

“What Theology is to be Studied and Taught?”

2 Tim. 3:10-17; 4:1-4; Eph. 4:11-16

Knowing Him and Making Him Known

Without a scriptural theology, the church will drift from its divine mission and become a rudderless ship. 2 Timothy 3:10-17 lays out the idea that Scriptural truth demands study and assimilation. Chapter 4:1-4 again emphasizes the need in light of the situation to “Preach the Word.” Ephesians 4:11-16 establishes the thought that our doctrine keeps us from being tossed about by every wind of doctrine. A Christ centered theology provides for us our anchor. Today, we will continue our study by asking ourselves our second question, “What theology is to be studied and then taught?”

As a fellowship, there are certain doctrines we hold in common. We believe these doctrines identify us as Evangelical Christians. Not all evangelical Christians hold to the same truths, but there are certain truths that must be maintained in order to be a Christian. Theology divides into two broad areas of study. On one hand, you have what is called "Biblical Theology" and on the other hand, you have what is called "Systematic Theology."

As we consider the question, “What theology is to be studied and taught,” we have out of necessity tried to see the bigger picture.

Primarily on Sunday mornings, we are engaged in biblical theology. We study a book of the Bible and endeavor to understand it in its context. What we discover through the process is a piece of a much larger picture. The larger picture is seen as the various pieces come together. Our systematic theology is an attempt at seeing the big picture.

Our core values and mission statement is a statement of theology. Our doctrinal statement as a fellowship is a statement in the context of systematic theology. It is always hoped that our core values and mission statement is an expression of our doctrinal beliefs.

When you look at our doctrinal statement, it is important to remember that the statement is not an exhaustive listing. It is a summary of what is believed collectively by the fellowship. Our doctrinal statement is not all that is believed by the fellowship. We do believe, however, that this is what we hold in common.

We will spend several lessons looking at each individual doctrine, but for this study let us endeavor to see the big picture. Again, it is important to note how everything studied fits into the overall categories listed below. It is equally important to note that not all areas of study carry the same weight. Studies in Theology Proper, Christology,

Continued on the other side...

Pneumatology, Soteriology, and Hamartiology take precedence over Angelology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology. We will note each of the ten major categories in order to see the larger picture of what Scripture addresses. Within each of the major categories, you have multiple categories that function at varying levels of significance.

1. Bibliology - The Study of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:15-17)
2. Theology Proper - The Study of God (1 Timothy 6:15-16)
3. Christology - The Study of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15-20)
4. Pneumatology - The Study of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 17)
5. Anthropology - The Study of Man (Genesis 1:26)
6. Hamartiology - The Study of Sin (Romans 3:9-20)
7. Soteriology - The Study of Salvation (Romans 3:21-26)
8. Ecclesiology - The Study of the Church (Acts 2:37-42)
9. Angelology - The Study of Angels (Hebrews 13:1)
10. Eschatology - The Study of Last Things (Revelation 1:1-7)

APPLICATION: (Making the Transfer)

First, every study of the Bible is doctrinal or theological.

Second, Americans have been infected with a spirit of pragmatism.

Third, there exists today the idea that God is more concerned with my activity of obedience, than with my knowledge of the truth. I am not so quick to draw the dichotomy between the two. Sincere ignorance is still ignorance. Most cultic behavior is commendable in practice, but damnable in doctrine.

I will continue to argue that mind renewal (Rom. 12:2, Eph. 4:23) is the only legitimate platform for life transformation. Moreover, mind renewal is primarily done through a consistent and thorough study of the Word of God.

Fourth, thinking theological must become a way of life.

Fifth, "a lack of doctrine leaves the preaching of the Church (which naturally will go on) without re-examination and therefore without possible correction."

Sixth, "the Church pays for its lack of theology with the loss of a substantial part of its own young generation."