

BT1210 Covenant Theology
Scott Redd, BTS Spring 2026

P.1. Theological Knowledge in the Biblical Account

P.1.1 Creation, Pre-Fall

- A. Revelation (Gen 1:28-30)
- B. Inference and application (Gen 2:19-20)
- C. Interpretation and Error (Gen 3:1-2)

P.1.2 Prophetic Office

- A. Moses as Covenant Advocate (new name, Exod 6:2-4)
- B. Writing Down of the Law (Deut 31:9-13)
- C. Jeremiah and Discovery of the Deuteronomy (2 Kings 22)
- D. Ezra the Scribe (Neh 8:1-8)

P.1.3 Jesus Christ

- A. Isaiah Scroll (Luke 4:21)
- B. Relevance of the Old Testament (Matt 5:17)
- C. Road to Emmaus and Beyond (Luke 24:27, 44)
- D. Jesus as Revelation of God (Heb 1:1-4)

P.1.4 Apostolic Proclamation

- A. Gospel Origination (See Luke 1:1-4 “..so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.” John 1:1 “In the beginning was the word...”)
- B. Inspiration and Application (1 Tim 3:14-16)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Tim 3:16

P.2 Historical Descriptions of Theological Study

P.2.1 Standard Description: theology as objective, intellectual endeavor

Thomas Aquinas (1225/27 – 1274) – “Sacred doctrine (theology) is a unified science in which all things are treated under the aspect of God either because they are God Himself, or because they refer to God.”

Summa I.1.7

Charles Hodge (1797 – 1878) – “The science of facts of divine revelation so far as those facts concern the nature of God and our relation to him.”

Systematic Theology I, 21



Herman Bavinck (1854-1921) – “And therefore it is much better to see to it that the scientific investigator can be as much as possible a normal human being, that he not bring false presuppositions into his work but be a man of God completely equipped for every good work. To that end the knowledge God has revealed of himself in his Word is serviceable it does not hinder by rather advances scientific study and research...In that sense one can speak with complete justice of dogmatics as a science about God, and there is not objection whatever to gathering this knowledge of God in a system.”

Reformed Dogmatics I., 43

P.2.2 Helpful Corrective: theology as beliefs and behavior understood in relation to God and faith.

William Ames (1576 – 1633) – “The doctrine or teaching of living to God...[The content of theology is] living for God through Christ, religion, [and] the worship of God.

Marrow of Theology, I. 1., 77-79



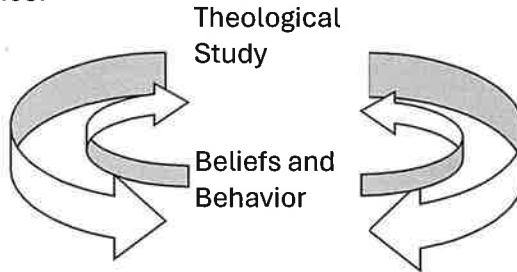
Francis Grimké (1850–1937) – “The great function of the Christian church is to minister to the spiritual needs of men. It may have other functions, but this is its supreme function. Its paramount obligation lies here. It is the one force or institution in the world set up by God himself with a definite spiritual mission-to wit, to bring men back to God, back to divine ideals and standards of living, back to holiness and heart and life.” “The Religious Aspect of Reconstruction”

“If the Bible is true; if Jesus Christ meant what he said in the Sermon on the Mount and in his other utterances, and if we are to follow His example, and to be influenced by His Spirit, in a word, if Christianity is not a miserable farce, there can be no doubt as to where the change ought to be made, and as to what the duty of the church is Its duty is to seek to mould public sentiment in accordance with Christian principles, and not to be molded by it.” “(G.A.) Against the Union,” 10.

John Frame (1939 –) – Theology is the application of Scripture by persons to situations in life.

DKG, 81, passim.

P.2.2.1 The corrective responds to the tendency in the Standard Description toward hypocrisy and irrelevance.



Theological Study necessarily interacts with Theological Beliefs and Behaviors in a constantly active relationship of reciprocity

P.2.2.2 Given the helpful corrective to the standard description, theological inquiry can pursue innumerable directions. Inquiry can be as diverse as situations in life.

A few examples: mercy ministry, hermeneutics, theology, biblical theology, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, apologetics, systematics, eschatology, counseling, anthropology, missiology, homiletics, suffering, literary studies, covenant theology and so on.

P.2.2.3 Because of the need to focus on a manageable number of theological inquiries (given human finitude and fallenness), the task of seminary training is to engage in inquiry useful in the preparation of pastors.

Basic Seminary Curriculum (and the division of this class)

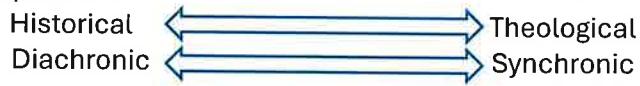
Biblical Studies (OT, NT)

Doctrinal and Historical Studies (Church History, Systematics)

Practical Theology (Homiletics, Counseling)

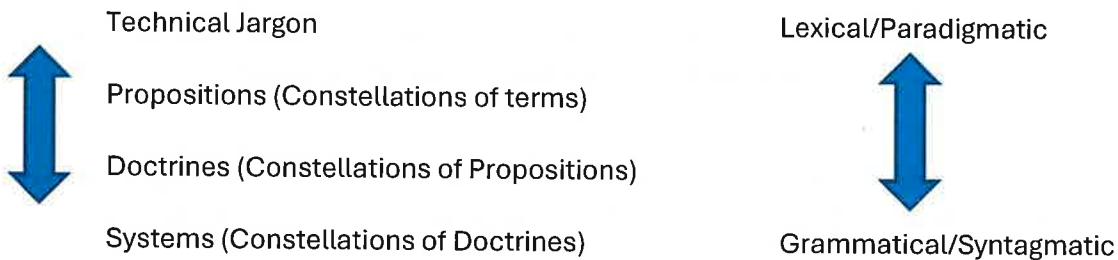
1. Perspective and the Study of Scripture

1.1 Biblical Theological Spectrum



1.2 Systematic/Thematic Theology

Heuristic Strategy – Interdependent and Reciprocal Steps



1.3 Technical Jargon

- 1.3.1 Biblical Terms, usually Paul is given priority: justification (Rom 3:28; James 2:24), sanctification (1 Thess 5:23; 1 Cor 7:14); definition is sometimes explicit, sometimes not.
- 1.3.2 Philosophical Terms, Platonic and Aristotelian: *Essentia, Natura, Persona*
- 1.3.3 Jargon:
 - Justification by faith alone. (but cf. Luke 7:29)
 - Sanctification in the *ordo salutis*
 - Essentia Dei*
 - One person, two natures.

1.4 Formation of Propositions

- 1.4 .1 Biblical Diversity of Genre: propositions, commands, poetry, hymnody, hyperbole, proverb/parable, riddles, prophecy, promise, apocalypse, analogy
- 1.4 .2 Systematic Theology: Propositions

Nicene Creed (325)

- Proposition #1: We believe in one God,
- Proposition #2: the Father Almighty,
- Proposition #3: Maker of all things visible and invisible

“Whether the knowledge of God is self-evident?”

Objection 1. It seems that the existence of God is self-evident. Now those things are said to be self-

evident to us the knowledge of which is naturally implanted in us, as we can see in regard to first principles. But as Damascene says (De Fide Orth. i, 1,3), "the knowledge of God is naturally implanted in all." Therefore the existence of God is self-evident.

On the contrary, No one can mentally admit the opposite of what is self-evident; as the Philosopher (Metaph. iv, lect. vi) states concerning the first principles of demonstration. But the opposite of the proposition "God is" can be mentally admitted: "The fool said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 52:1). Therefore, that God exists is not self-evident.

Thomas Aquinas

1.5 Formation of Statements of Doctrines (system of propositions or systems of sub-doctrines)

The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. WCF 8.2

1.6 Formation of Theological Systems (system of doctrines)

Goal: logically consistent and comprehensive system

If we would discharge our duty as teachers and defenders of truth, we must endeavor to bring all the facts of revelation into systematic order and mutual relation . . . we should study his word, and learn that, like the stars, its truths are not isolated points, but systems, cycles, epicycles, in unending harmony and grandeur.

C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1.2-3

See Calvin's *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Francis Turretin's *Elenctic Theology* (d. 1687), Charles Hodge's *Systematic Theology* (d. 1878), Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* (d. 1957), John Frame's *Systematic Theology* (2014)

Melanchthon (Luther) and Beza (Calvin) were more fully responsible for the systemization of Lutheran and Calvinist theology.

1.7 Evaluation of Scholastic Method

1.7.1 Lies at the core of the Reformed tradition

Western Christian theology develops in stages

Biblical Roots (Apostolic and Sub-Apostolic Fathers) 1-2C

Proto-Scholastic, Neo-Platonic 2-12C

Scholastic, Neo-Scholastic 12-20C

1.7.2 As with any human construct we must be aware of its benefits and dangers.

Benefits rise out to blessings of the Holy Spirit in the study of God's Word, and the dangers arise from finitude and fallenness. We should celebrate the blessings and reject the error.

1.7.3 Jargon

Benefit: Provides groundwork for coherence

Danger: Different use of terms leads to fragmentation of discursive communities

Danger: Difference from biblical use may give rise to inappropriate interpretations (e.g. John 3:16; John 2:23-24 "saving faith"?)

Extra-biblical jargon

Benefit: Enhance our articulation through general revelation

Benefit: Enhance our ability to communicate to others

Danger: Introduce sinful, unbiblical ideas into our theology

Danger: Confuse our communication if we use outdated and obscure terminology

1.7.4 Proposition

Benefit: Answers to questions of fact about God, humanity, and rest of creation

Benefit: Empowers logical inference about relations between God, humanity, and rest of creation

Danger: Becomes synonymous with "serious academic study" whereas practical and more emotional treatments are consider light and popular.

5.6.5 Doctrinal Systems

Benefit: Brings scattered explicit teachings into logical relations

Benefit: Makes inferences about the explicit teachings

Benefit: Formulates a coherent presentation of related teachings.

Danger: Failure to account for mysteries due to divine incomprehensibility

divine aseity, Jesus as very God and very man, divine sovereignty and human responsibility

Danger: Failure to stop short of formulations unwarranted by Scripture.

eschatological details, scientific matters, harmonizing gospels, lapsarian controversy (?)

1.7.6 Theological System

Benefit: Provides framework for teachings, a checklist for otherwise ignored teaching

Danger: Implicit biblical teachings may be ignored: *ordo salutis* emphasized over *historia salutis*; divine Transcendence over divine immanence.

