



*Semester 4, General Session 1*

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**Abide with me, fast falls  
the eventide**

**The darkness deepens,  
Lord, with me abide**

**When other helpers fail  
and comforts flee**

**Help of the helpless, oh,  
abide with me**

**Swift to its close ebbs out  
life's little day**

**Earth's joys grow dim, its  
glories pass away**

**Change and decay in all  
around I see**

**O Thou who changest not,  
abide with me**

**Hold Thou Thy cross  
before my closing eyes**

**Shine through the gloom  
and point me to the skies**

**Heav'n's morning breaks,  
and earth's vain shadows  
flee**

**In life, in death, o Lord,  
abide with me**

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# Housekeeping

- How does MOW work?

Semester	Main Session (1st Hour)	Tracks (2nd Hour)
1	Church History	Biblical Studies: Hermeneutics (or) Spiritual Development: Spiritual Disciplines
2		Biblical Studies: OT Survey (or) Spiritual Development: Making Disciples
3		Biblical Studies: NT Survey (or) Spiritual Development: Men Counseling Men
4	Systematic Theology	Biblical Studies: Hermeneutics (or) Spiritual Development: Spiritual Disciplines
5		Biblical Studies: OT Survey (or) Spiritual Development: Making Disciples
6		Biblical Studies: NT Survey (or) Spiritual Development: Men Counseling Men

We are Here



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# Housekeeping

- Next meeting - February 17
  - MOW+ - (only starts in the Fall), MOW+ Partners remain the same this semester.
  - Website updated - MBC2024 is the password
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An aerial photograph of a university campus. The central focus is a large, red brick building with a prominent white portico supported by four columns. Above the portico is a tall, white clock tower with a clock face. The building is surrounded by other red brick structures and green lawns. In the background, there are more campus buildings and a line of trees under a blue sky with light clouds.

# Systematic Theology I

WEEK 1: PROLEGOMENA AND BIBLIOLOGY

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# Prolegomena

- From the Greek, “*pro-lego*” which simply means “to say first” - in the context of theology is “the things which must be said first.”
  - Prolegomena, thus, asks questions like, “what is the authority for our thinking?” “How do we know what we know?” “Who are we?”
  - There are several traditions of prolegomena - one of the more popular approaches is called Thomism (the Thomistic Tradition) which is named after its most articulate early defender, Thomas Aquinas.
  - Thomism assumes a shared pattern of epistemology (how we know what we know) by which all rational people engage in thought. Logic and reasoning are the basis of theological propositions.
  - Though there is much we can learn from this approach, in the end, it makes logic and reasoning as the beginning/basis of all and so must be set aside.
  - The better approach is simply called the “Theological Tradition” which is based on the fact that before we were, God is (not just in time but in being and thought). So our thought and logic flow from him, and his self-disclosure.
  - In the Reformation, Luther, et al, realized the basic fault in the Church’s prolegomena, which was reason, logic, leading to the man-centered idea that the Church is the basis for knowledge.
  - But the basis for truth and knowledge are God. So the fundamental question of doctrine is, then, “What has God himself told us about truth?”
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# Objective: To Know What God Has Revealed

- Theology, “The study of God,” can be approached in different ways:
    - *Biblical Theology* - the organization of Scripture and doctrine by biblical chronology, with respect to the progressive revelation of the Bible. “Arc of Redemption” “Salvation History” - Properly placed, I believe this should be a component of Systematic Theology.
    - *Dogmatic Theology* - the organization of Scripture based on church “dogma” - basically studying theology by looking at the Creeds.
    - *Historical Theology* - the organization of Scripture by tracing the history of the church - from Christ onward. This is basically what we did the last three semesters. Often simply called Church History.
    - *Natural Theology* - a study of what man can know of God using nature and empiricism alone, without Scripture.
    - *Pastoral Theology* - the organization of Scripture by application - what is most “useful” to the Christian or the church.
    - *Systematic Theology* - the organization of Scripture by a synthesis of teachings, summarized using major categories which account for the whole counsel of the Word of God.
  - Systematic Theology is any study that answers the question “What does the whole Bible teach about any given topic?” So, Systematic Theology books are usually offered with major categories.
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# Some Famous and Recommended STs

- *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin
- *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, JM Boice
- *Systematic Theology*, Louis Berkoff
- *Biblical Doctrine*, MacArthur and Mayhue
- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem
- *Christian Foundations*, Donald Bloesch
- *Christian Theology*, Millard Erickson
- Others that are nice to have and consult from time to time: William Shedd, John Dick, LS Chafer, AA Hodge, Charles Hodge, BB Warfield, JP Boyce, Sproul (popular), Herman Bavinck.





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# Breakdown of Our Study

1. Prolegomena and Bibliology, Part 1
  2. Bibliology, Part 2
  3. Theology Proper (God the Father), Part 1
  4. Theology Proper, Part 2
  5. Theology Proper, Part 3
  6. Christology
  7. Pneumatology
  8. Anthropology and Hamartiology
  9. Soteriology, Part 1
  10. Soteriology, Part 2
  11. Ecclesiology
  12. Eschatology
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# **Bibliology, Part 1**

The Word of God

~~The Canon of Scripture~~

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# The Word of God

- The Word of God as a Person, Jesus Christ:
    - When John sees Jesus in heaven he declared who he is, “The name by which He is called is The Word of God” (Rev. 19:13). Similar to his gospel introduction - “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1,14).
    - What is in view is that Jesus, the Son of God, is the ultimate of God’s self-revelation. The incarnation is the pinnacle of God speaking to man - not infallibly through chosen prophets or apostles, but by visiting earth Himself.
  - The Word of God as Speech by God:
    - Actual, recorded **Decrees** of God - “And God said, ‘Let there be light...’” (Gen. 1:3). God’s decrees has in view the powerful, life-giving or life-altering edicts that actually cause things to happen in our reality.
    - Words of **Personal Address** - God communicates to people with actual conversation with humans. “And the LORD God said, ‘You may freely eat of every tree in the garden...’” (Gen. 2:16).
    - **Speech Through Others** - “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them...” (Deut. 18:18). This is the basis for the role of Prophet, ultimately fulfilled in Christ.
    - God’s Word **In Written Form - The Bible** -
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# The Word of God in Written Form: The Bible

- After the flood, as life expectancy shortened, oral testimony was becoming less reliable. And so, educated conjecture suggests this is why God first etched his Word in stone on the tablets. “And he gave to Moses , when he had made an end of speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God” (Ex. 31:18).
    - This followed the ancient practice of suzerain-vassal treaties.
    - Of course, Moses, in anger, destroyed the tablets and had to re-create them.
    - Then, as God, by the Spirit, breathed His Word through Moses (inspiration) Moses would write these things down.
    - At the end of his life, Moses told the Levites to cherish these writings as God’s very word: “Take this book of the Law, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God...” He would tell them, this is the Law from God, of God, and that they would know God and fear him by reading these words of God (Deut. 31:9-26).
  - And this stands as the pattern (mentioned in Deut. 18). God would appoint his man, this man would be confirmed by God (miraculously), and his words would cohere with the other Scriptures already written.
  - This leads us to a very important concept of what belongs in the Bible - The Biblical Canon.
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