**What You Should Know from TH3 - Systematic Theology 1**

Lakeside Institute of Theology

1. 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.
2. 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.)
3. 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.)
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. 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.”
6. 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*)

1. 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.
2. 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. In a theological sense, what is “revelation?”
   1. God’s disclosure to human beings of truth or knowledge they otherwise would not know and are incapable of discovering apart from it being revealed by God.
2. Why do we say that Christianity (like Judaism) is a “revealed” religion?
   1. We know what we do about God and the universe because God has told us or revealed it to us.
3. What **Greek word is the basis for our understanding of “revelation**” and what

does it mean?

* 1. From the Greek word “***apokalupsis,***” meaning “**a disclosure or unveiling**.” (This is where we get the words “apocalpyse” and “apocalyptic.”)

1. What **two characteristics are implied** in the concept of “revelation?”
2. personality
3. intent
4. How does divine revelation differ from other kinds of human knowledge?
   1. Revelation is not concerned with knowledge we once had and have somehow forgotten.
   2. Revelation is not the kind of knowledge that can be obtained by research.
   3. Revelation comes to us from outside ourselves and (especially in regard to “special revelation”) is beyond our ability to discover on our own.

1. In what way does our understanding of the nature of God inform our Theology of

Revelation?

1. God is a Person, and so like any person must communicate things about himself is we are to know Him.
2. God is transcendent – high above and different from us – so we can only know Him if He condescends to speak to us.
3. God created us as rational, communicative beings, so it is reasonable that he would communicate with us in rational ways – in words we can understand.

1. What are the **TWO basic forms of revelation**?
2. **General Revelation**: God’s revealing of aspects of His truth through “natural means” – observation of the created physical universe, philosophy and reasoning, human conscience, and providential history – which is plainly available to all humankind.
3. **Special Revelation**: God’s revealing of particular and specific aspects of His truth through “supernatural means” such as miracles, direct communication to people, or through written Scripture.
4. With what is Special Revelation especially concerned?
5. Special Revelation is especially concerned with **matters of redemption** – how we can be made right in our relationship with God.
6. In what way may we say that Special Revelation is “**verbal and propositional**?”
7. God has spoken to us in words; rational ideas put forward to us in understandable sentences. Therefore, contrary to come modern ideas, God’s revelation does contain propositional truths, and cannot be seen simply as a personal encounter free from doctrine.
8. In what **THREE WAYS** does Special Revelation occur?
9. Through the **Spoken Word** (sometimes called “Direct Revelation”).
10. Through the **Written Word**.
11. Through the **Word Made Flesh** – the Incarnate Christ.
12. What is mean by the term “inspiration” as related to the Christian Doctrine of the

Word?

* 1. The doctrine that the Bible is a product of God’s own revelation, as the Holy Spirit spoke to and through the Prophets and Apostles.

1. What is mean by the term “canon” as related to the Christian Doctrine of the

Word?

* 1. The list of books accepted as being God’s inspired words to us, and so included in the Bible.

1. What is mean by the term “inerrancy” as related to the Christian Doctrine of the

Word?

* 1. The belief that the Bible, as God’s own words, must have been completely true and without error in any part in the original autographs.

1. What is mean by the term “infallibility” as related to the Christian Doctrine of the

Word?

* 1. The belief that the Bible, as God’s own words, is without failing; completely adequate in accomplishing its goal and purpose. “Infallible in all matters of faith and practice.”

1. What is ***pantheism***? What is ***panentheism***?
   * + - 1. *Pantheism* is the ancient belief (which still exists today in New Age ideologies) that everything in existence, added together, *is* God.
         2. *Panentheism* is the ancient belief (which still exists today in New Age ideologies) that everything in existence, added together, plus a little more, *is* God.
2. In what primary way does the Genesis creation story differ from pantheism and/or

panentheism?

* + - * 1. In Genesis there is a clear distinction between the Creator God and His creation, so that creation is intentionally limited and is in no way infinite, eternal or divine.

1. For what reasons do we believe God made the creation ***good***?
   * + - 1. God declared His creation good when He made everything.
         2. God gave Adam and Eve – the apex of His creation – responsibility for caring for the rest of creation, as a sign of its value.
         3. God’s own son, Jesus, gave a positive value to creation when he willingly became incarnate into the world.
2. For what **purposes** did God create the universe?
   * + - 1. To exhibit His glory.
         2. To serve as His temple.
         3. As a created counterpoint to His own existence.
         4. As a platform on which he could create life.
         5. As an arena in which redemption could occur.
3. What does “**creation *ex nihilo***” mean?
   * + - 1. “Creation from nothing” – that God made everything from nothing.
4. Why is it important that we have a good Theology of Creation?
   * + - 1. Creation and Redemption form the two pillars that are fundamental to our understanding of God’s nature and of our relationship to Him.
         2. A proper Theology of Creation assures us not only that God has acted in the past, but that He continues to create and sanctify now.
         3. A good Theology of Creation is the best response to scientism and a rationalistic rejection of faith.
5. What is the meaning of God’s proper name, “YHWH,” and what is the implication of this?
   1. “I Am Who I Am” – meaning God is self-existent, independent, eternal, non-contingent, unchangeable.
6. What is meant by the “transcendence” of God?
   1. God is other than, above and distinct from all His creation.
7. What is meant by the “immanence” of God?
   1. God chooses to be near and available to His people, seeing and interacting with His creation, despite His transcendence.
8. What (according to Ross Arnold) is a good definition of a “miracle?”
   1. An event or occurrence in which God acts, or allows his servants to act, with intentionality in a way not limited by the usual boundaries of natural law which He has put in place.
9. According to Christian theology, what is “prayer?”
   1. Relational communication with God.
10. According to Christian theology, what are angels?
    1. Angels are immortal spiritual beings, without material bodies but with personal intellect, personal emotions, and personal will, created by God to do His will.
    2. “An angel is a spiritual creature created by God without a body, for the service of Christendom and the Church.” Martin Luther
11. According to Christian theology, what are demons and where do they come from?
    1. Demons are angels who, out of pride and under the leadership of Satan, rebelled against God, were cast out of heaven, and now work against God’s people until the final consummation.

1. What is Christology?
   1. Christology is the theological study of the person, nature and work of Jesus Christ, especially as reflected in the New Testament.
2. 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?”
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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. 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.
6. What are some of the ways people are 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.
7. What does it mean that human beings are created in three parts?
   1. Scripture (notably Hebrews 4:12 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23) indicates that human beings are created in three parts – body, soul and spirit. The suggestion is that the “soul” is the part that expresses our personality to others, while the “spirit” is that part of us that can relate to God.