

Theology

- Etymology
 - Theos = God
 - Logos = word, saying, reasoning
 - Theology = the study of God
- Theology is not the study of the Bible

*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life;
it is these that bear witness about Me;* John 5:39 (LSB)

Types of Theology

- Systematic Theology

This is a logical, coherent account of Christian doctrines, organized around specific topics like God, sin, and salvation. It draws on the Bible, historical theology, and other disciplines to create a unified understanding of the faith.

- Biblical Theology

This approach focuses on the theological themes within the Bible itself, often examining the teachings of individual authors or sections of scripture. It is a foundational step for systematic theology, which builds upon its findings to create a more comprehensive picture.

- Historical Theology

This field studies the development of Christian doctrine throughout history, examining how different theological ideas have been understood, debated, and formulated over time.

- Practical Theology

This type of theology focuses on the application of theological principles to the practice of ministry and the Christian life, including areas like preaching, counseling, and education.

Schools of Theology

- Covenant Theology
- Dispensational Theology
- Reformed Theology
- Replacement Theology
- Progressive Theology
- Etc.

Areas of Systematic Theology

- Prolegomena: The study of the foundational principles, methods, and presuppositions of theology.
- Theology Proper: The study of God's nature and attributes. It often includes the doctrine of the Trinity.
- Angelology: The study of angels and other spiritual beings.
- Anthropology: The study of humanity, including the nature and purpose of humankind.
- Hamartiology: The study of sin, its nature, origin, and effects.
- Christology: The study of the person and work of Jesus Christ, including his divine and human natures.
- Pneumatology: The study of the Holy Spirit, including His nature and work.
- Soteriology: The study of salvation, which involves the plan and process by which humanity is saved.
- Ecclesiology: The study of the church, its nature, mission, and organization.
- Eschatology: The study of last things, including topics like the final judgment and the future kingdom.

Prolegomena

- Etymology

- Pro = before
- Logos = word, saying, reasoning

- Purpose

Its purpose is to establish a coherent and consistent framework for the rest of the work. It helps define the ground rules and methodology before engaging in the detailed work of theology.

- Key topics

It often includes discussions on the source of theological knowledge, the role of reason and experience, and the relationship between theology and other fields like history, science, and philosophy.

- Methodology

It outlines the specific approach the theologian will use, which can be influenced by their own background and tradition. For example, an author's prolegomena would detail their commitment to the inerrancy of the Bible.

- Distinction from theology

Theology builds the "system" of doctrine. Prolegomena is the critical first step that explains how that system is to be built.

Prolegomena | Methodology

- Source
 - Scripture (the Bible)
 - Human reason and experience are subservient to Scripture
 - History, science, and philosophy are subservient to Scripture
- Methodology
 - Interpret the Bible in its context
 - Determine what the author intended to say to his audience
 - Exegesis – drawing out from the text
 - No eisegesis – reading into the text
 - Scripture is to be interpreted by a literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic, taking account of its literary forms and devices. Scripture interprets Scripture.

General Revelation

- General revelation testifies to God as creator and Supreme law giver (Ps. 19:1-6).
- The sources of general revelation are the conscience of the human mind, the whole framework of nature, and the course of God's providential government (Ps. 19:1-6; John 1:9; Acts 14:15-17; 17:26-28; Rom. 1:18-20; 2:14-15, 19).
- The purpose of general revelation is to provide each person with sufficient knowledge about God to make him responsible (John 1:9; Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:18-32).
- By means of general revelation mankind is held accountable and is left guilty and without excuse before God (Rom. 1:16-20; 2:15).
- General revelation does not reveal Christ and hence cannot save a person.

Special Revelation

- Special Revelation testifies to God as Redeemer (Ps. 19:7-14).
- Special Revelation is sourced in Jesus Christ, the living Word, and in the Scriptures, the written Word of God (John 1:1; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Heb. 1:1-2).
- God has used various means at various times to convey special revelation (Heb. 1:1-2).
- The purpose of special revelation is the complete regeneration of sinners and the glorification of God (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; 1 Tim. 1:15).

Inspiration

- The Holy Spirit so directed, guided, and superintended the writers of Scripture, making use of their own distinct personalities and literary styles, that they wrote all that He wanted them to write, without excess, omission, or error (Matt. 8:4; 19:8; 22:43; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:5; 12:26; John 5:46; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- All Scripture is God-breathed, and thus of a divine origin and cannot be reduced to human insight or heightened states of consciousness of any kind. The corruption of human culture and language through sin has not thwarted God's work of inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- Inspiration is limited to the authors of Scripture when they wrote and is affirmed only of the original autographs of the Scriptures, not of the versions presently in existence. Copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the originals. No essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the originals.
- Inspiration is verbal because precise concepts are formed by precise words. The very words of the original, and not merely the thoughts and concepts, were given by divine inspiration (Matt. 22:23-33; 22:43-45; 1 Cor. 2:13; Gal. 3:15-22).
- Inspiration is plenary because it includes all Scripture and thus is entire and without restriction (2 Tim. 3:16).

Inerrancy

- Scripture, in its original form, and in its entirety, is truthful and accurate in all matters that it addresses.
- Despite the finitude and fallenness of the writers of Scripture, they did not introduce distortion or falsehood into God's Word.
- There is no impurity, deceit, deception, or discrepancy within Scripture (Ps. 19:8).
- All prophecy contained in Scripture either has been, or will be, fulfilled just as it was prophesied (Matt. 2:17; 4:14; 26:56; Mark 14:49; Luke 24:44; Acts 1:16; 3:18).
- Inerrancy is not negated by biblical phenomena such as a lack of technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, reporting of falsehoods, use of hyperbole and round numbers, topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, use of free citations, use of material which is knowable apart from special revelation, or use of material from non-inspired sources.

Canonicity

- The canon is made up of 66 books, 39 of them contained in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New (Matt. 23:35; 2 Pet. 3:2; 15-16).
- Some of the books may be combined, and the order of the books may vary, but all the same books are included.
- Canonicity is recognized and acknowledged because of the intrinsic inspiration of the books (2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- No book became canonical by means of human declaration.

Authority

- God Himself is ultimate authority (Rom. 13:1).
- Scripture is the authoritative Word of God which establish the standard for faith and practice (Mark 12:10; Luke 4:21; John 19:36; Luke 24:27; Rom. 1:2).
- The authority of Scripture is not received from the church, tradition, or any other human source. No church creed, council, or declaration has authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible (Isa. 55:8,9; Matt. 15:1-9; Mk. 7:1-13; 1 Cor. 2:4-5; 14:36-38; 2 Cor. 10:5).
- Dependence upon an authority apart from Scripture leads to error (Matt. 22:29).

Summary

- God can only be known by Him revealing Himself.
- God has revealed Himself in nature, the conscience, and Scripture.
- To know God's redemption, one must know the Scriptures.
- Scripture is without error.
- Scripture establishes the standard for faith and practice.
- Scripture must be the foundation for any theology.
- The goal is not a well-versed theology. The goal is God.