

January 11, 2023

Introduction to Church History: What is Historical Theology?

What is Historical Theology?

- Alister McGrath (1998) – “the branch of theological inquiry which aims to explore the historical development of Christian doctrines, and identify the factors which were influential in their formulation.”
- Gregg Allison (2011) – “the study of the interpretation of Scripture and the formulation of doctrine by the church of the past.”
- Jason Duesing (2021) – “historical theology is the study of the development of Christian doctrine and tradition from the Bible by the church and for the church.”

How does Christian doctrine develop? Is it still developing?

Biblical Reasons to Study Church History: Historical Theology

- *Psalm 77:11* – “I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old.”
- *Psalm 105:5* – “Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered.”

Remembering what the Lord has done in the past for and through the church teaches us that God is...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Which should result in us...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Historical Theology for the Church

(Section Taken From Duesing, *Historical Theology For The Church*, 10-19)

1. Historical theology for the church upholds the primacy of the Bible over tradition and history but recognizes the value of tradition and history.

2. Historical theology for the church follows the two Greatest Commandments, as it is for the church catholic and church local.

How can we study historical theology in a way that expresses our love for God and others?

3. Historical theology for the church is done as a means to the end of fulfilling the Great Commission and glorifying God.

In what ways can the study of historical theology help fulfill the Great Commission and glorify God?

4. Historical theology for the church is academic and edifying as it functions as friend to the work of systematic theology, biblical theology, and applied theology.

5. Historical theology for the church as an academic endeavor is done as a servant of the church, not as a master.

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Overview of the Semester

1. Introduction to Church History: What is Historical Theology?
2. Christ and the Establishment of the Church, AD 33-100
3. Christ in the Patristic Era, AD 100-500
4. The Trinity in the Patristic Era, AD 100-500
5. Scripture & Tradition in the Patristic Era, AD 100-500
6. Salvation in the Patristic Era, AD 100-500
7. The Church in the Medieval Era, AD 500-1500
8. Salvation in the Medieval Era, AD 500-1500
9. Scripture & Tradition in the Medieval Era, AD 500-1500
10. Scripture in the Reformation Era, 1500-1700
11. Salvation in the Reformation Era, 1500-1700
12. The Church in the Reformation Era, 1500-1700
13. Scripture and Authority in the Modern Era, 1700-2000
14. Creation and Humanity in the Modern Era, 1700-2000
15. The Trinity and Jesus Christ in the Modern Era, 1700-2000
16. The Holy Spirit and Salvation in the Modern Era, 1700-2000
17. The Church in the Modern Era, 1700-2000

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Preparation For Next Week:

Dr. Jason Mitchell – “Come with open hearts.”

Further Resources:

Duesing, Jason and Nathan Finn. *Historical Theology For The Church*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2021.

Duesing, Jason. *Seven Summits in Church History*. Nashville, TN: Rainer Publishing, 2016.

Ferguson, Everett. *Church History, Volume One: From Christ to the Pre-Reformation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.

Litfin, Bryan. *Getting to Know The Church Fathers: An Evangelical Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016.