this research's ultimate impact cannot only reverse the declining trends in the church but also make church members' relationship with Christ satisfying to them and attractive to others. A biblically complete theology of the gospel is the key to effective ministry. And it is only a complete and
thoroughly biblical theology of the gospel that is the answer for the theological confusion which
has permeated the church of modernity through their attempted congeniality with cultural
relevance.172

Within one’s relationship with God is the heartbeat of doing ministry. However, ministry
is not merely an extension of one’s proper relationship with God; it is ministry, the act of serving
God by serving others, which is born out of and rooted in the believer’s deep and abiding
relationship with God; and the call that God has placed upon their life. As one grows in love with
God, they can, through the Spirit's work, discern the character and nature of God. It is God's
character that the believer longs to emulate, and it is His holy character that the ministry of the
church must seek to reveal. This godly character is indicative of the elect.173 The character
rhythm, as Boda propagates it, further reveals to the reader of the Old Testament the personality
of God.174 As expressed through the Old Testament, the character and glory of God is one of
steadfast love.175 This steadfast love points the student of the scripture to the fact that God both
forgives sin and judges sin.176 This dichotomy is further made clear by understanding that the
phrase steadfast love carries a loyal and faithful element and a legal obligation.177 God’s
character of steadfast love is both faithful in its guarantee to restore the repentant and to punish


176 Ibid., 40.

177 Ibid., 39.
the wicked.\textsuperscript{178} God has a self-imposed legal and moral obligation to carry out the dichotomy of forgiving and punishing sin.

Furthermore, according to Gorman, an understanding of God's gospel and comprehending the mission of God are deeply interconnected.\textsuperscript{179} Gorman also presents that God's mission can be seen as His desire to bring salvation to the world.\textsuperscript{180} Jesus echoes this truth when He says in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” As a result, one understanding God's mission and the fact that He has also invited His disciples to engage in the work of the ministry with Him, the church should be deeply concerned with how the gospel influences and impacts their ministry. This ministry, to which the church was called, is only accomplished through the flow of the Spirit. As a result, maybe the church will once again find joy in doing ministry if they rediscover the power that is contained within the gospel. The church must learn to experience the work of the Holy Spirit as they engage in the mission of God, for if they cannot sense the power of God the Holy Spirit in their ministerial work, they will not experience Him anywhere.\textsuperscript{181}

In summary, the heartbeat of God is the gospel, and as a result, the heartbeat of the ministry and mission of the church must also be found in the good news of the gospel message as well. A right understanding of the power of the gospel, the character of God, and the expectations that He has for His church should propel believers to engage in ministry as they seek to live out the gospel. As those saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone,

\textsuperscript{178} Boda, \textit{The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology}, 41.


\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 23.

\textsuperscript{181} John Ortberg, \textit{The Me I want to Be: Becoming God’s Best Version of You} (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010), 225.
the mindset of the church must become centered on taking the whole gospel, as is it delineated in
the entirety of the Scripture from Genesis to Revelation to the whole world. Moreover, it will be
the responsibility of ministry students to lead the churches and the ministries they serve to
engage in their ministry endeavors with the panoramic perspective of the gospel that the Bible
articulates. As a result, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College must do everything in its power to
foster a complete theology of the gospel within its ministry students. Fulfilling this objective will
solidify both the college's work and the future ministry work of the students in which Clear
Creek is training.
Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

This project's premise lies in the belief that the gospel is not merely an embryonic element of Christianity. The project director recognizes that there is a cacophony of ideas, definitions, and delineations projected from the modern church regarding what this gospel is and what it accomplishes in a believer's life. However, according to this author, the gospel must not be imagined to only serve as the ledge from which one jumps into the lake of Christianity; the gospel is, in reality, the entirety of the lake.\textsuperscript{182} The project director aims to aid ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in coming to an understanding of the gospel, which will accomplish some paramount elements in their lives. First, a complete understanding of the gospel will afford these ministry students the tools necessary to develop a faith walk that is both satisfying to them and attractive to others. Secondly, grasping the truth of the totality of a complete theology of the gospel will also provide students whom God has called into His ministry a foundation from which to effectively fulfill their call and finish well in the ministry setting in which they serve.

The project director is passionate regarding the spiritual health and theological acumen of ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College being fortified into a robust and sterling example of what God truly desires for His servants to possess and pass along to others through the fulfillment of the ministry to which He has divinely called and commissioned them to fulfill. The method by which this magnanimous goal is accomplished finds in the simple yet extremely profound truth of the totality of the gospel. Thus, the project director has designed a research project that will measure the gospel understanding of the ministry students at CCBBC and introduce them to a curriculum that will greatly enhance and solidify their intellectual and

experiential grasp on the totality of the theology of the gospel. In this author's opinion, the project at hand is not the absolute answer to the addressed problem in this thesis. Rather, the true remedy will be to formulate and offer an elective class on the theology of the gospel to the ministry students enrolled at the college. Thus, the project director desires to prove through the data collected in this research endeavor that the students would benefit from such as class.

The following verbiage will serve as an introduction to the minutia of the project which this author has formulated. However, one should note that the project director will articulate the finer points of this project in precise and vibrant detail in the confines of the major section below entitled Intervention Design. In general, the project director will recruit a group of undergraduate ministry students from Clear Creek Baptist Bible College to participate in this research project via an email invitation. The students will signify their desire to participate in the research endeavor by following the link in the emailed invitation. The students who volunteer to participate in the research project will complete an initial pre-project survey to determine their level of gospel misunderstanding and or understanding. Following the pre-project survey, the project director will provide a series of four video lectures covering the theology of the gospel. The lectures which serve as the intervention for this project will be accessed through the online platform Sakai. After engaging with the lectures, the students participating in the project will complete a post-project survey that is identical to the first survey except for the addition of a few questions that will expose the demographics of those participating in the project. This research project will transpire of a four-week period of time. From here, the project director will be able to measure the growth in understanding the gospel both before and after the intervention project. The data obtained will also afford the project director the opportunity to measure and delineate whether or not the students attained a higher level of understanding regarding a complete
theology of the gospel. If as the project director anticipates, the series of lectures which he has created to articulate the depth and breadth of the gospel provides noticeable growth in the students’ understanding of the gospel; the project director will then seek approval from the college to build, implement and facilitate an undergraduate theology of the gospel elective course at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. This course, if built and implemented, in the opinion of the project director, will unequivocally be proven to bolster the gospel understanding of the students. Moreover, as a result, a course such as this project suggests will provide the students a deep and abiding relationship with the Lord with is both satisfying to them and attractive to others. Moreover, it will also equip the students with a spiritually deep foundation to finish well in the ministry to which God has called them.

**Intervention Design**

The journey to strengthen the theology of the gospel understanding among ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College will begin in the form of a research project. This research endeavor will uncover the level of understanding regarding the theology of the gospel of the ministry students at the college. The project director will conduct an initial survey, provide a series of lectures to the participants, and then survey the participants a second time. These steps will reveal the lack of gospel understanding and provide an answer to rectify the deficiency. The project director proposes that the ultimate remedy for this problem lies in creating and implementing an undergraduate class devoted to the theology of the gospel. The project director’s thesis rests in his belief that the ministry students at the college do not have a complete understanding of the totality of the gospel. Furthermore, the project director contends that this lack of understanding will hinder the student in their relationship with the Lord and fulfill the ministry to which they were called.
The project director serves as a full-time faculty member at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and is currently occupying the role of Assistant Professor of Theology. In this position at the college, he teaches a full load of courses that extend to both on-campus and online students. The project director primarily teaches courses related to theology and doctrine, just as his title describes. However, he also teaches a few New Testament Bible courses each semester as well. In addition to the Theology and Bible courses, he also teaches a couple of ministry specific courses every few years as well. The project director holds four master’s degrees, and as such he is credentialed to teach a myriad of undergraduate courses across manifold disciplines offered by Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. As a result of the project director’s experience in the classroom, both instructing and mentoring students, he has been afforded the opportunity to grasp the reality that there is room for growth in the gospel understanding of the ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

The project director has also secured permission from Clear Baptist Bible College’s chief administrators to complete his doctoral research at the college among the ministry students enrolled at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. The college's endorsement for this research project is evident by the permission letters from both the college President and Academic Dean, Donnie Fox, and Jay Sulfridge, who serve as the chief administrators of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Located in the appendix section of this document are their letters of approval and commendation for this research endeavor. As a result of his full-time faculty position, the project director has email access to the college's entire online and on-campus student body. The project director will utilize the means of an email invitation letter to recruit students to volunteer to participate in his research project. All the undergraduate ministry students enrolled at the college will be emailed the recruitment letter. Located in the appendix of this dissertation is a copy of the
recruitment letter the project director will use. In an effort to make sure that his research is well informed and valid, the project director will seek to enlist at least twenty-two undergraduate ministry students to participate in his research project. Because the project director ultimately wants at the very least twenty undergraduate ministry students to complete the project, the director desires the number of twenty-two volunteers. The desired number of students completing the surveys and intervention process for the research project is at least twenty because a group of this number would represent approximately twenty percent of the undergraduate ministry students enrolled at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. The project director is also aiming for a 100 percent completion rate from those who begin the research project by completing the pre-project survey, as this is the ideal completion metric for a study such as this one.\(^\text{183}\)

As a result of the project director’s plans to send the recruitment letter to all of the college’s undergraduate ministry students, this research project should yield results from a good representation of the undergraduate ministry student at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. The students who will ultimately comprise this project's research group will be from undergraduate levels between freshman and seniors. This group will also consist of both female and male ministry students. Furthermore, the group will be comprised of students with a desire and call to fulfill a variety of ministry roles. Again, this diverse group of ministry students should prove to be a good representation of the variation of undergraduate ministry students currently enrolled at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

The project director will derive his data by utilizing two entirely anonymous surveys. To begin with the project portion of this research endeavor will commence by inviting students to

participate in a pre-project survey and complete it before the students engage with the lectures that the project director will produce on the subject of developing a complete theology of the gospel. After the students view the lectures, they will participate in completing a post-project survey. The post-project survey will center around the same primary fifty questions which were present on the pre-project survey. While the project director could be aware of some who are among the student body participating in the research project, completing the survey will be completely anonymous, and he will have no way of knowing who responded in a particular way. In no way will the participants’ identity be revealed in connection with their survey responses, as the survey results will be ultimately and totally anonymous. The project director desired to employ an anonymous survey in an attempt to receive honest results from the participants without placing them under the fear of exposing their knowledge of the theology of the gospel. The anonymity of the research participants and their survey responses will afford them the opportunity to truly unashamedly present their answers to the questions in a way that has the possibility of enhancing lives in the future.\textsuperscript{184} The project director truly desires to foster growth in the students’ understanding of the gospel without potentially humiliating or singling out any individual in the process.

For this research project, the project director will use two carefully articulated surveys to determine the level of gospel understanding among the students who participate in the project. The survey utilized will be built upon the Likert scale. Research that uses surveys commonly employs the Likert scale, which is a psychometric scale. The project director’s survey consists of eight sections and contains a total of fifty questions. The survey will include questions related to the Bible, sin, salvation, Christ, discipleship, the gospel, grace, and confidence and competency.

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The questions on the survey are in the appendix section of this thesis. These questions will be scored according to the Likert scale and will reveal both the pre-project and post-project level of gospel understanding among those surveyed. The pre-project and post-project surveys are designed and articulated to be both democratic and equitable, common in action-based research.\textsuperscript{185}

The project director will provide the students who participate in the project with four-thirty to forty-minute lectures after the group has completed the pre-project survey. The lectures that the project director provides will be delivered to the participants via Warpwire in Sakai, the online learning platform used by Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. These lectures will specifically cover a comprehensive theology of the gospel. The lectures will be available over a four-week period of time. While the participants will be required to view every single lecture of the four-lecture series, they will have the opportunity to engage the lectures asynchronously during each week of the study. Over the course of these four weeks, the students who are participating in this research project will have the opportunity to be exposed to a genre of theology that is not currently being addressed explicitly in any of the course offerings at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. The first lecture in the four-lecture series will cover an introductory presentation of the rudimentary elements of soteriology and theology. The second lecture in the series will present the gospel as the metanarrative of the Bible. The third lecture will articulate how the power of the gospel transcends beyond a mere salvific transaction. The final lecture in the four-lecture sequence covers how to formulate and apologetically defend a complete theology of the gospel. The appendix portion of this document contains a complete outline of the lecture series for this research project.

\textsuperscript{185} Stringer, \textit{Action Research}, 14-15.
The project director covering the theology of the gospel over the course of four weeks will provide to the students who have volunteered to complete the research project after they have watched the four lectures, the anonymous survey a second time. This second survey will be considered the post-project survey. However, the pre-project survey and the post-project survey will be the same identical anonymous survey. The students will take the same survey both before and after they engage in the lectures. Completing the surveys in this manner will allow the project director to measure the level of gospel understanding of the participants both before and after their exposure to the project lectures. In estimation, each of the two surveys will take approximately ten minutes to complete. Furthermore, each of the four lectures will last roughly thirty minutes. Meaning that the volunteers who participate in this study will have an estimated time investment of at least two hours and twenty minutes; however, Kibbe reminded his readers that quality research takes time.186

If the research project proves that the exposure to the lectures positively impacts the students’ gospel understanding, the project director will start building and implementing a specific course on the theology of the gospel. This course will have to be approved first by the academic affairs committee, and then it will also have to be approved by the college’s faculty in a faculty meeting. The project director has already had discussions with the Academic Dean of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, and he is in support of the research project and the ultimate implementation of a theology of the gospel course in the college’s course catalog if the research proves that it would bolster the gospel understanding of the students. The project director is beginning the project with the premise that a theology of the gospel course would help the

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ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College develop a complete and comprehensive theology of the gospel.

Primarily based on the project director’s belief in the power of the gospel, is the design of this intervention plan. As Jonathan Dodson propagated, the gospel simply changes people from the inside out.187 Moreover, this change goes far beyond merely altering one’s eternal destination; the power of the totality of the gospel is both help for today and heaven in the hereafter. Designed to highlight the power of the gospel in such a way that it is readily ascertainable, is the intervention plan for this project. The intervention plan that the project director has prayed over thought through sincerely, formulated is also intended to illuminate that the life-changing power, uniquely housed with the gospel’s message, is an invitation to forgiveness of sin also an inauguration into a right relationship with God. The rightness with God that is only attained through the gospel is personal; it is an opportunity for fellowship with God in a deep and abiding eternal relationship with Him. The gospel announces that through the salvific work of Christ, the believer is provided a seat at the table of God, as evidenced in the ordnance of the Lord’s Supper. The privilege of the Eucharist is so mightily weighty and profound that Ignatius referred to it as “the medicine of immortality.”188 Moreover, when one honestly and thoroughly understands the power of the totality of the gospel, they also become empowered to practice the spiritual disciplines which are so vital to the Christian life and the faith walk of believers.189


189 Greear, Gospel, 202.
Thus, one easily ascertains that the project director has formulated a plan of intervention that is designed in such a way as to dovetail perfectly with both his theology and thesis for this research project, as is recommended for research endeavors such as the project at hand. This continuity is essential to the author because he believes that the theology, theory, and research in this dissertation should all work together to accomplish the overarching goal of bolstering the gospel understanding of the ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. This lofty and comprehensive objective is overtly paramount to the project director’s intended outcome for this research project. The ultimate aim of this work is to equip the students at CCBBC for a long and fruitful ministry and edify them in the holistic influence of a complete theology of the gospel that develops a profound and nourishing faith that is desirable to a lost and dying world. The type of faith walk that this intervention intends to foster among ministry students will ultimately afford them to serve effectively in the ministry positions that they have been called to, but it will also equip them to propagate and live out the life-changing and sustaining message of the gospel. The gospel's message postulates forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ and serves as an invitation from God to follow Him.

Additionally, this research project is not funded in any way by any individual or through any ecclesiastical or educational entity. Nor has the project director been compensated for designing, building, implementing, or reporting on this research endeavor. The project director, obliviously, first conceived and designed this research as an aspect of his doctoral work's academic requirements. However, this project is much more than merely an educational endeavor with which the project director has been tasked to complete. The project director

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possesses a genuine passion for ministry students and the call of God upon their lives. As a result, he earnestly desires to aid them in their spiritual journey and equipping them for a long a fruitful ministry. Those two elements served as the catalyst for the project director desiring to undertake this project. While a myriad of topics could have been chosen that would have satisfied the academic requirements placed upon the project director, he chose the topic of the theology of the gospel because he earnestly believes that a grasp on the totality of a complete theology of the gospel will have a profound impact upon ministry students and that this fact will be ascertained in both the students’ personal spiritual journey as well as the public ministry that they will endeavor to fulfill.

Lastly, do not overlook the fact that this project was imagined, designed, and articulated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on our world cannot be overstated. The effects that the virus have had upon both the local church and theological academia entities like CCBBC have been nothing short of massive. The pandemic has augmented a manifold of procedural and administrative protocols. Moreover, the fear of contracting the virus, and the lengths in which people have gone to avoid the possible cataclysmic results of COVID-19 has caused so much to change in every sector of the world. In direct response to the possible pitfalls in which the pandemic could create during the facilitation of this project, the project director designed this research endeavor, which is intended to make a profound impact upon the spiritual life and ministry efficacy of the students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, in such a way, so that it could be disseminated and completed entirely online if it became necessary to do so. The design was able to be created with the fluidity to be entirely online as a result of the technological capabilities of the college. Specifically, the college employs an online learning platform called Sakai. The technology housed with the Sakai software enables lecture videos to
be kept there and lesson curriculums so that online education can be disseminated through the platform. In addition, both the pre-project survey and the post-project survey were built and is distributed to the students using Survey Monkey. The project director believed that using Sakai and Survey Money's capabilities made the project possible and completable even if Clear Creek Baptist Bible College had to go all online as they were forced to do for the last few months of the Spring 2020 semester in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Implementation of the Intervention Design**

Before the intervention portion of this endeavor, which the project director designed, was implemented, it had to be approved by Liberty University School of Divinity in its prospectus form. Moreover, of course, before it could be approved, the intervention, as well as the entire prospectus, had to be articulated in written format. The project director first presented the rough draft of the prospectus to Dr. Zabloski, who served as the initial prospectus advisor for this thesis; after a few weeks of back and forth with augmentations and revisions, the premise behind the project was approved by Dr. Zabloski. Next, the project director was moved to Dr. Talley, who serves in the theology department at LUSOD. The transition to Dr. Talley as a prospectus advisor resulted from the author being a student majoring in theology and apologetics. Over the next eight weeks, Dr. Talley continued to help the project director to hone and sharpen the thesis behind the prospectus for this project. At the conclusion of that eight-week term, Dr. Talley approved the prospectus. At this point, the project director was finally assigned to his requested doctoral chair, Dr. Roy Lucas. The author of this thesis, along with the fervent help of Dr. Lucas, put the final touches upon the prospectus. At this juncture in time, the project director’s prospectus was submitted to The Liberty University School of Divinity and received final and official approval.
Finally, a journey that had in its embryonic stages only been a cognitive dream had begun to take its shape as the author’s doctoral thesis. At this juncture of time, the project director had to complete the CITI training that Liberty University requires before a doctoral candidate is permitted to apply to the university's Institutional Review Board. The CITI training consumed this student for the better part of a few days. Hours of meticulous training videos were watched and studied by the projector. At the end of each module in the training, this student had to complete and pass an incredibly detailed examination.

Finally, the project director completed the entirety of the required training videos and passed all the tests that followed them. In reality, the author of this dissertation not only passed the exams, but he earned a perfect score on each and every evaluation in which the CITI training required. So the project portion of this thesis could be completed entirely online, the project director designed the project portion to accommodate; required to engage in one last training module, which focused specifically upon online research. Furthermore, at the end of the module, there was also one final exam to be passed; the project director had taken detailed notes and was thankfully able to keep his flawless record on the CITI examinations intact.

The project director had anticipated and longed for the approval of his prospectus, and all of the necessary training completed so that he could finally and officially submit his application to the IRB of Liberty University. And almost as glorious and radiant as the rising sun, the project director reached that crucial milestone in early October 2020. However, he learned that the IRB of Liberty University had just changed the way in which applications were to be submitted, and how the IRB processed student’s applications were greatly augmented from the previous protocols as well. Starting in the Fall of 2020, Liberty University implemented an online platform called Cayuse to host submitted applications. This program sent all applications
for research projects to the university. The application process became much more meticulous and time-consuming than previous application models. From the project director’s perspective, although the new application process was an arduous and extensive procedure, the primary redeeming benefit of the Cayuse platform is twofold. First, the software walks the applicant through the entire endeavor step by step. It also shows the applicant where they are in the application process as they proceed towards completion. The Cayuse platform also ensures that the applicant includes all the proper documents in their application before the system will allow submission of the application. Secondly, once the research application is officially submitted and accepted by the IRB, the Cayuse program allows the applicant to see precisely where their application is within the approval process as it progresses within the actual IRB office of Liberty University.

The project director completed the IRB submission process through the Cayuse platform in early October 2020, and then the waiting game for a response commenced. Upon submitting the application, the IRB advised the project director through the medium of an email that applicants should expect a response in roughly thirty days under normal circumstances. The project director began to cross the days off the calendar, similar to how a child anticipates the arrival of Christmas. However, thirty days came and went without a word from the IRB. The consternation and pressure the project director experienced through this process cannot be overstated. Eventually, it was the week of Thanksgiving, and on Tuesday of that week, at approximately 4:00 in the afternoon, the project director received an email notification from the IRB that they wanted some clarifications and revisions regarding his research application.

At this point, the project director logged in to Cayuse and discovered that there was a total of nine elements that the IRB wanted him to address in his application before he
resubmitted. So much for enjoying Thanksgiving, the project director thought to himself. He immediately went to work revising, augmenting, and providing clarification to his application. The project director worked hard through the holiday and eventually completed the requested changes and resubmitted his updated IRB application the Monday following Thanksgiving 2020.

And once again, he was forced to wait on a response from the Liberty University IRB office. By this point, it had become clear to the project director that the saying hurry up and wait did not only apply to one’s appointment with a medical doctor. The next several weeks were filled with angst and anticipation as the project director awaited word from the IRB.

The project director felt like time was in fast forward in one sense, and yet days with no word dragged on at the same time. As oxymoronic as it sounds, this author experienced a dichotomy of emotion regarding how time passed. Days turned into weeks, and Christmas was rapidly approaching. The project director had been informed that the IRB office would close at 5:00 pm on December 23rd. Without exaggeration, he checked his Liberty University student email at least two dozen times per day, awaiting word regarding his IRB application. Then Christmas Day arrived with the joy of celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. However, at this point, the project director resigned to the fact that it would be the first of the year before he received the long-awaited word from the IRB. His compulsive habit of checking his email continued even though he knew it was futile activity. On December 28th, the project director received a wonderful albeit late Christmas gift from the Liberty University IRB office in the form of approval of his proposed research project for this doctoral document. In reality, the IRB issued the project director an exemption for his project. Located in the appendix section of this document is the documentation of the IRB’s decision.
With the project director finally receiving the green light from the IRB, he began preparing for recruiting ministry students from Clear Creek Baptist Bible College to participate in his research endeavor. The student recruitment letter which the project director used was previously approved by both the IRB and the director’s doctoral chair Dr. Roy Lucas. As a result, only a few items such as dates and obscure verbiage were augmented within the recruitment letter. The letter was then disseminated to the ministry students at Clear Creek via email. At the start of the Spring semester, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College had 126 full-time undergraduate ministry students. The project director had previously hoped for at least 20 students to agree to participate in his project. In addition to the recruitment letter, the project director also promoted the research endeavor during the first day of the classes he taught during the Spring semester. He did this in both his on-campus and online classes. Through the recruitment letter, he provided the students with a link where the pre-project survey could be accessed and provided the students with an opportunity to consent to their participation in the research project.

By early January, the project director had recruited seventy-five of the one hundred and twenty-six full-time undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College to participate in his research project in an anonymous role. The author of this document was ecstatic to have so many participants show interest in his project. The seventy-five students' responses marked 59.5 percent of the total number of undergraduate ministry students at the college who agreed to participate in the research which the project director was conducting. The next concern was to see if those who had consented to participate through the anonymous consent form would actually follow through and complete the pre-project survey. It also should be noted that the consent form was simply a yes or no, so the project director knew the total
number of those who agreed to participate, but he did not know precisely the identity of those who agreed to be a part of the research. The project director had designed and implemented the intervention in this way so that the identity of the students in the project would be entirely unknown to him.

As is common in research, such as found in this project, the author employed data triangulation to assure the validity of the results derived from this project. In general, data triangulation is understood as collecting data from more than one method or place. In order to meet this requirement, the project director employed the use of two surveys, not merely one single inquiry. The author also triangled the position of the questions on both the pre-project and post-project surveys. The triangulation of the placement of the questions assured that the participants did not complete any section of the surveys in sequential order, but rather, the surveys were designed in such a way as to pull one question on a specific subject and then follow that up with a question from a totally different subject. In addition, the project director constructed numerous questions on each subject that the surveys addressed; this further assured the triangulation of the project’s data. Moreover, in an effort to extend the highlighting of the triangulation of data within this research, the director assembled the post-project survey to include a section of yes and no questions. This strategic implementation transitioned from asking questions which were on the Likert scale to a pragmatic yes or no response. This transition allowed the project director to triangulate the data even more as a result of having the survey predominantly constructed around Likert scale questions which could prove statistical significance and practical significance, and then presenting the additional section of yes and no questions which only points towards applicable and practical implications. As a result, it is easy
to ascertain that data triangulation was employed throughout the design and implementation of this research project.

All seventy-five students who agreed to participate in the project completed the pre-project survey to the project director's surprise and relief. In order to ascertain the level of student understanding regarding the theology of the gospel, the project director created the pre-project survey. The pre-project survey, which consists of fifty questions divided into eight major sections, was hosted and completed using SurveyMonkey software and the online platform that accompanies the program. The project director did not utilize a free version of the program but instead chose to invest in an upgraded paid version of SurveyMonkey so that the advanced analytic capabilities of the enhanced form of the software would be available to him and this research project. It was also both encouraging and astonishing to the project director that all seventy-participants completed the pre-project survey within seven days after consenting to be a part of the research. The students' initiative and excitement exhibited by their quick response to the project in general and the initial survey was very inspiring to the project director. However, he was aware that just because participants begin the project, this does not mean that they will all finish it. The projector director had discovered through prior research and reading that a few participants often bailed out of projects such as his. His project mentor had also warned him that this was a possibility. As a result, he simply prayed and trusted the Lord that he would have a good completion rate in the end. As stated earlier in this document, the project director was targeting a one hundred percent completion rate from those who agreed to participate. As lofty as that goal is, he was going to hold on to it until the end.

At this point, while the students were completing the pre-project survey, the project director began to put the final touches upon the four lectures that he would film for the
intervention portion of this project. Located in the appendix section of this document is a barebones outline of the four lectures in which the project director built and delivered for this research intervention portion of this project. At the heart of this project rests the author’s desire to make a difference in the life of students through pouring into them by the means of theological education. Thus, it is easily ascertained that the lectures that served as the intervention portion of this project were built and delivered to aid the students in their understanding of the theology of the gospel and help this to find a deeper and more satisfying relationship with the Lord. The project director believed that as long as the students who participated in the research came out of it with even a minuscule gain in their grasp on the theology of the gospel, then he would personally consider the project to be a success. While he obliviously began this educational endeavor in an attempt to earn a terminal doctoral degree, that was never the only ultimate goal of this journey. The project director’s desire to have a positive effect on ministry students was always a significant reason for his work.

The project director on the campus of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College filmed the four lectures for this project. The four lectures were approximately thirty minutes each in length. The project director chose to film all four lectures the same day, in an attempt to make them available to the students as soon as possible. The project director recruited a group of third-year ministry students who were currently enrolled in one of his theology courses to serve as a live audience for the filming of the four lectures that comprised the intervention for this project. The addition of some theology students being live and in person for the filming of the lectures allowed the intervention lecture videos to simulate better the atmosphere that would be present in the theology of the gospel elective course in which the project director is proposing to be necessary for the undergraduate students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.
Moreover, the student’s presence in the classroom as the project director delivered the lectures removed the possibility of the videos having a sterile and mundane feel to them. The students who were present in the classroom for the filming of the lectures were permitted to interact with the professor and ask some questions just as they would in an actual class on the campus of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. It should also be noted that some of the students who were present for the filming of the lectures were more than likely also participating in the research portion of this endeavor. However, the project director had no way of knowing who among those present were merely spectators and those who were actual participants in the project. Of course, this is a result of the absolute anonymity of the participants of this research project. The media crew who actually filmed the lectures and produced just over two hours of educational video material on the theology of the gospel were staff members of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College's distance education department. The project director worked with these individuals to ensure that the finished product was the precise fulfillment of his vision for the intervention aspect of this educational research endeavor.

With the aid of the distance education department, as well as the information technology department of the college, the project director made the lectures available to the participants of the project in early January of 2021. The four lectures were posted and hosted on the Sakai online learning platform of the college. This scenario was determined to be the easiest way to make the lectures available to the students participating in the project, as a result of all active CCBBC students, both online and on-campus, having access to the online learning platform. The distance education department, which manages the Sakai platform, built the project director a place to host the lectures, which they called a Sakai shell and entitled it merely “Doctoral Research.” This scenario allowed the students to get to the material for this project just as they
would access any other class at Clear Creek. Once everything was loaded up to the Sakai platform and had been proven to work properly without any potential technology issues, the project director again sent out an email to all of the students asking those who had agreed to be a part of the project to access the lectures via Sakai and then follow the link which was provided after the lectures to the post-project survey.

The students were encouraged through the email in which the project director sent out to view the lectures as soon as possible and then complete the post-project survey. The project director communicated a sense of urgency regarding the participants engaging the lectures, which served as the intervention portion of this project because he believed that if too much time transpired between when the students completed the pre-project survey and the time when they viewed the lectures and then completed the post-project survey, it could possibly create too much of an opportunity for participants to fall through the cracks and ultimately fail to complete the project. In an attempt to be proactive, the project director sent a follow-up email once again encouraging those who were a part of the project to view the lectures and submit the post-project survey as soon as was possible for them to do so. Even with the early excitement that the students appeared to express for the project as a result of the massive number of those who wanted to be a part of the project, as well as their quick response in completing the pre-project survey; the project director wanted to do his best to ensure that those who began the project completed it. It was for this reason that the project director continued to encourage the participants to complete the project through the medium of email. He also mentioned the importance of the participants seeing the project through to the end at the beginning of the first lecture as well as the ending of the last lecture. The project director had a one hundred percent completion rate by the participants as his goal for the response to his project.
By the first week of the Spring semester, the project director had the video lectures recorded and posted on Sakai to be engaged by the seventy-five undergraduate ministry students who had consented to be a part of this research project and had followed through with completing the pre-project survey. Again, this project's intervention consisted of four thirty-minute lectures intended to communicate an introduction to a complete theology of the gospel. With the lectures open and available to the participants, forced the project director to wait and fret regarding the student’s completion of the project. Anyone who has experience in education knows that students as a whole often prove unreliable at worst and slow in getting things finished at best. With this understanding in mind, in the following days, another email was sent out by the project director encouraging the students participating in the research to complete the endeavor at their earliest opportunity. However, the students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College who were participants in this research journey proved to be not only engaged but also very quick in their progress through the steps of the project. The project director was enthusiastically elated when all seventy-five students engaging in the research project completed the entirety of the project, the pre-project survey, viewing the lectures, and the post-project survey by the end of January 2021. This signified that the completion rate for the participants ended up at one hundred percent. The project director was jubilant with the success of the original goal regarding the completion rate of the participants. The project director was concerned and desirous for a unanimous one hundred percent completion rate because such a percentage would add validity and efficacy to this research endeavor.192

Throughout the entirety of the research portion of this project, the project director found himself being continually surprised by the positive and enthusiastic response of the

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undergraduate ministry students who were participating. The project director perceived the student’s eagerness for the project as a result of their quick responses, as evident by their completing the required elements of the project. While the identity of the participants was cloaked in the anonymous nature of this project, the students’ interest in the subject of the theology of the gospel was ascertainable by the project director. The project director had anticipated and articulated that the research portion of this project would span four weeks. In the end, that is precisely the amount of time that was required for the students involved in this research to complete the project. While the project director conceived and facilitated this project, in reality, this was always about his desire to aid ministry students at CCBBC to foster a more profound and more complete theology of the gospel. Students were the foundation and driving force behind everything that the project director endeavored to accomplish in this work.

Moreover, without the student’s involvement, this research would have simply been impossible. With this in mind, the project director is thoroughly and eternally grateful for the students who participated in his doctoral research. He also hopes that they comprehend his genuine desire to help them find a faith walk that is satisfying to them and attractive to others; and, at the same time, construct a foundation for an enduring and fruitful ministry. The project director believes that these essential elements, which are essential to the ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, are attainable through a proper grasp of a complete theology of the gospel.

The project director was blessed to see the completion of the research portion of this project without any interruptions or delays in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the entire nation cannot be understated. At the beginning of the pandemic’s outbreak in March or 2020, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College was forced to go
entirely virtual for the remainder of the semester. The project director was well aware that the pandemic had the potential to send the students home and the college solely virtual again at any time. This possibility was in mind when the project director designed the intervention for this project. As a result, the design and implementation of this intervention were crafted in such a way, so it could be fluid and had the possibility integrated into it so that if need be, the project could be completed by the participants even if the college was forced to go entirely online once again. However, the pandemic caused by COVID-19 did not hamper the implementation of the intervention portion of this project. Nor is the project director aware of any issues resulting from the virus that negatively impacted or hampered the students in terms of completing the project. Even with the contagious nature of COVID-19, to the project director’s knowledge, none of the seventy-students who participated in the study came down with the virus or were forced to quarantine as a result of contact tracing during the entire four-week period of the research portion of this project. In the eyes of the project director, this fact is absolutely miraculous!

From beginning to end, the intervention portion of this research project flowed smoothly without any incident or setback after the project director received approval for his study from the IRB office of Liberty University. The author of this document considers this to be a tremendous blessing. And even more so considering the unpresented and unpredictable affects the virus pandemic has had on virtually every aspect of society since early March of 2020. As a result, the project director wrapped up the intervention aspect of this doctoral thesis with both great joy and relief. He felt that the students were interested in the subject of the theology of the gospel, and that gave him not only affirmation that his project could help students in the ways he hoped, but it also provided him the great motivation to aggregate the data derived from the surveys so that he could unequivocally determine if the ministry students who had given of their time to
participate in this endeavor had actually benefited from being exposed to the content of the four lectures which were built and presented by the project director. The ultimate results of this project will be delineated and articulated by the project director through the content found in the next chapter of this dissertation. The project director is hugely hopeful that the students have made gains in their understanding and that he can, as a result of his findings, make an undeniable case for the need for Clear Creek Baptist Bible College to allow the project director to build and facilitate an elective course which focuses solely on a complete theology of the gospel.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The project director has propagated from the beginning of this project that by presenting the ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College with specific instruction pertaining to a complete theology of the gospel, they would exhibit quantifiable growth in their gospel understanding. This theory is, in essence, the project director’s research hypothesis.193 Throughout this chapter’s remainder, the project director’s approach will be weighed and measured based on his research endeavor results. Primarily, this chapter will focus on the practical significance of the project director’s research. Often described as an essential part of investigating meaningful educational interventions is practical significance.194 The emphasis on practical significance for this project is chiefly a result of the project director’s focus upon one institution, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. And while much of the data derived through this study may very well prove to be helpful for similar educational entities, this project has maintained a unilateral motivation throughout its planning, design, and implementation.

Moreover, the reader needs to understand that statistical results are a matter of judgment in the universe of practical significance. A verdict is based solely upon the numerical expression of how well an experiment group learned or performed.195 Through the medium of both written verbiage and visual charts and tables, the project director will present the practical significance of his project in the confines of the chapter at hand. Through this type of analysis, the researcher will examine the outcome of the research project in order to judge whether an observed result has

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had implications within the context of a particular research setting and their relative practices.\(^{196}\)

It will be through this chapter that the reader can discern the growth and advancement in the area of the theology of the gospel that the students who participated in this research project achieved. The project director began this research endeavor to prove that Clear Creek Baptist Bible College should offer an elective theology of the gospel course to undergraduate ministry students. This idea is the argument of the project director’s thesis.\(^{197}\)

**Demographics**

![Gender Demographics](image)

As the reader can ascertain through the information delineated in figure 1 above, the male participants served as the primary gender taking part in this study. Out of a total of seventy-five


participants, sixty of them were males. While Clear Creek Baptist Bible College has both male and female ministry students studying at the college, the majority are male, as reflected in the participant numbers engaging in this research project. Out of the seventy-five students who volunteered to participate in the project director’s research, only fifteen of the students were female. While there is a discrepancy metrically between the number of males and females who took part in this project, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College's student body demographics represent both males and females. At CCBBC, 18.5 percent of the study body is female, while 81.5 percent is male. While the project director would have liked to see more female participants, he feels good regarding the impact both male and female undergraduate ministry students had upon his research project. He was also very pleased regarding the seemingly enthusiastic mindset that all of the students showed for the project, based upon how quickly and thoroughly they completed the necessary portions of this research endeavor. The project director believes that out of the one hundred and twenty-six undergraduate ministry students at CCBBC, he had seventy-five participate in his study as an incredible participation rate. Statistically, that is a 59.52% participation rate. Observing the participants' growth and responses to surveys is the primary research tool, such as the surveys the project director conducted throughout this project.\textsuperscript{198} As a result, the larger the percentage of participants a research project has from the overall group, it should encourage the reader to view the data derived from the project with even more confidence in its validity.

\textsuperscript{198} Sensing, \textit{Qualitative Research}, 93.
As is revealed visually in figures 2 and 3, the age and class demographics that comprised this research project were primarily the younger students in both class designation and age group. Again, the age and class makeup of the participants are much like the gender
demographics discussed above; they are also reflective of the majority of undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. 48% of the students in this project were between the ages of 18 and 24; this age group represents 36 of the 75 participants. Moreover, over 65% of the students were either classified as freshman or sophomore in their class level, which means that forty-nine of the seventy-five students who took part in this research project were in their first two years of study at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. At the same time, just over 35%, or a total of 36 of the 75 student participants, were classified as upperclassmen representing the junior and senior classes. Although the project director would have preferred an equal balance in both age and class demographics among those students who volunteered to be a participant in his research project, he also recognizes that such symmetry is often improbable in the realm of real-world research.

Moreover, the demographics represented in this research endeavor are very similar to the overall demographics, which make up the undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. At CCBBC, the freshman and sophomore classes constitute forty-seven percent of the total student body. As a result, the project director feels that the student contributors to his research project are an excellent representation of the undergraduate ministry students at CCBBC. Therefore, the demographics that make up this study should assure the reader that a certain validity can be derived from the data that will delineate within this chapter's pages. As all four class designations, a variety of age groups and both male and female participants contributed to the data that the project director derived from both the pre-project survey and the post-project survey.
Overview of the Project

In this section, the results of the project will be viewed and delineated from a ten-thousand-foot view. However, the reader should note that in the sections that follow, the project director will walk the reader through each of the eight sections of the research survey to present the project results as they pertain to each specific section of questions in more detail. Before the project director presents the results and data derived from his research project, the reader should be reminded of a few things and introduced to some other truths. Note that the subjects of this research endeavor are undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. This fact should also convey to the reader that these individuals have a vested interest in getting the gospel right and enhancing their understanding of the theology of the gospel.

Moreover, as those who have expressed a call to ministry and endeavored to gain a formal theological education, one can assume that these students started this project with an advanced understanding of the theological subject at hand. Moreover, the project director also
propagates that these students should possess a heightened knowledge of the gospel compared to the average layman in the pew who lacks formal theological training. This assumption that the project director suggests seems to be verified by the mean score of the participants, as illustrated in figure 4. The mean score on the pre-project survey was a 92. Thus, the project director began his research with a group of participants considered above average in the subject at hand.

The project director also thinks that the reader should understand the results in light of the fact that the freshman and sophomore participants, which make up the bulk of the contributors to this data, as discussed in the demographics section, were all in his New Testament 1 class. In this class, the project director required the students to read and write a book application paper on *Recovering The Real Lost Gospel* by Darrell L. Bock, a book that focuses on the theology of the gospel. As a result, over sixty-five percent of the students who took part in the project director’s study had already been exposed to some of the content he presented within the four lectures, which comprised the intervention portion of this project. However, even with this prior exposure to this project's subject by the majority of the participants, the mean score of the post-project survey increased by six points to a 98. The project director ascertains a six-point growth in the mean score of the surveys to be very substantial. This metric alone, in the opinion of the project director, proves his thesis project's validity and importance.

Moreover, the project director contends that the six-points of growth in the mean score of the project is enough to warrant the need for Clear Creek Baptist Bible College to offer an elective course on the subject of the theology of the gospel. Additionally, throughout this chapter, the project director will display that the student participants of this research endeavor achieved growth in every section of the survey as a result of engaging with the lectures provided in the intervention portion of this thesis project. The two sections in which the project director
viewed as most germane to this project, the section dealing with questions related to the gospel, as well as the section pertaining to the student’s confidence and competency regarding the theology of the gospel, were two sections where the students marked the most substantial growth. These elements work together to prove the validity and effectiveness of the project director’s thesis regarding the need for Clear Creek Baptist Bible College to offer an undergraduate elective course that focuses on the theology of the gospel.

**Questions Related to the Bible**

The surveys, which served as the primary research medium for this project, were formulated in eight sections. The survey questions, provided to the reader in the appendix section of this document, were articulated in a clear, readable font recommended by Sensing.¹⁹⁹ Each

¹⁹⁹ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 118-119.
section provided the student with questions that were related to a specific subject; section one contained questions related to the Bible. Of course, one must remember that the participants of this research project are Bible college students, and thus they should be considered above average in the subject area of the Bible. However, even with this advanced pre-knowledge, the post-project survey proved that the participants exhibited an average growth of 6.76 points over in section one. This rate of growth is also displayed in figure 5 above as well. This amount of development, which is greater than five points, is not only practically significant but is also considered statistically substantial as well.200

Figure 6 above depicts the participants' response to question four in section one, which asked if the student primarily interpreted the Bible symbolically. Thus, being an inverted question, meaning strongly disagree, would be the top-scored answer. The project director asked this question because the project director strongly believes that when one primarily employs a

literal hermeneutic in their interpretation of the Scripture, they will better understand the theology of the gospel. The project director taught briefly the correct hermeneutical approach to studying the Bible-based upon his personal convictions in the lectures he provided the student participants. As a result of the students having already been presented this material, they exhibited a growth of 15.55 points on this specific question. This type of development is phenomenal from both a practical and statistical perspective.

Figure 7 above reflects the aggregate scores of the pre-project and post-project surveys regarding the question five of section one, which asked about the gospel being the metanarrative of the Bible. As the reader can see in both the chart and table depicted in figure 7, the participants in this project achieved 8.8 points of growth in their understanding that the gospel is the metanarrative of the Scripture. The project director propagates that one’s knowledge that the gospel serves as the metanarrative of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation as foundational for developing a complete theology of the gospel. Moreover, the project director viewed the growth the students reached of almost nine points regarding this question as extremely important to
proving the overall efficacy of this research project as well as validating his thesis of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College needing to offer an elective undergraduate course in the theology of the gospel. Before ministry students can fully develop a complete theology of the gospel, they must first grasp that the Bible is, in essence, the gospel's story. As a result of participating in this project, the students displayed extensive development in their understanding of the gospel as the Bible's metanarrative.

**Questions Related to Sin**

Figure 8 above visually presents the overall aggregate scores to the students’ response to the questions found in section two of the pre-project and post-project surveys. Section two dealt with questions related to sin. In this section, the student participants in the project displayed growth of 1.6 points. While the project director viewed this section as necessary to the research endeavor, it was not, in his opinion, one of the most imperative sections to formulating a complete theology of the gospel. However, the students did acquire positive growth in their
understanding of the doctrine of sin and its relation to the theology of this gospel. The project director concedes that the minute amount of change in this area is not enough to propagate statistical significance; it is still evidence of the project's practical impact and the thesis behind it.

Questions Related to Salvation

As displayed above in Figure 9, the chart and table reflect the overall average scores of the student participants on the pre-project and post-project surveys for section three, which were questions related to salvation. Only a small amount of growth in this area displayed by the participants from which this data was derived. Specifically, the students had an overall average score increase of 0.8 points when it came to questions from the section of the surveys dealing with salvation. While the project director perceives that any amount of growth on behalf of the students is a positive development, he also would contend that this minuscule amount of growth is not as significant as he would have liked to have seen. However, the reader must remember that this research data, derived from ministry students at a Bible college, and is as such, one
would expect them to have a decent grasp on the basics of soteriology. The figures seem to bear out the fact that the participants in this research did, in fact, possess an advanced understanding of salvation even before they interacted with the project director’s lectures on the theology of the gospel. However, again, the fact that the students did display growth in this area, even though it was microscopic, continues to point to the practical significance of the project director’s research.

Questions Related to Christ

The data that is delineated above in figure 10 displays the cumulative average scores from both the pre-project and post-project surveys concerning the students’ responses to questions related to Christ, as found in section four of both surveys. This point is another section of problems where the project director did not expect to see the growth that one would classify as statistically significant. However, he does view the growth of 0.8 points in this section to be another indication that his intervention, which consisted of the four lectures he delivered on the
theology of the gospel, was successful in aiding the students in their understanding of the subject at hand. Moreover, one could point to the minuscule amount of growth attained in this area by the students as evidence of at least a microscopic level of practical significance. As was discussed in the previous section, one would anticipate that students studying for the ministry at a Christian Bible college would have proficient knowledge of Christology's rudimentary elements. And that is exactly what the responses on the pre-project survey by the students proved to be true. With this information in mind, the project director promulgates that the extremely slight amount of growth that the students did achieve in this area further highlights his research project and thesis's efficacy. In reality, if the Christian ministry students who participated in this research endeavor had shown a confirmed deficiency in their knowledge of who Jesus is, that would have caused the project director great consternation regarding the rudimentary understanding of these students preparing for their future ministry. Overall, this section of questions produced final results that were very much in line with the project director’s personal presuppositions from the beginning of this project. And thus, the project director is pleased that this section of questions related to Christ did not produce any negative surprises within the results.
Questions Related to the Gospel

Figure 11 above presents the overview of the data resulting from the participants' responses to questions related to the gospel as found in section five of the pre-project and post-project surveys. In the project director’s opinion, this is one of the imperative sections of the survey regarding proving the validity of his thesis. With this particular section being one in which the project director anticipated to be able to show noteworthy growth among the students that could be delineated as both practically and statistically significant, he was very pleased to learn that the participants exhibited an overall increase of 8.76 points. This amount of progress among the students is substantial in the vein of research which the project director has conducted and is present within the delineation of this thesis. It is also noteworthy for the reader to remember that two-thirds of the students participating in this project had been previously exposed to advanced reading on the subject of the gospel in their New Testament 1 class, as
discussed in a previous section. In light of this fact, the vast amount of growth that the students achieved throughout this study is simply remarkable; and further illuminates the legitimacy of the project director’s thesis. If this section had not have yielded positive growth above the five-point mark in the project director's opinion, it would have caused him to doubt the efficacy of his project. However, the project director was highly pleased to discover that this pivotal section's results demonstrated this project's effectiveness.

![Figure 12: The gospel began in the New Testament with Jesus.](image)

The table and chart above in figure 12 feature the results from question three in section five on the pre-project and post-project surveys, which asked if the student believed the gospel began in the New Testament with Jesus. This question, located in one of the most important sections of the pre-project and post-project surveys, finds its elevated status because it is related directly to one’s understanding of the theology of the gospel. If an individual has a flawed view when the scripture begins its delineation of the gospel, it will lead them to a theology of the gospel chocked on fallacies. The ministry students from Clear Creek Baptist Bible College who
participated in this research effort succeeded in arriving at the remarkable growth of 20.26 points on the post-project survey. This level of growth is irrefutable evidence of both the practical and statistical significance of the project at hand. The project director also contends that this type of growth in understanding crucial truth such as is presented in this question will produce tangible benefits in both the spiritual lives and ministries of the students who made up the research group of this endeavor.

Figure 13 above provides the reader with a visual presentation of the aggregate results for question five from section five, which asked if the participants believed the gospel only referred to Christianity's essential elements. Unfortunately, the gospel's ideology relates merely to Christianity's rudimentary aspects is a common flaw in some believer’s theology of the gospel. As a result, this question was a topic of paramount importance to the research contained in this thesis. As figure 13 reflects, the ministry students who participated in this project and completed the pre-project survey, engaged with the lectures on the theology of the gospel, and then partook
in the post-project survey experienced an average growth of 7.47 points. Growth of this level is unequivocally practically significant. It lends itself to proving the project director’s thesis that the ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist College would benefit from an elective course that solely focuses upon the gospel's theology. Moreover, 7.47 points of growth are enough to suggest statistical significance as well. Although within the confines of the research venture at hand, the project director is unilaterally focused on the practical significance of his data pertaining exclusively to the realm of ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

![Figure 14](image)

**Figure 14**

I believe that the power and working of the gospel are more than a salvific transaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 5, Question 6</th>
<th>97.6</th>
<th>88.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-Project Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Project Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Above in figure 14, the reader is provided with a visual demonstration of the results from question six from section five. This question dealt with the idea that the gospel's working and the power goes beyond a mere salvific transaction. The ideology that the gospel is, in essence, only a business deal where the believer receives the Lord in exchange for salvation, and afterward, the work of the gospel has culminated, is a common defect in the area of the theology of the gospel. The project director contends that the question at hand is one that is crucial to his thesis. As a
result of the students' educational engagement with the lectures taught by the project director, the participants in the project showed an average growth of 9.4 points. In any realm of academic research, the volume of growth attained regarding this question is understood as substantial. One can point to the cumulative results of question six in section five as both practically and statistically significant. Furthermore, the project director believes that the growth which the ministry students who were a part of this study reached in this question reflects the powerful potential that an elective course in the theology of the gospel encapsulates.

**Questions Related to Discipleship**

![Figure 15 Section 6 Overview](image)

Section six of the pre-project and post-project surveys contained questions pertaining to the relationship that exists between the gospel and discipleship. In totality, this section revealed that the ministry students who participated in the project marked an average growth of 4.87 points. This data also reflected in the chart and table is found in figure 15 above. The project director propagates that the gospel goes beyond the saving of the believer and works to bring
them to a place where they are a mature disciple. The growth of 4.87 points reveals that the students grew in a meaningful way regarding their understanding of how the gospel plays a pivotal role in the believers’ journey of discipleship. Considering that this section of results failed to cross the mark of five points of growth, and thus is not statistically significant. However, the development which the students articulated in this area is without question practically significant. This type of practical growth is, in reality, the central aim of the project director for his thesis. As a result, the project director is extremely satisfied with the overall results derived from section six of the surveys.

![Figure 16](image)

**Figure 16**
I believe the power of the gospel works uninterrupted in the believer's life from the moment of salvation onward.

Question two in section six asked the students if they believed that the gospel's power works uninterrupted in the believer’s life from the moment of salvation onward. This question measured the students’ understanding of how the gospel works without interruption from the moment of salvation to sanctification, all the way to glorification and beyond. The truth enveloped in this question's subject is tantamount to forming a complete and biblical theology of
the gospel. According to the data derived from this question in the pre-project and post-project surveys, the ministry students who made up this project experienced an advance of 11.4 points. This level of growth also displayed in the visual aids is in figure 16 above. The growth achieved by the students in relation to this specific question is well beyond the standard to be seen as both statistically and practically significant. The project director interprets the data discovered regarding this question as lending itself to solidify this project's thesis further. The efficacy of the level of growth CCBBC could expect their students to attain from engaging in a course on the theology of the gospel is typified in the results of question two from section six.

Figure 17 above serves as an optical aid to assist in revealing the results from question five of section six of the pre-project and post-project surveys. An often-overlooked aspect of a complete theology of the gospel is understanding the correlation between the gospel and fellowship with God. Moreover, the project director propagated in the lectures, which comprised the intervention portion of this project. Through the gospel, God provided the believer a seat at His table, as seen in the act of communion. In the first century, having a meal with someone was
considered the pinnacle of fellowship. Question five from section six gauged the students’ understanding of the connection between the gospel and fellowship with God through the experience of communion. Overall, the participants averaged 10.16 points of growth in relation to this question after being presented with the project director’s lectures. Progress of this level validates both the project and the thesis behind it. Also, 10.16 points of growth in academic research are both practically and statistically significant.

**Questions Related to Grace and Faith**

Section seven of both the pre-project and post-project surveys featured questions that focused on grace and faith. The chart and table featured in figure 18, as seen above, unveil the overall results from section seven. As the reader can discern from figure 18, the participants of the project participants obtained an average growth of 4.31 points regarding the questions pertaining to grace and faith. The questions featured in section seven are obliviously crucial to this project. A complete and biblically sound understanding of grace and faith are essential.
elements to forming one’s theology of the gospel. As a result, the project director desired the students who made up the participants of this research to reveal a volume of growth understood as practically significant. The aggregate data from section seven disclosed that the students did show substantial growth in their grasp on grace and faith related to the theology of the gospel. While the average increase of 4.31 points falls just barely short of the standardized requirement of five points, to suggest statistical significance, the growth accomplished by the students in this section of questions is further proof of the efficacy of the project director’s thesis and research venture.

As has been previously stated, the project director built his project to prove the practical application of the data derived from his research. Expressly, the project director set out to measure the ministry students' gospel understanding at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. With that in mind, the project director was somewhat surprised that the data from this section of questions proved that the students grew in the significant amount that they did. Before conducting his research, the project director would have guessed that the students were so advanced in their understanding of grace and faith that only a very minuscule amount of growth would be evident in this section. However, as figure 18 above illuminates, the students did show remarkable significant growth from a practical perspective. This section of the research has served to convince further the project director of the powerful possibilities which is housed within teaching thoroughly biblical principles in the theological academic setting.
In section seven, question four inquired regarding the participants’ grasp of salvation and the work of the gospel transpiring outside of the realm of good results. The project director was astonished at the data from the pre-project survey, which revealed that a large portion of the participants indicated that they believed that good works played a role in the salvific process. It indeed was unfathomable to the author of this project that ministry students at a Baptist Bible college would hold this theologically flawed view. However, when the students, presented with the lectures, were produced by the project director, which articulated a complete and biblical theology of the gospel, they marked an average growth of 8.5 points on question four of section seven. The advancement in edification the students displayed on the post-project survey, in the project director's opinion, can only be described as astounding. The soaring achievement of growth on behalf of the student participants can be portrayed as practically and statistically significant. Additionally, the effectiveness of the intervention portion of this project is further solidified based on the results from this particular question. This truth also lends itself to
establishing the potential impact an elective course on the theology of the gospel would have upon the ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

Questions Related to Confidence and Competency

Section eight of the survey, both the pre-project and post-project, comprised the inquiry portion of the project director’s thesis project, contained questions related to the students’ confidence and competency in their understanding of a complete theology of the gospel. In the project director's judgment, this particular section of questions serves as the crux of the research project. The student's confidence in their competency to articulate a complete theology of the gospel and their ability to defend the theology of the gospel biblically apologetically lies at the heart of the project director’s purpose for his research endeavor. The project director concedes that personally, regardless of the totality of the results of the project, overall, he primarily weighs the validity of his project based upon the data collected from this section. As a result of the remarkable average increase of 10.14 points by the students on the post-project survey, the
project director views his original thesis regarding the positive impact that a class of the theology of the gospel would have on the ministry students at CCBBC as unquestionably vindicated. The mammoth amount of increase of the student's knowledge of the theology of the gospel displayed in section eight's data is not only inestimably practically significant, but 10.14 points is more than twice the rate of growth needed to prove statistical significance as well academically.

Figure 21 above contains a chart and table which delineates the data from the pre-project and post-project surveys pertaining to question two from section eight. This question inquired regarding the participants’ confidence in their ability to articulate the doctrine of soteriology. As the reader can ascertain through the visual aid of figure 21, the majority of the students did not possess advanced confidence in their ability to explain the doctrine of salvation on the pre-project survey. After the students erudite in this subject as a result of the lectures taught to them by the project director, they tested an average of 14.01 points higher on the post-project survey. Growth of this degree unequivocally considered enormous regardless of the metric used to measure it. The outcome data from this question proves the effectiveness of the project director’s
intervention of providing the students with lectures on the theology of the gospel. Moreover, an average increase of 14.01 points, as the students displayed in their response to this question, is both practically and statistically significant.

![Figure 22](image_url)

Figure 22
I am confident that I can competently delineate the gospel as the metanarrative of the Bible.

Understanding that the gospel is the metanarrative of the Bible is a foundational truth that helps one form a complete theology of the gospel. In reality, the Bible unveils one story, and that is the story of the gospel. Question three in this section of the survey asked about the students’ confidence in their ability to explain how that the gospel is the metanarrative of the Bible. As figure 22 above displays, the student participants of this project attained an average improvement of 10.5 points on question three from section eight on the post-project survey after being presented with the project director’s lectures. As the project director has stated in regard to data previously in this chapter, five points of growth are needed to prove statistical significance. Any numerical amount of improvement perceived as lending itself to establishing practical significance; thus, the data is derived from this question points to the efficacy of the project
director’s thesis project and should be considered noteworthy in either lane, of practical or statistical significance.

The project director asked the participants about their confidence in their ability to biblically defend their personal understanding of soteriology on question five of section eight—the results of both the pre-project and post-project surveys displayed in the visual presentation of figure 23 above. The project director set out on this project to prove that ministry students at CCBBC need to be offered an elective class on the theology of the gospel. He also desired to help the student participants in the project gain both theological pieces of knowledge of the gospel and confidence in their ability to articulate and defend that knowledge. As the chart and table of figure 23 reveal, the students increased their score by an average of 10.1 points on question five. Again, this level of improvement is both statistically and practically significant.
Figure 24 above delineates the collective data from both surveys, which comprised the inquiry portion of this research project relating to question six from section eight. This specific question queried the ministry students who completed the surveys about their confidence in their aptitude apologetically defending the gospel as the Scripture's metanarrative. As is displayed in figure 24, the students experienced a mean growth of 12.5 points on the post-project survey in comparison to their score on the pre-project survey. In the lectures which the project director provided the students, he taught them how to build a thoroughly biblical apologetic for the gospel as the metanarrative of the entirety of the scripture. As a result of sharing in this learning endeavor, the seventy-five ministry students from Clear Creek Baptist Bible College arrived at a place of increased confidence that is well beyond the requirement to be considered statistically significant. However, the project director built this project to produce practical results in the lives of the students, and one easily decerns that the students gained practical knowledge and confidence through their involvement in the project director’s research project on the theology of the gospel.
Yes / No Questions

In the final section of the post-project survey, the project director presented the participants with three yes or no questions. The project director concedes that these three questions should not be used to measure any statistical significance in his project. However, these questions do certainly have legitimacy in the dominion of forming a foundation from which the practical relevance of the project at hand is unquestionably proven. As the reader will see in the visual aids below; these three questions were straightforward and presented in a practical and understandable phraseology. The project director contends that when one views the results below, any lingering questions regarding the success and efficacy of this research will be verified as unfounded. The overwhelmingly positive data derived from these three pragmatic and straightforward questions will intractably anchor this thesis project which is built on the subject of the theology of the gospel in the harbor of effectiveness in terms of the research it contains.

![Figure 25](image_url)

**Figure 25**
Percentage of Students Who Expressed That They Would Like for CCBBC to Offer a Theology of the Gospel Elective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES/NO QUESTION 1</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The charts and tables above, displayed in figures 25-27, visually depict the results from the three yes or no questions that were present on the post-project survey. The project director constructed these final three questions to conclude the post-project survey on a highly practical note. He also desired to allow the ministry students who took part in this research project to have
the opportunity to produce some tangible data that would be easy to both interpret and apply in the context of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. With straightforward data such as is derived from the three yes or no questions, one can easily see that the students grew in their comprehension of the theology of the gospel as a result of being participants in this research endeavor. Moreover, through these yes or no questions, the student's desire to have an opportunity to take a class that solely focuses upon the theology of the gospel is unmistakably established.

As stated previously in this document, the research group for this project consisted of seventy-five undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. When asked if they would like for CCBBC to offer an undergraduate elective class on the subject of theology of the gospel, all seventy-five participants said yes, they would like for a class on this subject to be offered. Figure 25 shows this data in a visual format above. These same students were asked if they believed that they had grown in their knowledge of the theology of the gospel as a result of their involvement in this project. The results revealed that 97.33% of the seventy-five participants acknowledged that they advanced in their understanding of the theology of the gospel. Figure 26 also depicted the data in the table and chart above. Lastly, the students were asked if they believed that what they had learned about the gospel through their participation in this project would help them in their personal walk with the Lord and their ability to do the work of the ministry. Out of the seventy-five respondents, again, 97.33% of them indicated that yes, their faith walk, and their ministry was aided as a result of what they learned through a part of this research. The reader can also view this data through the visual portrayal of the results in figure 27 above.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The project director began this doctoral academic pursuit and the research endeavor that accompanied it because he contends that a complete and thorough understanding of the theology of the gospel holds the key to believers in general, and ministry students in specific, being able to cultivate a faith walk with the Lord which is personally satisfying them and publicly attractive to the lost world. Moreover, the project director propagates that when one called to vocational ministry reaches the summit of an advanced understanding of the gospel as well as the power which is encapsulated within it, their personal potential for an enduring lifelong and fruitful ministry astronomically increased. With this conviction held firmly within his heart and mind, the project director formulated and then articulated the thesis from which this project launched. Specifically, the project director contended throughout this dissertation that if the undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College given the opportunity to experience an elective course entirely on the subject of the theology of the gospel, they would see the claims made above come to a tangible reality in their individual lives. For the project director, this endeavor means much more than simply the pursuit of a terminal degree; he truly wants to positively impact ministry students at CCBBC in their gospel understanding so that they may go out and do the same with those they encounter in their future ministry settings. As the project director writes this final chapter and reflects on the journey of this project from its embryonic inception all the way to the completion of the research and the tabulation of the data which followed, he acknowledges all of the time and effort that has gone into making this thesis a reality. However, beyond the labor and time, the project director ascertains that this academic effort was not only worth it, but it was also successful. This is a research project which is
efficacious in numerous crucial areas pertaining to the foundational thesis from which it was cognitively and practically birthed.

**Overarching Conclusions Drawn From The Project**

The research project this dissertation is reporting on proved in chapter four above that undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College grow in their understanding of the theology of the gospel when presented with lectures on the subject in an academic setting. Also, this project has established through the data in that same chapter that the undergraduate ministry students at CCBBC certainly have room to grow in their gospel understanding. Through this project's resulting data, the project director was pleasantly greeted with the reality that the seventy-five undergraduate ministry students who made up the research group all unanimously desired to see a theology of the gospel class offered at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. The interest demonstrated in the subject of the theology of the gospel by the project participants serves as an additional indication of the need for CCBBC to offer the course suggested throughout this document. Moreover, the students’ exhibited desire for a course on the theology of the gospel lends itself to demonstrating that such a course would make if the institution were offering it.

The results from the research housed within this document also convey the reality that many of the undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College lacked confidence in their competency to delineate a complete theology of the gospel. This deficiency would undoubtedly cause the students future difficulty in both their faith walk and ministry. The project director’s intervention consisted of lectures that not only taught a complete theology of the gospel but also how to mount a biblical apologetic against detractors. The data unveiled that the students’ confidence and competency concerning the theology of the gospel soared after they
experienced the educational edification of the intervention portion of the project. Thus, these facts further establish the practical effectiveness of presenting material in an academic setting. The resulting data derived from the project director’s research illuminates that the dissemination of a theological curriculum impacts the student not only intellectually, but also bears itself out practically in their newfound confidence in the knowledge they possess regarding the subject.

The project director possessed a desire from the inception of this endeavor to impact the undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College tangibly and practically regarding their understanding of a complete theology of the gospel. Proven as one accomplished by this project and its director in chapter four's delineated results is this lofty and worthwhile goal. Simultaneously, the previous statement, validated in a myriad of ways, with one such evidence rests in the students’ newfound grasp on the gospel as the metanarrative of the Bible. The practical application of students ascertaining that the story of the Bible is the unveiling of the gospel from beginning to end will undoubtedly aid them in their personal spiritual formation and their future ministry endeavors as well. Furthermore, this panoramic perspective of the Scripture's continuity and trustworthiness will produce a foundation from which CCBBC students can minister with tremendous confidence.

Today’s ministry student, who is at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, training for the ministry to which they have been called, faces colossal challenges in terms of finishing well. This fact, well established and delineated, is located earlier in this dissertation. However, the reader needs to ascertain that today’s ministers go out in an effort to win the world with the gospel of The Lord Jesus Christ. However, the world is often so lost that it does not even realize that it is in need of salvation. All the while, the world mocks and scoffs at the minister of the gospel, and in moments of weakness, many called to carry the gospel message lay it down out of
fear, frustration, and even moral failure. The project director propagates that when the ministry students embark on their ministry journey outside of the comfortable confines of the classroom, armed with more than intellectual knowledge, they need the truth of the totality of the gospel. These ministry students need not only to understand the theology of the gospel and to genuinely believe in the uninterrupted power of the gospel, but it is also essential that they possess a deep and abiding conviction of the gospel’s ability to change lives. This type of unwavering conviction unilaterally linked to the ministry student knowing unequivocally that the power of the gospel has divinely transformed their life, and the deep and abiding relationship with the Lord, as intended to follow genuine conversion, is one of the missing aspects in a flawed theology of the gospel.

A complete and biblical theology of the gospel includes the understanding of an enduring fellowship with God, exclusively afforded to the regenerated sinner through the gospel. In his prospectus, the project director projected that the undergraduate ministry student at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College did not fully grasp the connection between the gospel and the believer’s fellowship with God. This presupposition was proven true in the delineated data of chapter four. After the engagement with the lectures, the student participants marked significant growth in understanding the role the gospel plays in providing the believer perpetual fellowship with God. In the lectures on the theology of the gospel, the project director went to prodigious lengths to articulate that the fellowship with God provided through the gospel is seen clearly in the act of the Lord’s Supper. As a result, concerning this element of the project, the students exhibited remarkable progress in their understanding of this vital doctrinal truth. The evidence of the student’s edification of the correlation between the gospel and true fellowship with God is seen
academically in the results chapter; it is seen practically in the confidence the students tested that they possessed due to the project on the post-project survey.

Overall, the project director learned through this research endeavor that the undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College both need and desire an advanced understanding of the theology of the gospel. This project has proven that this essential need of the ministry student, met through an intervention comprised of an educational element of disseminating knowledge in a lecture format such as transpires in a traditional college classroom. The efficacy of the project director’s foundational thesis, as presented in chapter one of this document, is validated based upon the overarching results of this research project. Moreover, the presupposition of this project which stated that CCBBC should offer an elective course on the theology of the gospel, is authenticated in light of the result data derived from the project director’s research. Throughout this research journey, the project director became even more thoroughly convinced of the unsurpassed power of the Lord Jesus Christ's gospel to change people from the inside out. This project also solidified the project director’s conviction that the gospel must be clearly understood and delineated for all that it is in the totality of a complete theology of the gospel. Because, when the gospel becomes defined as anything and everything connected to Christianity, it, in reality, becomes as nothing, or at least, something much less than that conveyed in the pages of Scripture and certainly less than what God intends it. The gospel is, in essence, a person, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has the power to save the lost, reclaim the wayward, and provide divine direction to those adrift in the sea of life. Ultimately, the power and totality of the gospel, when understood as it is and applied in the believer’s life as such, the gospel produces a faith that is eternally satisfying to the redeemed and is also wooingly attractive to a rebellious and aimless world.
Further Observations

Throughout the research and dissertation process, the project director discovered a few elements that deserve articulation in this segment of the written project. While the items which are discussed in this section do not fit categorically in the conclusions that are present in the section above, they still represent an essential contribution to this concluding chapter of the project. One item worth reiterating is the enthusiasm displayed by the student participants who made up the project's research group. In just a couple of weeks of recruitment by the project director, 59.52 percent of the undergraduate ministry students enrolled at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College volunteered to participate in the project. This level of involvement, which included the majority of the student body, came as an absolute surprise to the project director. Albeit the passionate participation of the ministry students at CCBBC in this project built around the theology of the gospel came as a very welcomed and pleasant surprise. The project director interprets the students’ keen interest in this project as a sign that the theology of the gospel is an area of theological awareness in which these undergraduate ministry students desire to grow.

During the course of collecting the results from the surveys, which served as the inquiry portion of this project, it occurred to the project director that the freshmen and sophomore participants had previous exposure to an advanced presentation of the theology of the gospel. This prior experience resulted from the project director assigning a book on the subject in his New Testament 1 class. The project director required that the students read the book and then write a paper over the contents. The consternation experienced by the author became exacerbated when he discovered that almost two-thirds of the project participants hailed from the freshmen and sophomore classes. As a result of these facts, the project director feared that this prior exposure to the subject matter could potentially make it more challenging to see the students
achieve growth between the pre-project survey and post-project survey. While the previous experience in the subject by the majority of the participants undoubtedly diminished the project's positive results, the data derived from the research revealed that the students attained growth in every single section of the survey. With this in mind, the project director contends that the potential for students to apprehend an ascending advancement in their knowledge of the theology of the gospel through the course, which this project suggests, is further established and validated in light of the previously stated facts.

Another element the reader needs to note is that the project director never intended for the data derived from his research to be entirely applicable or specifically repeatable in another setting. The research endeavor on which this thesis is reporting was solely conceived, formulated, articulated, and facilitated in such a way as to be holistically focused on the undergraduate ministry student at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Not to say that similar results are not discoverable in a comparable academic and educational institution as CCBBC, the project director is merely pointing out the centrality of CCBBC regarding his project. This singular emphasis on a specific educational entity is also why the project director did not place a premium on statistical significance. Although, much of the data discovered in this project reveals growth that meets or exceeds the standardized mark required to prove statistical significance. This research venture both sought and proved practical effectiveness in the lives of the seventy-five undergraduate ministry students of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College who comprised the research group.

The fact that this project housed a research group that is made up entirely of college students who are studying in preparation for the ministry certainly has some impact on the results. Again, this project yielded positive and marked growth in every area of its inquiry.
However, as expected, the results revealed that in some areas, the participants scored at a level that is considered well above a novice. As a result, the project director contends that a focused educational effort on the subject of the theology of the gospel among a group of believers who were measured to be novices, the growth potential would even exceed the tremendous results discovered in this project.

While the participants revealed their advanced knowledge in some areas, they displayed their ineptness in others. One such area where the project director was flabbergasted by the results came in the form of the responses, he received regarding the students’ understanding of the role of good works in the salvific process. Entirely too many of the student participants expressed a belief that good works did, in fact, aid in the salvific process. These are ministry students at a Baptist Bible college; the project director presupposed that the vast majority of them would grasp that one is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. However, the pre-project survey indicated that this was not the case. The post-project survey results revealed marked improvement, but still to the level that the project director would have expected. It also should be noted that the lectures delivered by the author for the intervention portion of the project did not focus very much on this rudimentary soteriological truth. If the project had known the pre-project survey results when he built and taught the lectures, he would have certainly spent some time articulating the unilateral theological truth that the sinner is redeemed by Christ completely and totally apart from any good works or supposed moral merits of the individual. The project director wondered if the participants misread the question, but he does not believe that to be true when looking at the results objectively across both surveys.

Lastly, the project director felt it germane to reiterate that the widespread virus impacted this project completed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This fact did create some difficulties and
uncertainties regarding the completion of the project. Chapter three discusses many of these concerns and adjustments delineated in this thesis report. Such concerns included two periods of campus shutdown at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College due to the virus’s outbreaks. However, the most significant setback in which the project director incurred as a result of the pandemic was contracting the virus himself. The project director came down with the COVID-19 virus during the final writing phase of this project. He battled the virus for three weeks when he would have instead been writing. The project director estimates that his contracting the virus probably set the completion of this project by at least two weeks. However, as is communicated previously in this document, the project director believes that it is a blessing that the pandemic did not adversely affect his project more than it did as virtually everything in the world, including the work and ministry of the church, has experienced the reality of living in the midst of a global pandemic.

**Future Study**

At the conclusion of most research endeavors, the researcher becomes aware of items that need consideration of future study, and this project is no different. As a result of the mammoth undertaking of study and research encapsulated in this project, the project director discovered some matters that would be deserving of future study. This, of course, consists of elements that are both directly and indirectly, related to the study at hand. Furthermore, the need for a future study which the project director is suggesting in this section, would bring further clarification to the study of the theology of the gospel. Moreover, this future study would lend itself to helping those tasked with teaching theological material to understand better how to disseminate the totality of the doctrinal truth housed within the gospel.
An element for future study in the author's opinion is the origination and proliferation of the flawed theological perspective that propagates the beginning of the gospel found in the New Testament. When the undergraduate ministry students participating in this research project were asked about the beginning of the gospel, many of them indicated that it began in the New Testament with the incarnation of Jesus. This is a defective theological viewpoint that the project director has encountered both in the classroom where he teaches and in churches he served as well. As this dissertation articulated in chapter two's confines, the gospel is clearly seen throughout the pages of Scripture, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The promise of the gospel makes its first appearance in the third chapter of the book of Genesis. Ascertained from the first few verses of the Bible in the creation account is the picture of God’s redeeming power and purpose. The project director deems that additional research and study need to transpire to determine why so many believers fail to see the gospel as delineated throughout the entirety of the Old Testament Canon.

Although this study has unilaterally focused on the ministry student at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and their grasp on the theology of the gospel; the project director contends that this is a theological subject which both clergy and laity need to grow in their understanding. As a result, further study and research need completing that is remarkably similar to what the project director has done here in this project, but with the research group consisting entirely of church laity. If such an undertaking came to pass, the results could metrically undergo evaluation, in a compare and contrast perspective, with the data obtained from the ministry students in this research project. The project director believes that an untold number of correlations is ready to be unearthed in such a study. He also suggests that many new discoveries relating to the theology of the gospel are waiting for a researcher to illuminate them in a study
with a research group consisting of persons exclusively of the laity. The type of study that the project director is recommending, in his opinion, would help the church to see the exclusive power and work of the gospel from the moment of justification all the way to glorification and beyond. The project director also contends that a research project of this nature would further help those teaching and preaching the theology of the gospel discover how to mediate their message in such a way that it is discernable and easily applied in the life of a believer. The church of today is in desperate need of the saving, sustaining, satisfying, and ultimately the sovereign power of the gospel. The church in American and around the world must get the gospel right and then labor to take it to everyone, absolutely everywhere, by utilizing every possible resource at their disposal.

Through the completion of this research project, the project director also discovered that there is a tremendous unthinkable and shocking void of both academic and practical writing on the theology of the gospel. That is not to say that there is an absence of written works with the word gospel in the title. In reality, there is a plethora of books and articles that utilize the term gospel in either the title or subtitle. However, the content of the majority of these treatises has very little to do with the gospel in general and nothing to do with the theology of the gospel specifically. When the project director was completing the research required for the writing of chapter two, he first became aware of the void of gospel-centered writing as he scoured theological journals for articles on the theology of the gospel. Moreover, the project director soon realized that the vacuum of material pertaining to the gospel not relegated to theological journal articles, but is the centrality of the gospel as a doctrine is also conspicuously missing in the content of published books that include the word gospel in the title as well. As this document has illuminated previously, when the gospel merely becomes a catch-all word used to house
anything and everything related to Christianity, it, in essence, is robed of the power it contains and becomes inadvertently pushed from the place of prominence which it should hold in the vocabulary of the redeemed. When the gospel is defined, described, and deployed as anything and everything, the project director asserts that it becomes nothing in actuality.

Evidenced is the need for further study and toil in this area in the project director’s delineation of the lack of genuinely gospel-centered publications that produce a great understanding of the theology of the gospel. It is the perspective of the project director, who, as a result of the work accomplished in this project, is considered an expert in this subject, that there is an exceptional need for adept scholars and practitioners to write and publish works regarding the theology of the gospel. There is a need for written works that are purely academic in nature. These works would aid the theology student in thinking through the doctrinal impact of the theology of the gospel. However, there is also a massive need for texts that are of a more practical nature as well. The practical books on the theology of the gospel would significantly impact the church and its ministers in learning how to properly implement a complete theology of the gospel into both their lives and their evangelism and discipleship efforts.

The project director plans to personally engage in both additional study of the theology of the gospel and produce a variety of written articulations on the subject as well. Throughout this project, the author has recommended that Clear Creek Baptist Bible College offer an undergraduate elective course on the theology of the gospel. The project director plans to build this course and present it for approval by the college. He also intends to write a book that would be considered an adequate textbook for an introductory undergraduate course focusing upon the theology of the gospel. The textbook that the project director is planning will approach the subject from both the perspective of a scholar and a practitioner as well. This hybrid approach is
based on the fact that the author believes that this method will prove to be most effective in teaching the undergraduate ministry student at CCBBC what the totality of the theology of the gospel is and how to make practical application of this truth in their ministry endeavors.

The project director also plans to write articles on the theology of the gospel. He desires to write some articles that are unequivocally academic, and as such, would fit nicely into a peer-reviewed theological journal publication. However, the project director also ascertains the need for articles to be produced relating the theology of the gospel in a practical sense. This type of article would be edifying for both ministers and laity alike. Moreover, these practical articles could efficiently address many how-to questions pertaining to the theology of the gospel. On a somewhat concerning note, the project director does harbor some worries about getting his material published. A market that appears to have experienced flooding of gospel-labeled material is the source of this anxiety. However, as it has been discussed previously, in reality, most of the modern published works available today with the word gospel in the title have nothing to do with the theology of the gospel.

The project director ascertains that there is a profound need for scholarly research to transpire, which elucidates the history of how the theology of the gospel was understood through the ages. Study in this area should follow the natural chronological timeline. One could begin with the time periods in which the Holy Scripture encapsulates. Working from the Old Testament all the way through the New Testament. Next, the effort to delineate the historical understanding of the theology from a chronological perspective should move beyond the timeframe of the biblical context. One would naturally excavate the Church Father’s understanding of the gospel as portrayed in their written works in the patristic period. From here, the researcher would chronicle how those in the medieval era comprehended the gospel. Next,
the work would focus on how the Reformers' understood the theology of the gospel. The work in this area could conclude by demarcating how the gospel is seen in postmodernism and beyond.

Lastly, the project director asserts that additional work needs to be done in regards to the theology of the gospel in general because so little knowledge about it exists among the masses. While scholars and students alike can wax on and on about different genera of theology, one rarely encounters the phrase theology of the gospel. Suppose additional research work on this subject becomes a reality. In that case, it will further promote the authenticity that one’s theology of the gospel matters and has a profound impact on them securing a satisfying fellowship with the Lord. Moreover, interest in this theological subject will grow profoundly in both ecclesiastical and academic situations. The influence that an acute understanding of a complete theology of the gospel could have upon the church of the living Lord and its ministry is colossal in the project director’s estimation. Moreover, the fact that the church has become a non-essential entity in the modern world, clearly seen through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the efficacy of the church in the modern world is questioned by some government leaders externally and even by a few internally who claim to be followers of Christ, the project director suggests that in these dark days, the truth which a complete theology of the gospel contains will shine even brighter. More research work needs accomplishing in an effort to propagate the totality of the gospel because in many cases, the church in America appears to be asleep at the wheel, and the theology of the gospel, and the powerful possibilities contained within that single word, may very lead ministers and laity alike to produce a spiritually fervent ringing that causes the sleeping giant, the true church, to wake up.

The metanarrative story of the Bible is the gospel. The foundation of the great commission is the gospel. The project director propagates that developing a spiritually healthy
heartbeat within believers individually and the church corporately is intractably linked to a proper grasp on the totality of the theology of the gospel. The importance and true centrality of the gospel in the believer’s heart and mind simply cannot be overstated. As a result, the theology of the gospel is a subject deserving of a greater focus. Moreover, the project director asserts that the signs of the times he is living in demand that those tasked with fulfilling the Lord’s ministry endeavor to apprehend all that can be found in the gospel intellectually. The Lord only left His church with one message, and that is the message of the gospel. Moreover, He tasked the church with a unilateral mission as well, and that is the mission of taking the whole gospel to the whole world. In light of these facts, how could any genuine follower of Christ discount the importance of the theology of the gospel and the vital role God designed it to play in convicting, justifying, redeeming, securing, sanctifying, and eternally satisfying the repentant?
Bibliography


December 28, 2020

Charles Goodman
Roy Lucas

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY20-21-308 Soteriology: Using the Classroom to Develop a Theology of the Gospel

Dear Charles Goodman and Roy Lucas,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

(2) Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46.102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word research with the word project throughout both documents.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office
This is to certify that:

Charles Goodman

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Researchers (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stages)

Under requirements set by:

Liberty University

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify?w9934a4b7-9399-449f-9c51-9157fe3037365-38842246
Charles R. Goodman

Charlie,

Congratulations on your progress toward a doctorate degree. The dissertation phase is, I believe, the most exciting part of that process. I am glad you are there now.

Your research topic is interesting and I believe your contribution to the field will be significant. I am very pleased to know that Clear Creek Baptist Bible College will be allowed some involvement in your work. You have my permission to survey our students, alumni, and/or faculty-staff as needed for your project. You may communicate to them that the study is approved by the administration and their full participation is encouraged by the same.

If there is anything else I can do to assist you, please contact me without hesitation. I am sure your efforts will make a positive impact for the kingdom, involvement in it will be good for our institution.

Sincerely,

Paul Saffidge, Ph.D.
Dean of Academic Affairs

Kimball G., President
Education for Christian Service Since 1920
Remember Clear Creek in your prayers, your giving, and your will.
September 24, 2020

Charles R. Davidson

Dear Charles,

I am excited to hear that you have moved into the final stage of work toward your doctoral degree. I know that you will find this last portion of your work some of the most rewarding, since you are researching and writing about your passion.

You have my permission to survey our faculty/staff, students, and alumni as needed for your project. Please communicate any approvals of this research to anyone you choose to survey along with my encouragement for their participation in the research. I look forward to reading about the results of the study.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if there is anything else I can help with.

Thank you,

Brandon Fox, Ph.D.
December 15, 2020

Dear Ministry Student,

As a doctoral student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to evaluate the level of understanding regarding the theology of the gospel among the undergraduate ministry students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Therefore, I am writing to invite you to participate in my study. The participants of this study must consist of undergraduate ministry students currently enrolled at CCBBC. Should you choose to be a participant in this study you will be asked to complete a pre-project survey that will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. In the weeks that follow you will be asked to watch four-thirty to forty-minute lectures on the theology of the gospel. Afterward, you will be asked to complete the post-project survey which will take you approximately fifteen minutes to finish. In addition, it should be noted that your participation will be completely anonymous, as no personal, identifying information will be collected.

In order to be a part of this exciting research project please go to [survey link]. Complete the survey you find there in a timely manner and await further instructions related to the upcoming lectures and the post-project survey. A consent document is provided as the first page you will see after you click on the survey link. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please click on the button at the end of the consent information to indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Charles R. Goodman
Research Survey Questions

The Likert Scale is used to measure responses for all questions.

Key: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Section One- Questions Related to the Bible

1. I believe the Bible is entirely inerrant.
2. I believe that God divinely inspired the Bible through the means of verbal plenary inspiration.
3. I primarily interpret the Bible literally.
4. I primarily interpret the Bible symbolically.
5. I believe the gospel is the metanarrative of the entire Bible.
6. The gospel is clearly evident in both the Old and New Testaments.

Section Two- Questions Related to Sin

1. I believe sin is rebellion against God and the displacement of God.
2. I believe that Adam’s iniquity in the garden corrupted humanity with sin.
3. I believe the corruption that man inherited from Adam is pervasive.
4. I believe that all have sinned and need salvation.
5. I believe that all who die in their sin are condemned to hell.
6. The gospel is good news for sinners.
Section Three- Questions Related to Salvation

1. I believe there is only one path to God and that it is through Jesus.
2. I do not believe that man can earn his salvation.
3. I believe that Salvation is available to all humanity.
4. I believe the salvific work of God is eternal.
5. I believe that the work of the Holy Spirit plays an essential part in the salvation of sinners.
6. In its broadest sense, salvation according to the gospel includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Section Four- Questions Related to Christ

1. The good news of the gospel is related to Jesus.
2. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Gospel.
3. I believe that during the earthly life of Jesus, he was God in the flesh.
4. I believe that Christ is the only way for sinful men to be reconciled with God.
5. I believe that Jesus, who is the Messiah, is, in reality, the King, and as such Christians should show allegiance towards him.
6. Jesus's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin.

Section Five- Questions Related to Gospel

1. I do not believe the gospel is only relevant in regards to salvation.
2. I do not believe that the word gospel only refers to the first four books of the New Testament.
4. I believe the gospel is good news regarding Jesus.
5. I believe that the gospel only refers to the elementary elements of Christianity.
6. I believe that the power and working of the gospel is more than a salvific transaction.

Section Six- Questions Related to Discipleship

1. I believe that a genuinely saved individual will show outward evidence of the working of God in their life.
2. I believe that the power of the gospel works uninterrupted in the believer’s life from the moment of salvation onward.
3. I believe that sanctification is a process that transpires as a result of the gospel’s power.
4. I believe that the gospel is actively aiding my growth as a disciple of Christ.
5. I believe that the gospel afforded me fellowship with God, as evidenced in the ordinance of communion.
6. I am able to explain the reason for my faith in Jesus if someone asks me.
7. As a disciple of Christ, I should endeavor to make disciples.

Section Seven- Questions Related to Grace and Faith

1. I believe that one is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.
2. I believe that grace is a gift of God, provided through the gospel.
3. I believe that Faith is a gift of God, provided through the gospel.
4. I believe that good works aids in the salvific process.
5. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.
6. Personal faith in Christ is required for receiving God’s gift of grace.

7. Through the power of the gospel, all true believers endure to the end.

Section Eight - Questions Related to Confidence and Competency

1. I am confident that I can competently explain the theology of the gospel.

2. I am confident that I can aptly articulate the doctrine of soteriology.

3. I am confident that I can competently delineate the gospel as the metanarrative of the Bible.

4. I am confident that I can biblically defend my personal theology of the gospel.

5. I am confident that I can biblically defend my personal understanding of soteriology.

6. I am confident that I can propagate an apologetic for the gospel as the metanarrative of the Scripture.
Soteriology: Using the Classroom to Develop a Theology of the Gospel

Outline of the Four Lectures used for the research project.

Lecture One

Introduction to Soteriology and the Theology of the Gospel

I. The rudimentary foundations of soteriology.
II. The fundamental principles of the gospel.
III. The place the gospel holds within soteriology.

Lecture Two

The Gospel as the Metanarrative of the Scripture

I. The gospel as it is presented in the Old Testament.
II. The gospel as it is presented in the New Testament.
III. The continuity of gospel across the Old and New Testament.

Lecture Three

The Gospel Beyond a Mere Transaction

I. Understanding the power of the gospel outside of a personalistic salvific experience.
II. Recognizing the relationship and fellowship the gospel affords.
III. Grasping the power of the gospel for Christian living.

Lecture Four

Presenting and Defending a Complete Theology of the Gospel

I. What is a complete theology of the gospel?
II. How does one present a complete theology of the gospel in a postmodern world?
III. How to build and articulate an apologetic for a complete theology of the gospel.