**What You Should Know from NT2-New Testament Theology**

Lakeside Institute of Theology

1. What is the “New Testament?”
   1. The New Testament is the divinely inspired written account of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ (the Four Gospels), the birth and growth of the Early Church (Acts), the development and articulation of the Christian faith and theology (the Epistles), and the prophetic Revelation of the world to come.
2. What is theology?
   1. Theology is the study of God (from Greek words *theo*-“God,” and *logos*-”study”). *Christian* theology is the study and effort to understand God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture.
3. What is Biblical Theology?
   1. Biblical Theology is the study of doctrines found in the Bible, arranged according to their chronological and/or historical background. (i.e., theology of the Pentateuch, or the theology of John’s writings, etc.)
4. What is Systematic Theology?
   1. Systematic Theology is the division of theological doctrines by systematic categories or groupings, in order to better understand their final meaning and relevance for today. (i.e., theology of angels, theology of salvation, etc.)
5. What is Dogmatic Theology?
   1. Dogmatic Theology is a form of systematic theology, used to articulate and defend the theological doctrines of a particular organized church body. (i.e., Roman Catholic dogma; Presbyterian dogma; dispensational theology, etc.)
6. What is “New Testament Theology?”
   1. The art and science of knowing and understanding what we can about God, in an organized and understandable way, through what He has revealed in the New Testament.
7. While Christian Theology is based on our assurance that we can come to know God, what are some of the other ways of thinking and believing, and what perceptions do they reflect?
   1. Agnosticism – “I don’t know.”
   2. Skepticism – “I don’t think so.”
   3. Pessimism – “I’m afraid not.”
   4. Secularism – “I don’t think it’s important, so I really don’t care.”
8. How are we to understand the respective differences in the nature of the truth sought by science versus that sought by theology, and how does each seek to find that truth?
   1. Science seeks the “I-It” truth that leads to knowledge. (*by reason & the senses*)
   2. Theology seeks the “I-Thou” truth that leads to faith. (*by revelation… and reason and senses*)
9. How might we describe the most appropriate relationship between theology and science?
   1. All truth is God’s truth, so if theology is to have the needed impact in the world it must affirm reason and sense observation, just as science & philosophy do.
10. What was the dominant approach to theology before the Reformation (AD 1517 and after), and why did this change?
    1. Prior to the Reformation, Dogmatic Theology was virtually the only theology that existed, as it was in support of Roman Catholic doctrine.
    2. The Reformation emphasis on *sola Scriptura* (“Scripture alone”) as the source of authority led to an explosion in biblical and theological scholarship and commentaries.

1. What is “Biblical Criticism?”
   1. The scholarly study and investigation of biblical writings that seeks to make discerning judgments about those writings.
2. What is meant by “Lower Criticism” in Biblical Criticism?
   1. The study of the TEXTS of Scripture – what they say and what we can learn from the study of various versions and manuscripts.
3. What is the more modern name for Lower Criticism?
   1. Textual Criticism.
4. What is meant by “Higher Criticism?”
   1. The study of the historic origins, dates and authorship of the books of the Bible – what came before and behind the writing of Scripture.
5. What three problems have caused Higher Criticism to come to be associated with lack of belief?
   1. Leaders of the Higher Critical movement have based their theories largely on their own prior, subjective conclusions instead of approaching the task of understanding biblical origins with objectivity.
   2. The mostly-German historic leaders of Higher Criticism have seemed so preoccupied with theories that they often have seemed to lack any common sense.
   3. The dominant men behind Higher Criticism have had a very strong bias against the supernatural; i.e., miracles are not possible, predictive prophecy is not possible, and the Bible is not and could not have been divinely inspired or revealed.
6. What is Christology?
   1. Christology is the study of the person, nature and work of Jesus Christ, especially as reflected in the New Testament.
7. What is the special or particular concern of Christology?
   1. Christology is particularly concerned with the relationship of the nature and person of Jesus with God the Father; and with details of Jesus’ ministry, acts and teaching, to arrive at a clearer understanding of who he is, and how he is able to provide our salvation.
   2. OR, “How is it that Jesus was both human and divine, and how is that important for our salvation?”
8. What were the two natures within Jesus?
   1. Divine – he was the Divine Son of God, the eternal 2nd Person of the Godhead.
   2. Human – Jesus became incarnate as a human man, and so experienced the full and complete range of human emotions and physical characteristics.
9. What were some of the titles for Jesus in Scripture and in the Church, and why were they significant?
   1. *Messiah/Christ (“*Anointed One”*) –* established Jesus as the fulfillment of Jewish expectations for God’s promised king and redeemer.
   2. *Kyrios* (“Lord”) – the most common title for Jesus in Paul’s writing, among Gentile Christians and in the Early Church, *Kyrios* inherently contains implications of deity, pre-existence and absolute Lordship.
   3. *Jesus, Friend of Sinners* – a popular title in the Middle Ages, which led to a much softer image of Jesus.
   4. *Son of God* – reflected the full divinity of Jesus.
   5. *Son of Man* – reflected the full humanity of Jesus, but also recalls the powerful image of the Son of Man in the Book of Daniel (chapter 7) who receives everlasting power and dominion from God the Father.
   6. *Son of David* – reflected that Jesus was the Messiah and Davidic king that had been promised to the Jewish people.
10. What were some of the primary Christological controversies (heresies) that developed in the Early Church, and what did they claim?
    1. Ebionism – Jesus was only mortal; he was not divine.
    2. Gnosticism – Matter is evil, so Jesus only “appeared” to be human.
    3. Adoptionism – Jesus was born human & then “adopted” as divine at his baptism.
    4. Modalism – God is one, but appears in “modes” of Father, Son or Spirit at different times.
    5. Arianism – Jesus was a created being; he was not co-eternal with the Father.
    6. Pelagianism – There was no original sin; people are not inherently sinful, and so have no need of Christ as savior.
11. What were some of the most important Ecumenical Church Councils in the development of orthodox Christology, and what did they determine?
    1. AD 325 - Council of Nicaea, suppressed the Arian heresy by established the Doctrine of the Trinity with Jesus as co-eternal, only-begotten Son of God, 2nd Person of the Trinity. Produced the Nicene Creed.
    2. AD 381 – 1st Council of Constantinople, affirmed Council of Nicaea, establishing that Jesus was fully human, with a real human mind and soul.
    3. AD 431 – 1st Council of Ephesus, established that Jesus had two natures in one person (not two persons), and that Jesus had been fully divine when born.
    4. AD 451 – Council of Chalcedon, established that Jesus was fully divine and fully human, 2 natures in one person, not one new hybrid.
12. What is meant by “Hypostatic Union?”
    1. Hypostatic Union isthe belief that Jesus the divine Son of God fully took on human nature, yet at the same time remained fully God.
13. How might we summarize orthodox Christology?
    1. Jesus was both fully God and fully human. He has always been God; he became human when conceived in Mary; with no mixture or dilution of these two natures, forever united in one Person.
14. What is the Christian doctrine of the Trinity?
    1. The belief that God is One, but that within the One God exist three distinct Persons or personalities.
15. What are the three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity?
    1. God the Father
    2. God the Son
    3. God the Holy Spirit

1. Where does the word “Trinity” appear in the Bible?
   1. The word “Trinity” appears nowhere in the Bible, but the Doctrine of the Trinity is based on clear Scriptural references to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit existing as separate persons within the One God.
2. Why do the Jewish and Islamic faiths have trouble accepting the Christian Trinity?
   1. Because they are monotheistic (believing in one God) and misunderstand the Christian concept of the Trinity – One God in Three Persons – claiming that Christians actually believe in three gods – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. What is the meaning of the term “Godhead,” and where did it originate?
   1. “Godhead” refers to the divine nature of the Trinity, or the Triune God of Christianity. It comes from a Middle English variant of “godhood,” meaning the nature of God (similar to “personhood”).
4. What is the relationship between a person’s Christological beliefs and a belief in the Trinity?
   1. The difference between those who believe in the Trinity and those who do not is primarily one of belief concerning the personal identity of Christ. It is a difference in conception of the salvation connected with Christ that drives all reactions, either favorable or unfavorable, to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. As it is, **the doctrine of the Trinity is directly tied up with what a person believes about Christ.**
5. What is theological anthropology?
   1. The study of humanity as it relates to God; a consideration of what it means to be human in light of a belief in God.
6. What is Christian anthropology?
   1. Christian anthropology is a theological anthropology – the consideration of what it means to be human in light of a belief in God – that comes from a distinctly Christian perspective, based on the teaching of the New Testament.
7. What is the Christian understanding of the human condition?
   1. We are made in the image of God and intended for fellowship with Him, but we have fallen from that privileged place because of our sinfulness, and the greatest need and desire (although often unconscious) is to reestablish that relationship.
8. Why is a clear Christian anthropology important?
   1. A clear Christian anthropology is necessary to make sense of who and what we are, and what is wrong with us – the existence of sin and evil – and how we might be redeemed from this condition.
9. Why did God created humanity in His image?
   1. For his own pleasure and glory.
   2. For fellowship with Him.
   3. To care for Creation.
10. In what ways are people made in the image of God?
    1. Self-awareness.
    2. Spiritual awareness.
    3. Having moral capacity.
    4. Having volition.
    5. Ability to communicate in detail.
    6. Creativity.
    7. Rationality.
11. With regard to the generation of human souls, what is Traducianism and why is it theologically significant?
    1. Traducianism is the belief that the human soul is inherited from a person’s parents – that the soul is created as a product of the union of two human parents at the point of conception, in much the same way that the physical body of the human baby is created by such a union. Traducianism is the most direct theological way to explain the transmission of Original Sin.
12. With regard to the generation of human souls, what is Creationism?
    1. Creationism, with regard to the generation of souls, is the belief that God creates a new soul each time a baby is conceived.
13. Despite their differences, what critical similarity exists between Traducianism and Creationism?
    1. Both maintain that souls are *newly created* when a baby is conceived, as opposed to the theory of transmigration of souls (reincarnation), which claims that souls are pre-existent and are called up as needed.

1. What does it mean that human beings are dichotomous?
   1. The belief that human beings are created in two parts – physical and spiritual, or body and soul/spirit. This seems to be supported by the majority of relevant Scripture verses, in which “soul” and “spirit” seem to be interchangeable terms.
2. What does it mean that human beings are trichotomous?
   1. The belief that human beings are created in three parts – body, soul and spirit, with a distinction being made between the soul and the spirit. This seems to be supported by several verses (notably Hebrews 4:12 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23) which seem to indicate a difference in “soul” and “spirit.”

1. What is “ecclesiology?”
   1. Ecclesiology is the theological study of the Church (Greek *ekklesia,* or “congregation”), especially the Christian Church, including its origin, relationship to God, historical development, structure and polity.
2. What are the “Four Marks” or “Four Attributes” of the Church, and what do they mean?
   1. The church is One, in that all followers of Jesus Christ are united in their belief in one God & one Lord, Jesus Christ.
   2. The Church is Holy, in that the followers of Jesus Christ are set apart for a special purpose by and for God. (“Holy” in this context does not mean without sin.)
   3. The Church is Catholic, or “universal,” in that the Church is made up of all people everywhere and at all times who believe in and profess Jesus as Lord.
   4. The Church is Apostolic, meaning it is based on the teaching given by Jesus *through* the Apostles, especially as recorded and taught in Scripture.
3. Define “hamartiology.”
   1. The study of sin and human sinfulness, from the Greek word *hamartia*, which means “missing the mark.”
4. What is “**sin**?”
   1. Anything in a creature which does not express, or which is contrary to, the holy character of the Creator God.
5. What is the **difference between “Sin” and “sins**.”
   1. “Sin” (capital “S”) is the condition of our souls in rebellion against God, inherited from our human ancestors. (“The Plague of Sin.”)
   2. Our “sins” are the rebellious acts we commit which reflect the Sinful nature that is in us.
   3. “We are not Sinners because we commit sins; we commit sins because we are Sinners.”
6. What is “**original sin**?”
   1. The plague of rebelliousness against God which is inherent in all people, and which was inherited from our original ancient ancestors following their rebellion against God.
7. Define Pelagianism.
   1. A prominent heresy of the 5th Century AD, which said there was no such thing as Original Sin, but instead that Adam had only “set a bad example” for his descendants (with Jesus, consequently, “setting the good example”). Pelagianism said that without Original Sin to taint subsequent human nature, people are still capable of choosing good and evil without help from God, and so are not in need of a Savior. Pelagianism was effectively refuted by Augustine.
8. What is the meaning of “soteriology?”
   1. Soteriology (from Greek *soter*, “savior,” and *logos*, “study”) is the study of the religious doctrines of salvation.
9. What is the Christian meaning of “salvation?”
   1. To Christians, salvation means the reunion of persons to their intended relationship with God. This occurs by the removal of sins that had been causing separation from God, accomplished through the sacrificial atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross.
10. What is the meaning of “free will” in the context of salvation?
    1. The belief that all people have the complete freedom to choose, or not choose, reconciliation to God that is offered by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
    2. The difficulty arises in the so-called “paradox of free will,” which questions how people can have free will in any meaningful way if God truly is all-knowing (meaning he knows what will happen in advance) and all-powerful (meaning nothing can exist outside his power to control).
    3. There are Scripture verses which seem to support free will in the context of people choosing salvation, such as 2 Peter 3:9 – *“The Lord… is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*
11. What is the meaning of “predestination” in the context of salvation?
    1. The belief that all events have been willed by God, and that in his omniscience God had predestined, or preordained, some people for salvation and others to destruction.
    2. The difficulty arises because a strict doctrine of predestination (or “election”) seems to suggest God is capricious in his judgment, and unfair in giving everyone an equal opportunity to be saved.
    3. There are Scripture verses which seem to support predestination, such as Romans 8:29-30 – “*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”*
    4. And… Ephesians 1:4-6 – “*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will - 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”*