Theological Synthesis Paper

Assignment 7-3 for ST5534 Systematic Theology 1

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The doctrine of Scripture was always more of a mystery to me until I started Systematic Theology. Within class we started with discussing about general revelation and special revelation. I found it personally helpful to understand that general revelation is how God provides us with a way to see Him through nature, history and our own bodies. I also found it helpful when we discussed special revelation as a way of God entering into covenantal relationships with us like we see in Hebrews 1:1-2 which states “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”[[1]](#footnote-1) We then need a way to preserve the revelations through inspiration, which sometimes is thought of as the same thing but we see that they can be separated like in John 21:25, which says “Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”[[2]](#footnote-2) John is stating in this passage that there was revelation without inspiration. Understanding how we receive scripture from God and how it is recorded is very important but we must also include that scripture is both inerrant and authoritative, which fell under inspiration within class. Inerrancy is defined as the Bible being fully truthful in all of its teachings. Authority of the Bible is that it posses the right to tell us “what we are to believe and how we are to live.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

Attributes of God are interesting for me to discuss because I thought they would be something that everyone would understand. I did not realize the depth or importance to them until my studies focused in on this area and the author of my theology book Erickson put it best by saying, “God’s attributes are essential and inherent dimensions of his very nature.”[[4]](#footnote-4) Within my studies I found that the attributes discussed were broken up between two topics the goodness and the greatness of God. The areas discussed within the greatness of God include spirituality, life, infinity and constancy. I would like to elaborate little bit on my previous sentence to say that God is not composed of matter and does not possess a physical nature, God is a personal being that is capable of feeling, choosing and having relationship with His creation. God’s existence does not depend on anything outside of him, God is a limitless being without boundaries that we as humans have and He is unchanging meaning He cannot increase or decrease in anything because He is already perfect and He does not shift around like tides of the sea. The next area that I was able to learn more about was the goodness of God. The goodness of God incudes moral purity, integrity and love, which can be summarized in my own words as being free from any evil or wicked thing and He is completely truthful/faithful as well as loving which means a whole host of things including unselfish, tenderhearted, graceful and persistent. God’s nature is hard to some up in just a few words but is well worth knowing so we can more efficiently be in communion with Him.

The trinity is crucial part of God’s nature and any Christian looking to further his walk with God must understand this as the author of my theology book Erickson states, “the doctrine of the Trinity is crucial for Christianity. It is concerned with who God is, what he is like, how he works, and how he is to be approached.”[[5]](#footnote-5) This is sometimes a bit hard to comprehend and to be honest one that I shy away from sometimes. There are 6 key components that must be included when discussing the trinity. Component number one is the unity of God is basic which means God is one being. Component two is that each person of the trinity is equal and we should treat them as such instead of focusing all our time on one of them. Third the threeness and oneness of God are not in the same respect. The fourth point is that the trinity is eternal which means that one did not randomly come into being before another but on the contrary they have always been/will always be. Fifth the function of one of the members of the trinity may be subordinate for a time but this is in no way saying that this member is inferior. For instance each of the members has had a time within the Bible that they play a unique role for a specific purpose. Lastly I learned that the trinity is incomprehensible and something we will never fully grasp while we are here on earth. I have learned the majority of my previous statements within class but hold strongly to them because I honestly didn’t have much of a background with these topics previously. I strongly believe that each member of the trinity is a being that makes up one God even though this is sometimes hard for me to understand fully. The Bible clearly tells us that God is the only true God.

The topic of providence is the next thing I would like to discuss and one I have thought much about in my life. I grew up with a very Calvinistic view that God is in total control but I have heard convincing arguments for both sides. Many of my views align with a softer determinists viewpoint so I wouldn’t say that I am really on the far end of the spectrum. To summarize my beliefs and why I see it this way is because if we truly understand that God is in control of all things and is actively working then we will be more willing to trust His guidance. I believe God wants us to know that He is active in our lives and that He wants to use us/work through us in all aspects of life not just ones that pertain to Church. I would also like to discus within this section my views on creation and I definitely fall in the young earth camp. I believe that God made the world in a literal 7-day week and I believe that scripture supports this viewpoint. I firmly believe that God created everything out of nothing and that it was from the start good as God designed it to be and as He states multiple times within Genesis about everything being good. I was starting to think about an old earth view point for a time being within my studies. I thought possibly that God still worked and created everything out of nothing but a day might mean something different to God like 1,000 years our time but recently I have went to the creation museum and that helped cement my feelings about the young earth view. I have also been blessed with the opportunity to see the life size ark located within Kentucky which was amazing to see God’s work through Noah and also helped cement my feeling on creation when put together with my studies. I would also like to note that creation was done with each member of the trinity present because they have always been/will always be and we have evidence of this within scripture when it talks about God sending His sprit over the earth.

Jesus Christ from a very high level view is the Son of God who came to Earth through the Virgin Mary and is fully God and fully man. It is important to note within that last statement I made that these are two distinct features that come together in unity within the person of Christ. I will focus on two topics as I try to discuss more of my personal beliefs and convictions. First thing I would like to discuss is what Jesus said about Himself because if He didn’t ever claim it then why should I believe it. Jesus never explicitly states that He is God but He does make claims that would be out of place if he were not God. We see many places within scripture of Jesus saying your sins are forgiven which is a trait that we know only God poses and Jesus claims in John 10:30 that He and the Father are one. The next topic I would like to cover briefly is the humanity of Christ. He experienced hunger (Matt. 4:2), thirst (John 19:28), and fatigue (John 4:6). He was disappointed in the garden for he experienced the same type of weariness the disciples did (Matt. 26:36, 40–41). We can also see Christ’s humanity show through the cross when He died just as we all will die physically one day. Jesus throughout the Bible also shows many signs of human emotion like weeping/loneliness as well as anger. I said all of the previous statements very similar to how I wrote one of my theology papers on this topic because it is my true belief that Jesus was fully God and fully man. I do not think that this is something one can look past in His studies of God which is why I wanted to make sure that I included a full scope of what I am basing my personal belief on which include the Bible paired with my theology book by Millard Erickson.

The Holy Spirit like the Father and Christ the son is apart of the holy trinity, which makes up our one true God. The spirit is constantly moving within us today and teaching us about God and who He is so we can be in closer relationship with Him. Two main points that everyone always brings up when it comes to the Holy Spirit is how do you know He is God and where does it state that the spirit is a separate entity that makes up the trinity. Answering the first question we see the Holy Spirit being referenced by Peter as God in Acts 5:3-4 “But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”[[6]](#footnote-6) In this passage I believe it makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is God but there are many other areas that can be referenced within scripture as well. I would also say to those that question His being separate by pointing them to Luke 3:21-22 “now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” This passage I believe backs up the Spirit being able to come down in bodily form as a member of the trinity. I say all of this so that you may know where my stance is when it comes to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

My beliefs and personal convictions on spiritual warfare are that it is not taken seriously enough and that we need to be preparing ourselves. One key verse that I keep close to my heart because of this topic is 1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”[[7]](#footnote-7) When discussing my take on spiritual warfare I believe that it is biblical and that there is also a correct way to partake in spiritual warfare, which includes being in prayer consistently, meditating on scripture and having a mentor. I believe this mentor should be someone that you can trust to spur you on in Christ like a pastor or seasoned member of the church. I am more on the cessation side of things when it comes to gifting’s of the Holy Spirit which may influence part of my beliefs on spiritual warfare but I believe most of the time it is not some big thing that is made public and needs to be cast out in front of multiple people. I believe that the most dangerous times are our times alone which is when the devil loves to prey on us, he wants to separate us from the herd and that is why I stress scripture reading/prayer and meeting with a mentor that you can trust. I hope that this theological synthesis can give you a good background into my personal beliefs and understandings on the above topics. Theology is something I believe I will be studying for the rest of my life and so far I feel like I have only scratched the surface. I hope to continue to grow my understanding on each one of these topics discussed through my daily walk with Christ but I also believe I have a firm foundation to base my studies on.

1. The MacArthur Study Bible, English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The MacArthur Study Bible, English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Christian Theology 3rd Edition, Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Christian Theology 3rd Edition, Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Christian Theology 3rd Edition, Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The MacArthur Study Bible, English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The MacArthur Study Bible, English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)