



“Introduction: A Biblical Understanding of Theology”

Proverbs 1:7; Psalm 131

Lesson 1

In A Nutshell

Like it or not, willingly or no, everyone is a theologian. For us as God’s creatures, placed in God’s world, and bearers of the image of God, God is simply inescapable. We are like Him, we think about Him, we respond to Him, and we are sustained by Him. As Paul told the polytheists of Athens about their unknown God, “In him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Some, like the men of Athens, have many theologies, but every man has a theology—his set of conclusions about God. The wonderful thing about the God unknown to Athens, however, is that He desires to make Himself known. Paul describes that desire: “That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us” (v. 27). This lesson focuses on answering three preliminary questions: “What is theology?”, “How should theology be done?”, and “Why do theology well?”.

To The Testimony!

What is Theology?

- Prov. 2:1-6
9:7-12
30:1-6
1. In tenth grade you have taken or will take a course called *Biology*. That word means *the study of life*, and the course involves studying animals and plants through experimentation and observation. *Theology* comes from the Greek word *theos*, which means *God*. What then does *theology* mean?

- Prov. 2:5
9:10
30:3
2. The Bible never uses the phrase *study God*. The phrase we do see repeated in the Bible is *the knowledge of God*. How is the knowledge of God different from the study of God?

How Should Theology Be Done?

- Prov. 1:7
Psalm 131
3. Scientists often think that they can find any answer they wish to have simply through their research and study. We know that science has often been wrong, but that does not shake the faith of many confident scientists. Read Psalm 131:1-3. Should we act like a laboratory full of confident scientists as we do theology? What does this passage say we ought to act like when we study God? Why?

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- Heb. 11:6
4. A biologist uses microscopes and computers in order to find the knowledge and truths he is looking for. What tool must one use in order to find the knowledge and truth of God?

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- Heb. 11:1-3
11:7-13
5. Define *faith*.

Interesting Insight!

“‘Faith’ vs. Faith”

“One must analyse the word Faith and see that it can mean two completely opposite things.

“Supposing we were climbing in the Alps and were very high on the bare rock and suddenly the fog shuts down. The guide turns to us and says that the ice is forming and that there is no hope and that before morning we will all freeze to death here on the shoulder of the mountain. Simply to keep warm, the guide keeps us moving in the dense fog further out on the shoulder until none of us have any idea where we are. After an hour or so, someone says to the guide: ‘Supposing I drop and hit a ledge ten feet down in the fog. What would happen then?’ The guide would say that you might make it till the morning and thus live. So, with absolutely no knowledge or any reason to support this action, one of the group hangs and drops into the fog. This would be one kind of faith, a leap of faith.

“Supposing, however, after we have worked out on the shoulder in the midst of the fog and the growing ice on the rock, we had stopped and we heard a voice and the voice said: ‘You cannot see me, but I know exactly where you are from your voices. I am on another ridge. I have lived in these mountains man and boy for over sixty years and I know every foot of them. I assure you that ten feet below you there is a ledge. If you hang and drop, you can make it through the night and I will get you in the morning.’

“I would not hang and drop at once, but would ask questions to try and ascertain if the man knew what he was talking about and if he was not my enemy. In the Alps for example, I would ask him his name. If the name he gave me was the name of a family from that part of the mountains, it would count a great deal to me. In the Swiss Alps there are certain family names that indicate mountain families of that area. For example, in the area of the Alps where I live, such a name would be that of Avanthey. In my desperate situation, even though time would be running out, I would ask him what to me would be the sufficient questions, and when I became convinced by his answers, then I would hang and drop.” [Francis A. Schaeffer, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), pp. 124-125.]

- 1 Cor. 1:18
2:6-16
6. What must be true about a man or woman or young person before they can begin to understand what is true about God?

Deut.
29:29

7. What two categories of truth does Moses mention in this verse? Which category belongs to us, and why specifically did God give us that category of truth?

Why Do Theology Well?

Eph.
4:11-16

8. What is the happy result of the lives of those who understand the truth they believe and who live it?

Hos.
4:1-6

9. What is the sad result of the lives of those who reject the truth of God and the knowledge of God?
