

What Is “Theology”?

Theos = “God”; *Logos* = Word, Expression, Speech, Thought, Logic, Study

Main Categories of Christian Theology

- Biblical Theology, Moral Theology, Liturgical Theology, Foundational Theology, etc.
- Systematic Theology:
 - God / Trinity
 - Jesus / Christology
 - Spirit / Pneumatology
 - Church / Ecclesiology
 - Salvation / Soteriology
 - End Times / Eschatology
 - Sacramental Theology
 - Lots of other *-ologies*!
- See also <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/NT-Theology.htm>

Four Main Sources of Theology

1. **Scripture:** oldest core & foundation
2. **Tradition:** what is “passed on” or “handed down”
3. **Reason:** logic, science, study
4. **Experience:** what real people actually find in life

Four Main Modes/Expressions of Theology

1. **Scripture:** both OT & NT (two inter-related "canons")
2. **Credo** (<Lat. *credo* = "I believe"), esp. Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed
3. **Liturgy** (Gk. *leitourgia* = "people's work"), "rites" or "services"
4. **Doctrine**, esp. core "dogmas" (both <Lat. *docere* = "to teach")

Development of Doctrine:

- “The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New” (St. Augustine)
- Older/biblical teachings are like seeds planted, which later grow and mature into full plants.
- **Not** everything in Christian theology is **explicit** in the Bible, **but** all must be **based** on the Bible.
 - E.g. Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
 - E.g. Sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, etc. (“do this...”)
 - E.g. Christian Leaders as “Fathers” and “Priests”

Hierarchy of Truths:

- Not all doctrines/teachings carry the same weight or require the same level of assent.
- Distinguish: Bible, Creeds, Dogmas, Doctrines, Magisterial Teachings, Theological Opinions
- Core truths vs. ancillary teachings; Unchangeable vs. changeable; Universal vs. particular; TRADITION vs. traditions.

New Testament Theologies:

- **Mark:** Christology? Discipleship?
- **Matthew:** Christology? Discipleship? Ethics? Church?
- **Luke:** Christology? Discipleship? Justice? Spirit?
- **John:** Christology? Discipleship? Trinitarian Theology?
- **Paul & Deutero-Pauline Epistles**
- **Other:** Hebrews, James, Peter, Revelation

For Discussion:

- How are Scripture/Bible and Tradition and Theology related to each other?