

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MAN

Rough plan

Introduction to systematic theology

Origin of man

 Creation

 Man as the Image of God

 Other competing theories of the origins of man

What is man

 Aspects

 Physical body

 Mind

 Will

 Emotion

 Man as sinner

 False views of man

PART I: DEFINITION OF THEOLOGY AND VARIOUS THEOLOGIES

- I. DEFINITION: WHAT IS SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY?
 - a. Wayne Grudem: “*Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, ‘What does the whole Bible teach us today?’ about any given topic.*”¹
 - b. Cornelius Van Til: “*Systematic theology seeks to offer an ordered presentation of what the Bible teaches about God.*”²
- II. OTHER THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES
 - a. Theology: The study of God and other teachings on the basis of God or some specific god.
 - b. Biblical theology: This is the study “which takes the fruits of exegesis and organizes them into various units and traces the revelation of God in Scripture in its historical development.”³
 - i. NOTE: Biblical theology is not saying that Systematic theology or any other theological disciplines are not biblical! This reasoning is just as bad as the reasoning that theological disciplines that are not systematic theology are somehow disorganized or unsystematic.
 - ii. Examples of issues that Biblical theology might concern itself with: What is the main theme in the book of Esther, what doctrines concerning Christ is taught in the Gospel of John, what are the similarities and differences between Romans and James, the fact that Daniel is in the prophetic genre, etc.
 - c. Historical theology: A “study of how Christians in different periods have understood various theological topics”.⁴
 - i. Examples of issues that Historical theology would concern about: Did the early church believe in the deity of Christ, how was the doctrine of justification explained throughout the centuries, what was at stake in the Council of Chalcedon, etc?
 - d. Philosophical Theology: The area of study that seeks to clarify or articulate theological subjects by employing tools and languages from the realm of philosophy.⁵
 - i. Example of subjects in philosophical theology: Demonstrating the doctrine of the Trinity does not violate the laws of non-contradiction, etc.

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction To Biblical Doctrine*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 21.

² Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary), 1.

³ Ibid, 2.

⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction To Biblical Doctrine*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 21.

⁵ The definition offered here differs from Grudem’s definition so as to allow room for the possibility of biblically faithful philosophical theology. He defined philosophical theology as “*studying theological topics largely without use of the Bible, but using the tools and methods of philosophical reasoning and what can be known about God from observing the universe*”. By stating that philosophical theology as “*largely without use of the Bible*”, it suggests a form of theological studies that allow room for spiritual autonomy. For a response to autonomy see my article titled, “The Biblical Case Against Autonomy” at http://teamtruth.com/articles/art_caseagainstaunomy.htm

- e. Apologetics: The rational defense of the truthfulness of the biblical faith.
 - i. Examples of subjects in apologetics include the existence of God, the Bible is the Word of God, etc.

III. RELATIONSHIP OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY WITH OTHER THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES

- a. Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology
 - i. Systematic theology ought to be built from the Truths as presented from the Word of God
 - 1. Sound Biblical theology would be the tool to develop Biblically sound Systematic Theology
 - a. Example: Knowing that Daniel is a prophetic genre, would allow me to focus on this book in the development of a theology of end times (Eschatology) instead of Songs of Solomon or Job
- b. Systematic Theology and Historical Theology
 - i. True doctrine is part of the historic faith
 - 1. Jude 3: *“Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.”*
 - 2. Important principle base upon Jude 3: *“What is new can not be true, what is true can not be new”*
 - ii. The systematizing of theology takes place during Church history
 - 1. *“There is no period in the history of the church that is entirely unfruitful, or that should be wholly neglected, even its bearing of Christian theology, and even independently of its historical value and importance”*⁶
 - iii. Historical theology can give us insight to the origin of doctrines
 - 1. Jesus employ historical theology in his polemics when he confronted the Pharisees that their teaching was not historically from the Word of God but from human tradition (See Matthew 15:5-6)
 - a. In the inter-relations of various theological disciplines, other field may also be linked
 - i. Historical theology can also be an additional tools in the Christian apologetics arsenal by exposing the source of false teachings
 - ii. True theology is not only historical (established by historical theology) but is biblical (established in biblical theology)
- c. Systematic Theology and Philosophical Theology
 - i. Distinction between theology and philosophy is not as sharp as one may think
 - 1. There is an overlap with theology and philosophy

⁶ William Cunningham, *Historical Theology* (reprint, Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust), 8.

- a. Both attempt to answer the ultimate question about origin, reality, values, beauty, purpose, ethics and knowledge
 - 2. Theology and philosophy are at times similar discipline in different languages
 - a. *“Men in general do not use or even know our theological terms. But, to the extent that they are educated, they have had some training in secular philosophy...if we are to speak to them and win them, it is necessary for us to learn their language.”*⁷
- ii. Philosophical theology can clarify theological terms
 - 1. Explaining and clarifying the precision of theological terms allows it then to be more insightful in Systematic Theology.
 - a. Example: The distinguishing of “being” and “person” in the doctrine of the trinity
- iii. Formal Logic (from Philosophical Theology) is a direct tool in the craft of Systematic Theology
 - 1. The Laws of logic are used as doctrines are organized
 - a. Example of logical reasoning in Systematic theology: All humans are totally depraved; you are a part of humanity; therefore you are also depraved.
- iv. Philosophical theology allows an outlet in explaining the truths in Systematic Theology in another way
 - 1. A test of how much one knows something is whether they can teach it in a manner that is as simple as to children or as deeply as to philosophers.
- v. A Truly Christian Philosophy will be dependent on a biblically faithful Systematic Theology
 - 1. There is no neutrality, a Christian Philosophy must submit to the whole Counsel of the Word of God
- d. Systematic Theology and Apologetics
 - i. Systematic Theology provides the content of what Apologetics ought to defend
 - 1. How is the Church able to defend the faith unless they know what is the content of the faith?
 - a. Some believe that one ought to be ‘neutral’ and start with unbelief where Christians employ apologetics first, but what direction should his rational discussion head towards, unless Systematic theology informs him?
 - ii. Systematic Theology provides us the principles for the method of Apologetics

⁷ Cornelius Van Til quoted from:

Greg Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetics: Readings and Analysis* (Phillipsburg, Presbyterian and Reformed), 60-61.

1. What does the totality of Scripture tell us in regards to how believers are to defend their faith?
- iii. Apologetics defend the content of Systematic Theology
 1. Christian apologetics did not 'accidentally' stumble upon Christian truths but rather starting with Christian truths from the Bible, they defend it