

PROLEGOMENA:

“INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE”

I. What Is Christian Doctrine?

II. Why Study Christian Doctrine?

III. Who Should Study Christian Doctrine?

IV. How Do We Study Christian Doctrine?

V. What Are The Types Of Doctrinal Studies?

VI. What Are The Major Divisions We Will Study?

I. What is Christian Doctrine?

“Theology is the discovery, systematizing, and presentation of the truths about God.” -- Charles Ryrie, Basic Theology, page 15

“A conclusive summary statement inductively drawn from all biblical evidence about a given subject of divine revelation.”

II. Why Study Christian Doctrine?

Belief of basic Bible doctrine is **Essential** for salvation

Scriptural Evidence:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Acts 17:11

2 Timothy 2:15

John 5:39

Matthew 22:37

Romans 6:17 (cf. v. 19,22; Titus 2:1,10)

Matthew 28:20; 2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Timothy 5:17

1 Timothy 1:18-20; 1 Timothy 4:1; 6:3

Acts 17:22-31

1 Timothy 4:12-16

III. Who Should Study Christian Doctrine?

1. Those interested in Salvation -- 1 John 5:13
2. Those who desire to grow in the Lord -- 1 Peter 2:2
3. Those who want to teach 2 Tim. 2:15
4. Everyone -- Acts 17:11

IV. How do we study Christian Doctrine?

1. Primary Sources-
Bible
2. Secondary Sources-
Commentaries, Classes,
Church Fathers/Historical Theology
3. Interpretive Principles-
Literal/Historical/Grammatical Method

V. What are the Types of Doctrinal Studies?

1. Biblical Theology- O.T., N.T., particular writer or book
2. Historical Theology- How doctrines unfolded or developed throughout the history of the church. (Creeds)
3. Dogmatic Theology- Articles of Faith of certain churches (Reformation-Arminiasm/Calvinism/Covenant Theology)
4. Systematic Theology- Organized Theology

VI. Major Divisions of Systematic Theology

Bibliology	<i>The study of <u>The Bible</u></i>
Theology Proper	<i>The study of <u>God</u></i>
Angelology	<i>The study of <u>Angels</u></i>
Satanology / Demonology	<i>The study of <u>Demons</u></i>
Anthropology	<i>The study of <u>Man</u></i>
Hamartiology	<i>The study of <u>Sin</u></i>
Christology	<i>The study of <u>Christ</u></i>
Soteriology	<i>The study of <u>Salvation</u></i>
Ecclesiology	<i>The study of <u>The Church</u></i>
Eschatology	<i>The study of <u>The Last Things</u></i>

BIBLIOLOGY:

“THE DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE”

- I. Authority**
- II. Revelation**
- III. Scripture**
- IV. Reliability of the Bible**
- V. Hermeneutics**
- VI. Doctrine of Illumination**

"The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book. There have been more copies produced of its entirety and more portions and selections than any other book in history. Some will argue that in a designated month or year more of a certain book was sold. However, overall there is absolutely no book that reaches or even begins to compare to the circulation of the Scriptures."

-- Evidence That Demands a Verdict
by Josh McDowell, Here's Life publishers

I. Authority

The Problem:

How do we decide what is the correct Christian teaching?
What do we appeal to when we have a conflict in teachings?

Definition of Authority:

"The ***power or right*** to require ***obedience***."

Sources of Authority:

1. *Tradition*
2. *The Church*
3. *Personal Experience*
4. *The Bible*

2 Peter 1:16-21 refers to the Scriptures, as compared to human experience, as “which is more sure than what we heard.” Here Peter raises the Word of God above any human experience.

The Problem with Scripture and Theories

1. The Mormons:

“The Bible is accurate as long as it has been translated correctly.”

2. The Jehovah Witnesses:

*“ . . . Furthermore, not only do we find that **people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself**, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the "Scripture Studies" aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years -- **if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience is that within two years he goes into darkness.** On the other hand, if he had merely read the "Scripture Studies" with their references **and had not read a page of the Bible as such, he would be in the light at the end of two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures.**”*

Charles Taze Russell, *The Watchtower*, p. 298, Sept. 15, 1910.

3. The Roman Catholic Church – Scripture and Tradition

They use Scriptures such as 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and 1 Corinthians 11:2 to support this doctrine. However:

By definition, you cannot have two ultimate authorities, lest one will always be subject to the other! Mark 7:1-23

II. Revelation

A. What is meant by: “Revelation?”

“The act of God whereby He reveals to man which would otherwise be unknown.”

B. The Significance of Revelation:

Christianity is a religion of revelation, a faith based on the claim that God has come to us and made Himself known to us. We need revelation because:

1. Since we are God's **creation**, in order to know Him, He must **reveal** Himself to us.
2. We are **dead to God**, morally and spiritually separated from God going our own way (Rom. 3:11).
3. The natural man is not able to understand the things of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14).

C. Revelation from God is Mandatory:

1. God is unknowable apart from revelation. The following Scriptures show that God is impossible to know apart from Christ:

John 1:14-18
John 12:45
John 14:7
Colossians 1:15
1 Timothy 1:17
1 Timothy 6:16
Hebrews 1:3
Revelation 1:1

2. Man is not able to understand God apart from a supernatural revelation, and the only way for a person to reveal God is that He Himself must be God. Only God can reveal God!

Types of Revelation:

1. **General** Revelation.

1. Definition:

God's revelation of **Himself** observable apart from the **Bible** and through **creation**."

2. Means of Revelation:

1. Ps. 19:1-4 **Heavens/Universe**
2. Romans 1:18-21 **Creation**
3. Romans 2:14-15 **Conscience**
4. Matthew 5:45, Acts 14:15-17 **Provision**

3. The Purpose:

As seen in Acts 17:27, the purpose is so that "man might seek after and grope after the Lord."