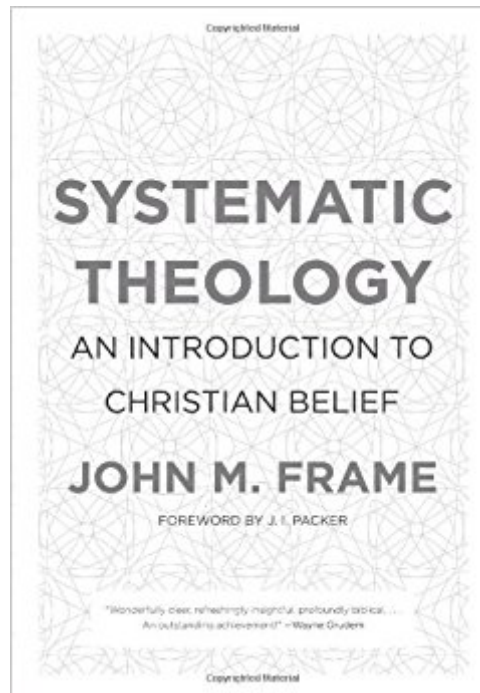




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Systematic Theology: An Introduction To Christian Belief



Synopsis

Systematic Theology is the culmination and creative synthesis of John Frame's writing on, teaching about, and studying of the Word of God. This magisterial opus "at once biblical, clear, cogent, readable, accessible, and practical" summarizes the mature thought of one of the most important and original Reformed theologians of the last hundred years. It will enable you to see clearly how the Bible explains God's great, sweeping plan for mankind.

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Customer Reviews

If you're looking for a contemporary confessional Reformed systematic theology book then don't look further. John Frame has written a masterpiece that sets forth a systematic theology through the historic Reformed perspective. This is probably Frame's most significant work of all his writings. There are many beneficial aspects to this monumental work. First, Frame writes in a way that the average lay Christian can understand what he is saying. Unlike some systematic theology works, Frame does not try to write in a way that will confuse the reader. He is straightforward and clear in his presentation without being amateurish. Also, in the early parts of this work, Frame defends a modest Van Tillian approach to prolegomena without using the complicated language used by Van Til. One will find Van Til's presuppositionalism defended with much more clarity and ease. Second, the work is structured using the standard systematic theology structure found in works of previous theologians. Frame starts off with prolegomena and ends with eschatology. Unlike Michael Bird's systematic theology where he inserts the chapter on eschatology in the middle of his work, Frame, rightly I believe, puts eschatology at the end of his work. Third, the work is biblical

through and through. Frame relies heavily on Scripture and does not come up with ideas at the top of his head. One of the essential ingredients in any systematic theology is a thorough interaction with the Scriptural text. Any systematic theology that does not appeal to Scripture regularly is a failure, in my opinion. Many modern theologies fail in the fact that they do not interact with Scripture consistently but rely on new ideas to develop a particular doctrine.

Ever since John M. Frame's systematic theology was released last November, I intended to promote and explain it for a wider audience, and Tom Chantry's recent critique has furnished me a suitable opportunity. Did I say "critique"? It's more like a bludgeoning: "[I]t is my firm opinion that John Frame is one of the most dangerous characters in the broadly Reformed world today," and, "Frame's response [to queries about his views on worship] could only be characterized as spectacularly ignorant or intentionally deceptive, and no one ever accused Frame of ignorance." In other words, Chantry calls Frame a liar. At the very outset, therefore, we might be cautioned, since it's difficult to write objectively about another Christian's systematic theology when one's already committed to such a dire verdict. My own intent in this short post is not to offer a point-by-point refutation of Chantry's critique. Rather, I'll highlight those aspects of Frame's systematics that have become particularly controversial but, in my view, reflect the genius of his approach. That genius centers entirely on Frame's view of the Bible. First, sola scriptura really has teeth in Frame's systematics. All orthodox Protestants are formally committed to sola scriptura, but, unlike many of theirs, Frame's theological method marinates in it. One's source/s for theology is/are the first and most critical aspect of theological method. Your theological source will shape the systematics that comes out the other side. Theology based in reason (Enlightenment), intuition (Romanticism), contemporary culture (liberalism), church history or historical theology (Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy) looks very different from theology based on the Bible alone.

This is a phenomenally clear and easy-to-read systematic theology. Frame's definition of theology is as follows: Theology is the -application of Scripture, -by persons -to every area of life. This definition frames the work (no pun intended) that follows this beginning definition as the author focused intensely on the Bible, how the various teachings of the Bible apply to people, and how those areas of study reverberate across the full spectrum of human activity. I added the "-" dashes in his definition, but I did so quite deliberately, for you must understand that this book is very, very focused on triads. To those of you who are considering this book and are unfamiliar with Frame, know that

the "triperspective" that he reveals in this definition of Theology will show up in every area of his system to follow. Everything comes in threes, and there is a triangle of some sort on almost every page. Most of the time these threes are incredibly helpful, but sometimes they seem like a stretch to make a biblical doctrine fit into a tripartite division. (Point is, you will either appreciate or hate the triangles. I welcomed them as they were very helpful for clarity and remembrance.) From this definition of theology comes a "frame"work (pun intended that time) built on the basic idea of "The Lord." Everything that follows the first three chapters is built on the notion that God is the Lord and that his followers are part of his Kingdom. This is an explicit rejection of any kind of feminist, liberationist, or liberal theology. Frame is reformed through and through. That being said, he strives to root his arguments in Scripture and avoid historical spats.

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