

Theology Matters

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13. Theology MATTERS

All theology is also spirituality, in the sense that it has an influence, good or bad, on our relationship with God: if our theology does not quicken the conscience and soften the heart, it actually hardens both."

J.I. Packer

Meta-narrative of Scripture

1. Why this theology matters

- Shows the Bible as one unified story of God's kingdom—presence, people, place, and purposes—rather than random moral tales.
- Helps people see their "problem" and God's "solution" in the Creation-Fall-Promise-Redemption-Fullness structure you've taught.
- Clarifies that the gospel is the center of the story, not just a private spiritual add-on to life.

2. How it relates to other theologies

- Hermeneutics asks, "Where in this story is my passage?" so interpretation is story-conscious, not verse-isolated.
- Doctrine of God, salvation, covenants, church, and eschatology are the key "movements" in that story, not disconnected topics.
- Eschatology (new creation) mirrors Genesis 1-2 and shows the story's restoration bookends.

3. Real-life application

- Gives believers a framework to interpret their own lives: "Where am I tasting creation, feeling the fall, clinging to promises, seeing redemption, longing for fullness?"
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- Shapes Bible reading so people expect Scripture to move from God's work in Christ to changed life, not just "tips."
 - Fuels hope and mission because people know where history began and where it is headed.
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Hermeneutics

1. Why this theology matters

- Equips believers to read the Bible as it was given: specific authors, audiences, genres, and purposes, not as a grab bag of quotes.
- Protects from "emotional," "pragmatic," or "superficial" approaches that ask only "What does this mean to me?" rather than "What did God mean?"
- Builds confidence that ordinary Christians, using tools like COMA, can handle God's Word faithfully.

2. How it relates to other theologies

- Controls how people see the metanarrative, the covenants, and the big "already/not yet" of eschatology.
- Shapes conclusions about God's attributes, human sin, salvation, the church, and ordinances (e.g., reading epistles, narratives, apocalyptic well).
- Different hermeneutical instincts often sit behind different covenant and millennial views; you've modeled this by laying out multiple eschatological options.

3. Real-life application

- Helps people answer: "How do I understand the Word?" in daily decisions, not just in class, by moving through context-observation-meaning-application.
 - Trains them to question popular misuses of verses and to check context, genre, and cross-references.
 - Encourages regular personal devotion that is less random proof-texting and more patient listening to God's voice in Scripture.
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Doctrine of God

1. Why this theology matters

- Answers “Who is God?” by highlighting incommunicable and communicable attributes, and the Trinity, so people worship the real God.
- Shows that God is independent, immutable, eternal, omnipresent, and yet personally knowable in covenant relationship.
- Clarifies that knowing God is a lifelong pursuit that shapes every part of discipleship, not an elective for theologians.

2. How it relates to other theologies

- God’s character drives the big story—from creation through judgment to new creation—and frames every other doctrine.
- Salvation, covenants, and eschatology are expressions of who God is: holy, just, loving, faithful, and triune.
- Being made in God’s image ties doctrine of God directly to anthropology, sin, sanctification, and the church’s call to reflect his character.

3. Real-life application

- Reassures believers that the God who saves and sustains them does not change when circumstances do.
- Challenges distorted images of God (distant, indulgent, powerless) by returning to his revealed attributes.
- Invites worship, obedience, and imitation: “Be imitators of God, as beloved children,” especially in love, holiness, goodness, and wisdom.

Salvation

1. Why this theology matters

- Names the real human problem (Sin, not just “sins”) and the full scope of God’s solution in the work of Christ.
 - Clarifies the key pieces: atonement, repentance and faith, justification, sanctification, and glorification.
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- Gives assurance and joy by rooting salvation in God's grace rather than human performance.

2. How it relates to other theologies

- Sits at the center of the metanarrative as the transition from Fall to Redemption, anticipating Fullness.
- Flows from God's attributes (holy love) and his covenant commitments (covenant of grace fulfilled in Christ).
- Creates the church (ecclesiology) and aims at eschatological glory—resurrection and new creation.

3. Real-life application

- Shapes evangelism: people can clearly answer, "What is the problem?" and "How are we saved?" in everyday conversations.
 - Frees believers from both despair (because of sin) and pride (because of works) into grateful obedience.
 - Reframes sanctification as part of the gospel story: being conformed to Christ's image, not trying to earn God's favor.
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Ecclesiology

1. Why this theology matters

- Answers, "What is the church?" as the community, body, temple, holy people, and bride of Christ, not just an event.
- Explains why gathering for Word, worship, ordinances, discipline, and mission is central, not optional.
- Resists consumer and spectator models by highlighting every member's role in the body.

2. How it relates to other theologies

- The church is the "gospel made visible": the people formed by God's saving work in the story.
 - Church life and ordinances (baptism, Lord's Supper) are covenant signs flowing from the covenant of grace.
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- Ecclesiology is lived eschatology: a holy, set-apart people now, anticipating the marriage supper of the Lamb.

3. Real-life application

- Calls believers into committed membership, service, and mutual care rather than lone-ranger spirituality.
- Shapes how they view Sunday: a gathered temple and family, not a spiritual product to consume.
- Trains them to see ordinary practices (hospitality, singing, teaching, forgiving) as central to God's mission.

Covenant Theology

1. Why this theology matters

- Offers a unifying lens for Scripture as one covenant story—works, redemption, grace—rather than disconnected eras.
- Shows that God binds Himself to his people in promises He Himself fulfills, climaxing in the new covenant in Christ's blood.
- Clarifies the logic of sacrifice, atonement, and mediation across the Testaments.

2. How it relates to other theologies

- Provides the structural "spine" that holds the metanarrative together (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, new covenant).
- Helps explain the relationship between Israel and the church, and thus affects ecclesiology and eschatology.
- Frames salvation as life in the covenant of grace with one people of God across history.

3. Real-life application

- Builds confidence that God keeps his promises, even through long seasons of waiting and apparent delay.
 - Informs how believers think about baptism, Lord's Supper, family life, and church membership as covenantal realities.
 - Encourages them to see every part of life as lived in a real, binding relationship with the living God.
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Eschatology

1. Why this theology matters

- Answers “Where are we now and where is this going?” in light of Christ’s return, judgment, heaven, and hell.
- Brings future hope to present realities: suffering, mission, and perseverance.
- Reminds believers that the certainty of his coming should shape the urgency of their living.

2. How it relates to other theologies

- Brings the metanarrative to its fullness: new heavens and new earth, God dwelling with his people forever.
- Shows the final outcome of salvation—resurrection bodies, full holiness, and visible glory.
- Interacts with covenant and church questions (Israel, church, kingdom) while keeping focus on living as overcomers now.

3. Real-life application

- Calls Christians to live as pilgrims: holding possessions, politics, and plans loosely in light of eternity.
 - Strengthens believers to endure opposition, temptation, and suffering as they await Christ’s appearing.
 - Motivates holy living and mission, since time is moving toward a real, promised future with Christ.
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