

Theology: The Study of God

1. Introduction

Great Theologians of Church History



Athanasius of Alexandria

298-373 A.D.

Defended the Deity of Christ

Opposed the heresy of "Arianism" which taught that Christ was created rather than eternal

Great Theologians of Church History



Martin Luther

1483-1546

Leader in the Protestant Reformation in Germany
Spoke out against indulgences, and other problematic teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, translated the Bible from Latin to German making it accessible to people

Great Theologians of Church History



John Calvin

1483-1546

Reformer in Geneva

Called “Organizer of Protestantism” because he developed model of church government

Many influential writings

Great Theologians of Church History

Do you need to be a great theologian in order to study theology?

No!

We are doing theology whenever we open our Bibles

What is Theology?

- *Greek “theos”* = God
- *Greek “logos”* = words, or discourse
- “Theology” = words or discourse about God
- Baker’s definition:

“Theology in its narrowest sense is the science or study of God. In its broadest sense it includes the study, not only of God, but of all of the relationships which exist between God and His universe. Theology may be thought of as a systematizing of the teachings of the Bible.” *(A Dispensational Theology, p.22)*

What is Theology?

When we study theology we ask “what does the Bible say about this particular topic?”

- about God
- about Scripture
- about human beings
 - about Jesus
 - about salvation
 - about the Church
- about the future and end times

Why Study Theology?

1. Theology is not a substitute for the Bible.

- Matthew 15:9
- Good theology is built on the teaching of Scripture

Why Study Theology?

2. The Bible encourages thorough study of God's truth.

- 1 Timothy 4:6, 13
- Study, search, meditate, know, and obey
- Be like the Bereans (Acts 17:11)

Why Study Theology?

3. If we are not well grounded in the major doctrines of our faith, we will be led astray.

- Ephesians 4:14
- It is important to know both what you believe and *WHY* you believe it

Why Study Theology?

4. Apparent contradictions are resolved by an orderly and careful study of Scripture

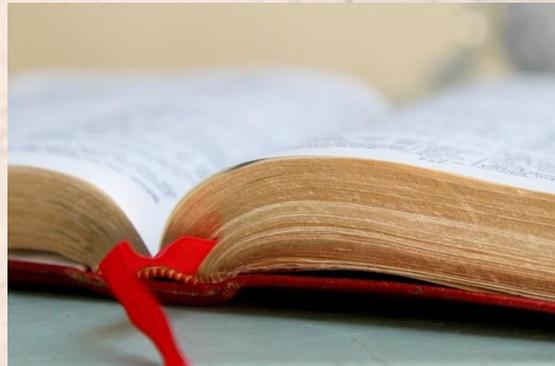
- Colossians 1:26
- We will be confused if we look at the parts but do not consider the whole

Possible Objections

- Isn't theology cold, academic, & impractical?
 - Not if we study with the right spirit (Ps. 19:8; 119:14)
 - Deals with subjects all of us think about
 - Practical, impacts our life
- I don't need theology, I just need the Bible
 - Everyone engages in theology, it may be good or bad theology depending on the foundation

Different Approaches to Theology

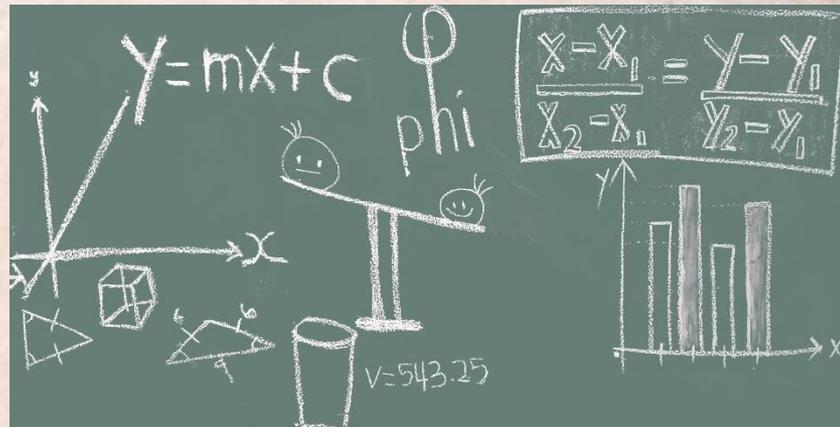
Biblical Theology



- Looks at the meaning of a specific passage, or book of the Bible
- Considers background, and historic context

Different Approaches to Theology

Systematic Theology



- Looks at the major doctrines
- Organized in a logical manner
- Gathers all relevant passages from entire Bible

Different Approaches to Theology

Historical Theology



- Looks at developments within church history
- What did believers wrestle with during this era, and what conclusions were drawn?

Different Approaches to Theology

Dogmatic Theology

- Looks at the “dogma” or doctrinal position of various Christian groups or denominations
- i.e. Covenant Theology, Dispensational Theology, Pentecostal Theology, Arminianism, Calvinism, Catholicism...

For next week:

The Bible (revelation & inspiration)

- Chapters 6-7 of Baker's "A Dispensational Theology"