



Gospel Doctrine

Healthy Church

What is Gospel Doctrine?

- Put simply, gospel doctrine is the doctrine that the Bible *as a whole* gives us.
- Gospel doctrine is just another name for “biblical theology”.
- Gospel doctrine can be contrasted with other ways of viewing what the Bible conveys:
 - Felt-needs teaching
 - Ethical rulebook
 - Helpful “fables”

Why Gospel Doctrine is Necessary

- Gospel doctrine gives us the broad framework in which we can understand our lives and our relationship with God.
- Gospel doctrine forces us to keep the whole storyline of the Bible in our minds.
- Gospel doctrine keeps us from going astray in harder issues or losing the forest for the trees in smaller doctrinal ideas.

How Gospel Doctrine Works

- First, we must read the *whole* Bible in order to understand its doctrine.
- Second, we look at those ideas in the Bible that come up over and over: God's holiness, human failure, redemption, restoration, etc.
- Third, we ask how the development of these theological ideas creates a framework for understanding other ideas.

Seeing Gospel Doctrine in Action: Holiness

- Gen 1: God creates a world that is “very good”
- Gen 2: God creates a garden paradise in which he plants humanity (his image-bearers) and over which he gives them certain commands
- Gen 3: Humanity disobeys God’s command and are exiled from the garden
- Why were they exiled? What did God need to separate them from?

Holiness (cont.)

- Exodus 3: Moses must enter into God's presence in a particular way because the area around God is holy.
 - We see the beginnings of the "holiness codes" or the laws about cleanness and how one can enter into God's presence.
- Exodus 19: God desires to make a people who reflect his holiness and who will act as intercessors between him and the world.

Holiness (cont.)

- Leviticus: God gives Israel a method for becoming holy so that they can come into his presences and have a relationship with him (see especially 19:2).
 - God is trying to make people who image him properly.
- Numbers 20: Moses fails to treat the Lord as “holy” and cannot go into the Promised Land.
 - What does this say the Promised Land is meant to mirror?

Holiness (cont.)

- Isaiah 6: The danger of what it means for a sinful human to enter God's presence becomes stark for the prophet.
 - At the same time, an unexpected solution is presented.
- Ezekiel 26: God proclaims his intention to act for his own holy name by pouring out his own Spirit on his people.

Holiness (cont.)

- Matthew 4-7: Jesus' ministry both taught and enacted a purifying of Israel (healing, demon-casting, etc.). He proclaims that God is making a holy people who can dwell in his kingdom.
- 1 Peter 1-2: Peter sees the church as people who are to become holy and who are being built into a holy temple for God's dwelling.

Holiness (cont.)

- Revelation 21-22: We see the people of God again united with him, without the ruse and with nothing unclean, dwelling forever as we should have from the start.
- How does a biblical theology of holiness help us understand things like the Mosaic Law or the ethical commands of the New Testament?
- How does understanding holiness help us understand ourselves better?
- How does understanding holiness help interpret the difficult passages like Joshua or the death of Uzzah? How about Jesus' teachings on divorce?