

Introduction to Theology

Dr Nigel D. Pegram

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1 Introduction

Key question How do we want to do the class? Lectures or flipped?

1.1 Assessments

Details in Moodle (show class where).

- Assessment 1
 - Weekly tests (12, starting week 2)
 - Worth 20% of overall grade
 - Focus is on readings, but also lectures
 - One attempt, one hour.
 - Have until the end of semester, but danger of letting it get on top of you.
- Assessment 2
 - Due week 5, Friday 8 September, midnight EST (+ 2 hours)
 - Worth 30% of overall grade
 - Devotion on relevant theological concept
 - 1200 words
 - Based on biblical passage, not more than 5 verses.
 - Have a target audience. Be creative
 - Explore the topic—including alternate views
 - At least two *academic* references (5 for HD).

Question: Do we want to share in-class? (Must still submit written paper.)

- Assessment 3
 - Due week 8, Friday 20 October, midnight EDT (+3 hours)
 - Worth 10% of overall grade
 - Builds toward assessment 4, so choose question to address there *first*.
 - Annotated bibliography—*explain*
 - Six references, three books and three articles
 - 400 words of annotation (in total) — sources do not count
 - ★ Key content—scope, relevance, limitations
- Assessment 4
 - Due week 13, Friday 24 November, midnight EDT (+3 hours)

1 Introduction

- Worth 40% of overall grade
- Essay
- 1350 words
- One of three questions
 1. What is the 'Kingdom of God' and how does it relate to the Church? Critically discuss alternative perspectives.
You may wish to draw on biblical scholarship, and/or theological literature.
 2. What does it mean to be made in the image of God?
Critically discuss a range of perspectives in your answer and provide a short application of your conclusion to the Christian life (the application section should be no longer than 300 words).
 3. Describe and explain the doctrine of the Trinity.
In your answer, refer to the debates of the early church and allow for dialogue with contemporary developments. Include a short application section (of no longer than 300 words) regarding the relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity to Christian life.
- Credit grade will require at least four references. HD, 7.
- Method:
 - ★ Research thoroughly. Use Wesleyan Quadrilateral to focus research and refer to it in your paper.
 - ★ Identify and explain the central elements of the chosen topic.
 - ★ Discuss and evaluate alternate theological views on your selected topic.
 - Note: You will need to demonstrate an appreciation and openness to these different views. This does not mean you accept the view, rather that you are aware of the differences.
 - ★ Identify at least one inter-relationship between your topic and another theological theme, e.g. the relationship between 'Work of Christ' (Topic 8) and 'Christian Hope' (Topic 12)
 - ★ Discuss how this topic can be applied to the contemporary church, family and society today.

1.2 Reading notes (ericksonIntroducingChristianDoctrine2001)

Note goals at start of chapter:

1. Compose a brief definition of theology
2. Demonstrate the need for doctrine in the contemporary scene

3. Identify alternative starting points for studying Christian doctrine
4. List and explain each of the steps involved in developing an adequate theology

Note five study questions at the start of the chapter.

Note key role of the idea of revelation—though focuses on the Bible.

Note the idea of a method in doing theology.

There is a process.

It is something you actively do, not just something you have.

Note that this is an American text, so some of the comments therein reflect US attitudes and laws, which are different to Australia. In some ways, theology is local.

Method

1. Collection of the Biblical Materials
2. Unification of the Biblical Materials
3. Analysis of the Meanings of Biblical Teachings
4. Examination of Historical Treatments
5. Identification of the Essence of the Doctrine
6. Illumination from Sources Beyond the Bible
7. Contemporary Expression of the Doctrine
8. Development of a Central Interpretive Motif
9. Stratification of the Topics

1.3 Activities

1.3.1 Discuss student's answers to the four questions in the reading.

1.3.2 Questions to ponder:

Why study theology?

What is theology?

Does theology matter? Why/why not?

media/Baptists-against-jews.jpg

By HoppingRabbit34 at English Wikipedia, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=25481009>.

Figure 1: A protest against Jews, held by Westboro Baptist Church, USA

1.3.3 Discussion starter

Observe figure 1 on this page.

- What do you observe?
- How do you react?
- What thoughts do you have?
- What theology is displayed in the picture?
- What theology is part of your thoughts?

1.3.4 Another discussion item

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-01/doomsdaymum-lori-vallow-daybell-sentenced/102671642>

2 Method of Theology

2.1 Reading Jones (2014, chapter 1)

Note Emphasis on connection between theology and practice. Thought and action.

Description of thought and action ‘running both ways’ (bottom of p. 12) describes Practical Theology.

Definitions:

Doctrine ‘communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude and action’ (Lindbeck in Jones, 2014, p. 15)

Dogma doctrine with the highest levels of authority and trustworthiness. Ideas which describe the boundaries of what is or isn’t Christian.

Wesleyan Quadrilateral Describes sources which inform the Christian life. Not all equal.

1. Scripture
2. Tradition
3. Reason
4. Experience

Culture Box on page 23 highlights the cultural issues implicit in theologising—and how much of theology has been done from an individualistic Western perspective in recent centuries.

Truth vs fact p.24 highlights that truth and fact are not the same thing. They also note that they don’t have to be seen as necessarily antagonistic.

Question Can you identify the groups?

On page 24 Jones notes that, ‘One strand in contemporary theology has little patience with appeals to experience, seeing experience as hopelessly subjective, individualistic, and sinful.’ Below that she notes another tradition ‘prefers to make that influence clear’.

Note links with Enlightenment suspicions—even seen in emotion studies.

Box Apophatic vs cataphatic knowledge of God on p. 25.

Note Questions to ask on page 29.

2.2 Lectures

Question What are the strengths and limitations of using the Cross as the basis for theology?

workshop What other bases could be used?

Suggestions incarnation, God's people, arc of Scripture (creation, mess, solution)

Discuss Theology from above vs theology from below—we tend to make God in our image.

Epistemology Apophatic and cataphatic, also relate to experience and spirituality—knowing God without words.

Science Theology as queen of the sciences. What is a science—notice different definition from popular thinking which equates it with empirical process.

Note enlightenment and rationalism

Difference between truth and fact.

Truth objective vs subjective truth. Can we ever truly have objective truth?

Discuss What do you think about Chris's argument that truth is both objective and subjective? Is the difference between the truth and its impact on us—perhaps this is closer to the two 'tasks' mentioned.

Hermeneutics May need to unpack what this is.

Notice theology→culture→application

2.3 Activities

- Draw the Wesleyan quadrilateral.
- Google search for images of Wesleyan quadrilateral.

Discuss strengths, limitations and implicit communications therein. What do you observe, how do you react, what thoughts do you have?

3 Revelation and Scripture

3.1 Reading (Jones, 2014, chapter 2)

Key ideas, things of God are ‘hidden’ (p. 32), but God uncovers them.

Question What pictures of God can be created from the idea that God’s things or God himself are hidden?

Note concept of accommodation: God reveals himself in ways that fits what we can know.

Question How might this influence how we read Scripture overall?

Note importance of materiality and temporality, God reveals himself in time and space, in history.

Note also influence of sin—irony of the narrative in Genesis 3 (‘You will become like gods’).

Note the implications of special revelation—the task of the people of God to make God known!

Four positions regarding relationship between special and general revelation (p. 34ff.)

1. General revelation takes priority

- Note the challenge of post-enlightenment thinking putting reason first.
- Deists (p. 35) those who believe in the distant, separate, clockmaker God.
- Liberal theology tends to be based on these sort of assumptions.
- Very modernist, not so acceptable in post-modern thinking.

2. Special revelation takes priority

- Represented in fundamentalist and evangelical theologies, but more commonly found in 3 and 4 below.
- Note Barth’s strong position—influenced by his experience (link to Wesleyan quadrilateral).
- Note the influence of a theology of sin, which is absent from position 1.

Question Does special revelation challenge Barth’s perspective on general revelation? (What about Psalm 19, Romans 1, et al.?) How might you investigate this? (Perhaps find out how Barth himself reads that Psalm and then offer a critique.)

3. Ongoing continuity between the two

- Favoured by Catholics

4. Sin veils the continuity between the two, but God can lift the veil.

- Favoured by Protestants.
- Greater emphasis on sin than 3, including fallen creation, not just fallen humanity. (Note that p. 39 presents a different view, ‘The problem is not with God’s revelation, but with our ability to perceive it.’)

Question Was death part of Creation? What about carnivores? What about the immune system?

Note the difference between inspiration and illumination—both works of the Spirit.

Discuss What does inspiration mean for me?

Verbal inspiration Which words are inspired? In which language? Should the Gospels be in Aramaic? Which MSS? If the autographs, why don’t we have them? Why didn’t God ensure their preservation?

Notice that 2 Tim 3:15–17 refers to the Hebrew Scriptures—challenging those who discard them in favour of the NT.

Explore the formation of the Canon.

Note parallels between Montanism and some contemporary expressions of Christianity and cults. (Primacy of *their* revelation.)

This is one reason we call Mormons non-Christian, even though they call themselves Christians.

Authority of Scripture—note how inerrancy is tied up with a modernist way of thinking—facts and truth are the same—which seems odd given the faith position of the inerrantists. Note its rise from the 19th century, paralleling liberal theology’s rise. Did they mirror their culture, even while trying to challenge liberal theological views of Scripture?

Some make it a test of faith. Should it be? What are the arguments for and against?

Some also confuse inerrancy with literalism—compare with Henry’s comments, an inerrantist, on pp. 50–51.

3.2 Lectures

Note Jesus is also revelation. Closely linked with his incarnation. God becomes one of us so we can know him most fully. Cover more fully in subsequent weeks.

Note the frequent use of ‘Word’ and ‘Word of God’ in the lectures.

How do non-Christians understand this?

What ‘baggage’ does the term have? Is it helpful? What other terms are helpful?

3.3 Activities

Discussion What does revelation reveal? (Weekly reading p. 32, 'divine reality'.

Question What is scripture's relationship to revelation?

Compare the description on page 33 of the reading with other gods and belief systems. See the first paragraph of the section entitled 'The Doctrine of Revelation.'

Comment on gnosticism and gnostic tendencies in the church.

Ask if people have seen this and get them to describe it.

What is the 'Word of God'? How do you and others around you use the term? Is it helpful, for Christians, for others?

How might 'God-breathed' be viewed in light of Genesis 1–2? Does this change our language about Scripture?

Did God inspire the result, the process of creation of a text, the reception of the text, any or all of these?

Could some parts of the Scriptures be writings through which the message of God was heard? For example, letters to churches...

4 Trinity

4.1 Reading (Jones, 2014, chapter 3)

Key idea is that there is one God.

Exercise: On page 57, the baptism of Jesus is described as being evidence of the Trinity. Is that the only way to read this passage? (Read some different versions.)

Comments: The spirit of God was not seen by Jews as a separate person. Israel was called beloved son. So how would have early Jews heard this?

Note: to some extent we're reading back into the text.

Question: does this make our effort invalid?

Thought: God revealed himself in a way which was most helpful to the people at the time, emphasising his unity. What would Israel have thought if the trinity was revealed in the early days? Likely that they were 3 gods.

Note the story of transition in the Church's thinking in our reading (p. 57).

Note comment at bottom of p. 59, the early church first focused on Jesus, later the Holy Spirit.

Hereses Three key heresies identified, which emphasise one God, but reject divinity of Jesus or the Spirit in some way.

1. Adoptionism—Jesus is a human who became 'promoted' to Son of God (a position). Not divine by nature. Makes worshippers of Jesus idolators. Distorts the Good News into salvation by works. Jesus becomes another good teacher.
2. Modalism (aka Sabellianism) has God working in 3 modes. What do we do with accounts where more than one of the three are present? Why limited to three modes? Problem of death of God on the cross. Cannot worship God, rather his images. The Good News becomes a 'play', where it seems like he dies for our sins.
3. Arianism was one of the big heresies of the early church. More sophisticated than Adoptionism, though has some similarities. Jesus was God's first created being. Godlike, but not God. Jesus and the Spirit are both subordinate to the Father. Not sharing his divine essence. Thus worshipping him is idolatry. The comment that the Father cannot be the Father without the Son is also telling.

325 Council of Nicaea—response to Arianism. Affirmed that Jesus has same substance as the Father. Reaffirmed in 381 Council of Constantinople. Led to the Nicene Creed:

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come.

Amen.

Note how it excludes tritheism right at the start.

Note how it excludes subordinationism—same essence.

Note comparison of Nicaea and Constantinople: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene_Creed, especially the ending, which highlights the focus on Arianism.

Note the emphasis on relationality at the heart of God.

P. 72 ‘God, Jesus and the Spirit’—not a good way to talk about God. God=the whole, Father, Son and Spirit.

4.2 Lectures

Passage from Philippians 2 not mentioned.

Illustration on slide 18 very helpful.

4 Trinity

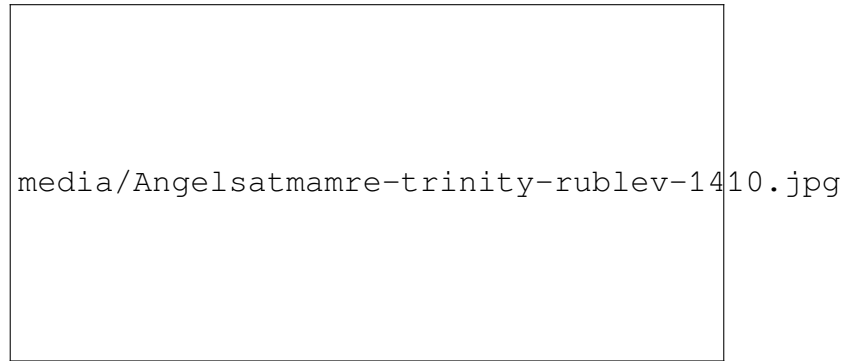
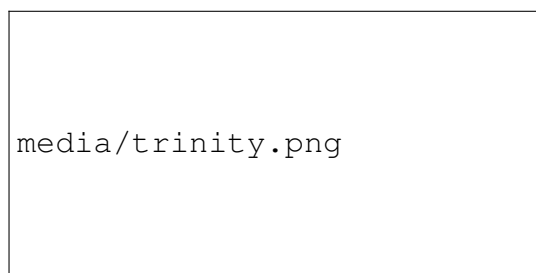


Figure 2: Rublev's Icon of the Trinity

Trinity. (2023, July 4). In Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_\(Andrei_Rublev\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_(Andrei_Rublev))



Slide 23—both mystery and paradox.

Might ponder how a relational trinity impacts on our thinking about solitary Christians and the image of God.

Terminology economic vs immanent trinity. Economic trinity focuses on what God does, immanent trinity focuses on who God is.

Note that care is needed to distinguish between the incarnate Jesus and the eternal Christ. Thus we can talk of the subordinate position of Jesus in his incarnate work, while he retains his equality with the Father as eternal Christ.

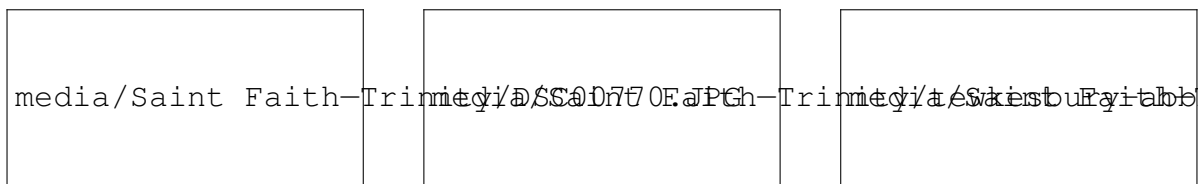
Rublev's icon Discuss vanishing point and way icons draw us into them. Get artistic input on vanishing point. See figure 2 on the current page.

4.3 Activities

Use image from Tewkesbury Abbey, Gloucestershire, St. Faith. See figure 3 on the following page.



Figure 3: Plaque from St. Faith's Chapel



Centre image, <https://www.uksouthwest.net/gloucestershire/tewkesbury-abbey/tewkesbury-abbey-st-faiths-chapel.html>.
Other images, Nigel Pegram.

Figure 4: St. Faith's Chapel

5 Creation

Reading: Jones (2014, chapter 4)

Empahsis on creation as a key doctrine, as opposed to method of creation.

Exercise: drawing of picture of creation in Genesis 1

Discussion: what is the role of humanity (Gen 1 vs Gen 2)

Discussion: Environmentalism—what do we see in churches. What is a biblical response?

How do we deal with ‘greenies’?

6 Humanity and Sin

6.1 Required Reading (Jones, 2014, chapter 5)

Note two foci on page 98: examine humanity as God intended *and* as it is.

p. 98 we take humanity seriously because does!

Jesus provides the image of true humanity—life lived in full relationship with the Father.

p. 99 Human as creature, as sinner as new creation in Christ. Note that this means unredeemed humans not ‘complete’.

Creature dependent, not isolated. Ultimately dependent on God. Challenges individuality and self-sufficiency.

While being created has commonality with other creatures, also *unique*. ‘Middle creature’ is the term used on p. 100ff.

Question How much influence might Greek thought has on the consensus that we are middle between spirit (angels) and physical (animals)?

Genesis 1 notes we are made in God’s image. Same not said of animals.

Genesis 2 speaks about receiving the Breath of God to become a living creature (2:7 **וַיִּהְיֶה הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה**). However, in v. 19 other animals called living creatures (**כָּל-חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה**). Living vs *nephesh*?

Reject hierarchical dualism—we are a unity, not a spirit temporarily inhabiting unwanted, burdensome flesh.

Means our bodies are significant. Notice the importance the Bible places on resurrection. Notice also that in the incarnation *and* resurrection Jesus was embodied!

Also avoids rejection of the material without the spiritual—contra modern society.

Unpack Three models: tripartite, bipartite, monist.

6.1.1 Imago Dei

Key concept: ‘made in the image of God’—*imago Dei* in Latin (Gen 1:26—**וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים**—**נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ**). Note that ‘make’ is used, rather than ‘create’.

vv. 26–27: ‘adam’ = humankind/earthling/earth-thing. Nouns used in chapter 1 are singular but used collectively/plurally. Pronoun ‘him/it’ in v. 27 is singular to agree grammatically, but meaning is ‘people’ as male and female that are in the image of God.

Also one might assume that we are human in community, rather than individually.

HaAdam = the earthling, the Ground-thing; v. 26 ‘them’

Dominion is given to the ‘HaAdam’ — male and female together as one. Commissioned to maintain. Christians should be the ‘Greenies’. See 2:15 לְעֹבְדָהּ: וְלִשְׁמֶרָהּ ‘Work’ has same triliteral as ‘servant’, plus guard/protect.

Note the use of the definite article — normally proper nouns presuppose/assume a definite article. Is this not a proper noun but a class noun?

Image of God Has been given a range of interpretations. God’s representatives on earth; quality of humanity; ability to communicate with God. See Clines (1968) and Miller (1972). For a relatively obscure text, it’s been given a heavy theological weight.

Options: pages 104ff.

1. Substantial likeness

Something in our nature lets us relate to God in a way that animals cannot.

Some consider this to be the soul, others rational thought, ethical capacity, ability to love.

2. Function in relation to creation

Role in caring for creation—image of the king (cf. Psalms 8:5–6).

3. Relational to other humans—reflecting the loving nature of God in trinity.

4. Dynamic view (does not describe it, but says it is a process)

Question: How would this have been understood in the ANE by the Hebrews?

Notice how Jones’s discussion does not focus on Scripture but on theology and tradition (2014, p. 106)—link to Wesleyan Quadrilateral.

This is not to say her discussion about what it means to be human is unimportant, just to note that she rapidly moves away from an exegetical understanding of the text.

Important Note her discussion about how we determine what it means to be human influences what it means to be less than or not human.

- Disabled—mentally, relationally or physically
- Capacity includes age (old and young) and disability

- Abortion, end of life, medical care
- Difficulty in knowing how loving relationships are to be constructed—egalitarian, hierarchical, etc.

Problems

1. We largely end up doing theology from below—using human patterns.
2. We fail to account for the reality of fallen humanity—too idealistic

Better to talk about the reality of fallen, flawed humanity reflecting a flawed image.

6.1.2 Sin

Discuss What was the sin in Genesis 3?

Note irony, in attempting to become like gods, lost/damaged the image of God.)

Shame is a key impact—relational.

Impact on all human relationships.

Note the consequences included the land (earth linked with earthling).

P. 108 Sin makes us inhuman!

Sin is both personal and systemic.

Question How do we address this in our churches—how we preach, what actions we take, how we approach others?

What is the key sin? Jones (2014, p. 109) mentions pride, lack of trust, unbelief, untruth. What about disobedience—command broken. Do some of the explanations confuse the mechanism with the act?

IMPORTANT Jones (2014, p. 110) makes the point that even though marred by sin, the creation, including humanity, is good!

6.1.3 Original sin

All born subject to the presence and power of sin. So sin is not *just* about specific acts.

Pelagianism—later declared a heresy (529 Council of Orange)—results in a works-based salvation. We can be good! (Jesus is not needed.) Augustine reacted against this (and possibly due to his own sexual hangups) and emphasised original sin.

Augustinian view tied with sin as inherited (like a disease) led to infant baptism. Imputed sin, does not require sin be passed on—the guilt is passed on. Risk of becoming Pelagianism.

Discuss thinking around infant baptism and original sin.

6.1.4 Jesus *imago Dei* and theosis

Proposition: Jesus, rather than Adam is the best picture of humanity in the image of God.

Discuss how does this impact on reading Genesis 1? How seriously do we take *new* in the creation of a new humanity?

Do we conflate ontology and function?

Note the Eastern church has a belief that Jesus was always going to become incarnate. Thus Adam was incompletely human!

New humanity's key characteristic is the indwelling Holy Spirit. God took on humanity so humanity could take on something of God's nature.

Question what is the role of resurrection? (NET occurs 40x in NT and not limited to Gospels.)

6.2 Lectures

Image and likeness—idols not banned because humanity is in God's image, but because they were ways of manipulating God. Compare story of Ark in Israel and use in battle (1 Samuel 4–6). Notice how much space is given to this—indicates its importance.

7 Jesus—His Person

Note Jesus' dual nature requires considering his humanity and his divinity. We must consider both separately as well as in combination.

7.1 Reading (Jones, 2014, chapter 6)

Note Jesus is a 1st Century Jewish man.

Notice how human he is presented. Born as a baby. Son of Joseph and Mary...brother of James, Joseph, Simon and Judas (Matt 13:55).

Many focus on his crucifixion—Orthodox provide healthy weight to his humanity. (Perhaps discuss theosis and incarnation.)

Discuss nature of messianic prophecy? Isaiah 53 as a key text (p. 119).

Note 'Son of man' meaning is often misunderstood—actually a claim to divinity, rather than humanity (pp. 119–120).

Discuss Christmas carols and other songs celebrate the incarnation, the birth of Jesus. What are their strengths and limitations?

For example

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
 The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
 The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
 The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.
 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
 But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
 I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
 And stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh.
 Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
 Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
 Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
 And take us to heaven, to live with Thee there.

Note He grows and develops as a human. He knows human experience *fully*, including ‘weakness, tiredness and suffering’ (p. 120).

Read Heb. 2:17, Phil. 2:

‘He is with us and for us’ (p. 121).

7.1.1 Controversies

In light of affirmation of his divinity—what is his humanity? Culminated at Council of Chalcedon (451).

Divinity and humanity creates tensions (paradoxes) (p. 123):

Divinity	Humanity
eternal	temporal
omni-present, -scient, -potent	finite
holy	sinful
immutable	changeable

- Immutable not static, but constant—life requires change, love is dynamic, for example. Note her comments about the language and thoughts of the times impacting on theology (pp. 123ff.). Yet in arguing for the concept she defends the word—which may not be so helpful. The discussion highlights that nowadays, another word might be better.

Exercise: what is a good contemporary word to use for this concept? List a few with their strengths and limitations.

Note Augustine’s comment against viewing impassibility as being unfeeling. Yet are we comfortable with a view of God who doesn’t suffer or is not disturbed by passions? What do we do with books like Hosea?

Note that all the heresies remove the tension by denying something of his humanity or of his divinity.

Apollinarianism Jesus is less than fully human—he had no human spirit, but was replaced by the divine Word. Note his opponents’ response ‘What is not assumed is not saved’. Note how this showed up in ‘Away in a Manger’ above. Jesus is neither subhuman or superhuman.

Represented implicitly in many’s thinking about Jesus.

Eutychianism/monophysitism Only one nature—his divine nature overtakes his human nature and in doing so becomes something other, neither fully human nor fully divine. Salvation doesn’t make us other than human.

Nestorianism Most pernicious—looks very good on surface since acknowledges both Jesus’ divinity and humanity, yet keeps them separate. The ‘God’ bit does the divine things, like raising someone from the dead, while the human bit does things like die.

Note the tension around θεοτοκος ‘god bearer’. Nestorius said God cannot be born, so this title is inappropriate for Mary, calling her Χριστοτόκος ‘Christ bearer’. Cyril of Alexandria, his opponent, considered it quite fitting. So Jesus the baby was not inhabited by a fully developed divine consciousness.

Chalcedon

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach people to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; (ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως – in duabus naturis inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter) the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person (prosopon/πρόσωπον) and one Subsistence (hypostasis), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten God (μονογενῆ Θεόν), the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

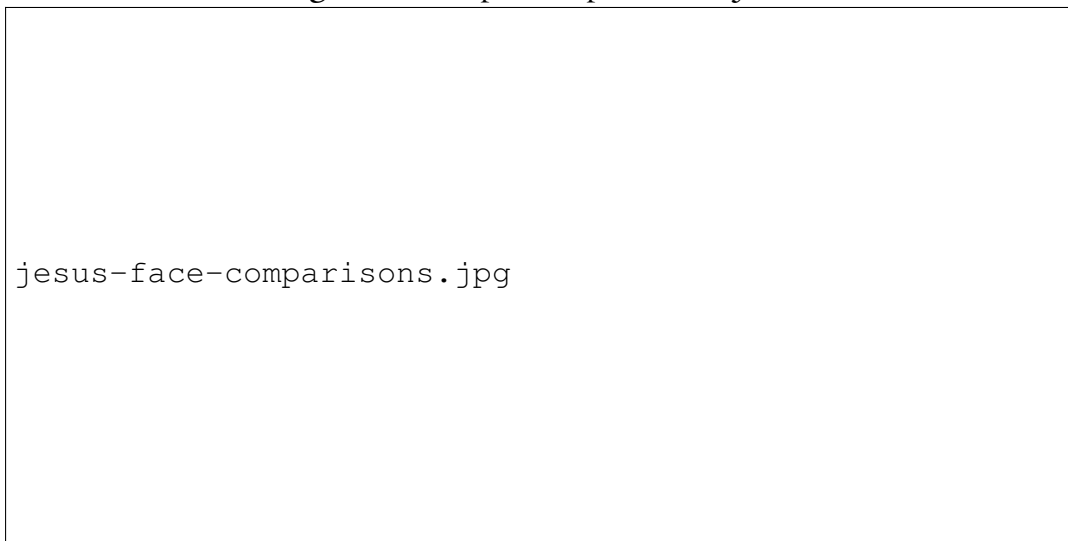
Note that it does not explain how, rather it maintains what is. The term hypostatic union is used to describe this state.

‘Divinity does not stand back from humanity. God is truly with us, in person, in Jesus.’ (p. 135)

	Monophysite	Nestorian	Orthodox
Number of natures	One	Two	Two
Relationship between the natures	Mixture of divine and human	Association of divine and human	Unity of divine and human
Humanity of Jesus	Flattened or overpowered	Fully human, but inappropriate for God to take on	Full humanity becomes God's own
Implications for salvation	Jesus is not truly one of us	Separation between God and us	Reconciliation between God and us
In practice	Jesus may seem distant and unattainable. We may believe that our own humanity must be destroyed if God is to transform us.	Our human messiness may be viewed as separating us from God. We may not believe that God is truly with us.	Jesus, our high priest knows and owns our human nature. Because of his true compassion and empathy with us, we can 'approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need'(Heb. 4:16)

Table 1: Summary of Christological views (Jones, 2014, p. 136)

Figure 5: Comparison pictures of Jesus



From <https://www.themonastery.org/blog/what-did-jesus-mary-and-joseph-actually-look-like>.

Finally note that Jesus humanity is particular—he was not generic, but a male, Jew in first-century Palestine.

7.2 Lectures

Ebionism An additional heresy. Essentially a form of adoptionism—thus Jesus is not fully God.

Docetism Denies humanity—seems human, but is divine.

Arianism Jesus was a created being, a demigod, but not fully God.

8 Jesus—His Work

8.1 Reading (Jones, 2014, chapter 7)

Exercise: Prepare a brief 5-min presentation on “What did Jesus achieve on the Cross?”.

Note: you will need to choose a target audience.

Class: take notes, question and answer, during others’ presentations.

Discussion: What did we learn from the exercise and each other?

Key idea: The Bible uses many images and descriptions to communicate the work of Jesus.

Implications:

1. no single image or description is complete.
2. There is diversity among Christians, including various traditions
3. Diversity does not mean there is little consensus.

Note quote from Wesley on page 142f.

Salvation is not what is frequently understood by that word, the going to heaven, eternal happiness[...]It is not a blessing which lies on the other side of death, or (as we usually speak) in the other world...is not something at a distance: it is a present thing, a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, ye are now in possession of[...]The salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory. (p. 142f.)

Exercise As a class, create a list of NT images of salvation.

What would you add if including the OT?

How might you use this richness in your talking about what Jesus has done?

How many are ‘me’ and how many are ‘us’ centred?

Did you include non-humans in salvation (creation)?

Possibly discuss δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and Romans 5, et al. Western vs Eastern, guilt versus shame. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=romans+5&version=GNT>

Good example of how tradition influences her reasoning (using Quadrilateral’s terms).

See how Jones (2014, 146, highlighted) uses both ‘justified’ and ‘right’ in the same sentence. This makes it seem like they are different things, yet in the Greek they are the same.

Notice how Luther’s thoughts (p. 148) are based in guilt, rather than shame—he could not be righteous.

Notice the courtroom metaphor (p. 148) does not mention forgiveness!

Notice how the example cited therein of Barabbas is not an acquittal.

We are not acquitted, but forgiven! (Acquittal means we are not guilty, forgiveness means we are guilty but it is not held against us.)

Discuss challenge of ‘election’ terminology—problem of reformed tradition.

Discuss Weinandy’s description on p. 144 is limited by its sole focus on the NT.

Note Jones’s description of salvation as a process:

Beginnings——→Justification——→Sanctification——→Final Redemption

Question How might this impact how we think about evangelism, what it is and how we do it?

Hint It’s best to understand salvation theology as a spectrum Arminian→Calvinist, rather than binary positions, Arminian or Calvinist.

Question what is the difference between forgiveness and redemption/atonement?

Question Does this help the Arminian–Calvinist problem?

Question The term, election, is used often in these debates. What does scripture say? (Possibly do as an exercise.)

Discuss Did you recognise yourself in Jones’s description of our Pelagian tendencies in assessing our own faith (‘By Grace’, p. 158).

Discuss Which model of atonement is your default? Which were new? Which were challenging? Why?

1. Deification (theosis)/Recapitulation
2. *Christus Victor*
3. Cross-centred
 - a) Satisfaction
 - b) Forensic
 - c) Substitutionary atonement
 - d) Ransom
4. Moral exemplar (note lecture notes critique of Jones’s simplistic presentation)

9 Jesus—Our Response

9.1 Reading (Grenz & Smith, 2014, chapter 8, 141–167)

Role of HS is completing the work of salvation.

Key words:

- community
- process
- incomplete

Definition: ‘Salvation is the Spirit at work in bringing us into full conformity with the likeness of Jesus Christ.’ (Grenz & Smith, 2014, p. 142)

Three moments:

- I have been saved (conversion)
- I am being saved (sanctification)
- And one glorious day I will be saved (glorification) (Grenz & Smith, 2014, p. 142)

Three elements in conversion:

1. Our personal response to the gospel.
2. The Spirit’s gracious work in our lives
3. Our incorporation into the faith community (Grenz & Smith, 2014, p. 144)

Repentance has three elements: intellectual, emotional, volitional.

Repentance also has turning toward God, others, creation and ourselves, as part of its turning away. (148f.)

Faith has three components: knowledge, assent, trust.

Question: how do you understand faith? How do you see it presented in churches?

Four roles of the Spirit

1. Conviction of sin
2. Calling us to respond
3. Illuminates the Word
4. Enables us to respond

Human Condition	Christ's Provision	Spirit's Application
Alienation	Reconciliation	Regeneration
Condemnation	Expiation ¹	Justification
Enslavement	Redemption	Liberation
Depravity	Substitution	Empowerment

Table 2: Summary of work of God in humans (Grenz & Smith, 2014, p. 157)

Notice the Spirit is involved in all aspects of the journey.

For example, notice the comment on page 150 about gaining awareness of sin—sometimes it's consequences, not preaching! (BTW, in the OT often judgement is not preventing consequences.)

Question: how might this influence how you approach conversion conversations with others, prayer for others, and so on? (cf. paragraph at bottom of page 151)

Four works of the Spirit (pp. 153ff.)

1. regeneration—new life (undoing death in Gen. 3), new relationship with God, new family
2. justification
δικαοω according to Grenz is justified, yet set right is better, and probably more Jewish. (Compare Grenz's image (p. 154f.) with concept of forgiveness.)
3. liberation
4. empowerment

Question: Where is forgiveness in table 2? (Alienation is relational)

Notice strong community emphasis. Grenz and Smith emphasises the Church, yet this is God's pattern throughout Scripture—using a people!

Question How much emphasis is there on a people, rather than individuals in Western churches?

To ponder How does the description of worship as recounting the story of Jesus fit with your experience (Grenz & Smith, 2014, p. 157)?

Note are both incorporated into the Church and have the choice to participate in the community of the Church.

Evangelism is not just conversion but disciple-making. See also Gehring, Kinsey, Baker, Lawrence and Abraham (2019).

¹The act of making amends or reparation for guilt or wrongdoing; atonement (OUP).

Discuss tension between holiness as work of the Spirit and something we participate in.

Question Do we have positional sanctification? Are there other explanations (e.g. aspirational descriptions, possibly Hebrew verbless clauses)?

Question How might this relate to Jewish ideas of levels of cleanliness?

Question Does being set apart describe a relationship or a purpose? (Grenz and Smith seem to emphasise the former. Do we need an attributed/positional holiness if it describes purpose?)

Note assumption that there is movement toward godliness/holiness over time.

9.2 Lectures

New Perspective on Paul not law or grace, but law and grace—covenantal nomism.

10 The Spirit

10.1 Reading (Jones, 2014, chapter 8)

Notice emphasis at start of chapter on divinity of the Spirit.

2 Tim 1:7 ‘a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline’

Question: How many of these are emphasised in our churches?

Question: What might it look like to emphasise all three?

Note Basil the Great’s discussion on prepositions in prayer on page 170 give various ways of praying:

to the Father, *in* the Son, *through* the Holy Spirit

to the Father, *with* the Son, *with* the Holy Spirit

The first emphasises how God seems to work in the World, the second emphasises their shared divinity and equality.

A person Note on page 171 that the Spirit is a person, not a force. Can be a challenge, because of the language used, not a relational term like Father and Son.

filioque (p. 171f) Spirit proceeding from the Father or from the Father and Son. Led to Great Schism in . ‘and from the Son’—filioque in Latin—was added by the Western (Roman) church. The Eastern (Constantinople), Greek-speaking church objected. This continues to be an area of disagreement.

Note Much of the objection seems to arise from the unilateral process, not just the theology.

Gender discussion How did you react to the discussion on God and gender? ‘God is neither male nor female.’ (p. 173)

spirit and body Notice again strong discussion of importance of the physical—being embodied. Eternity is embodied.

The Christian spiritual life, following the example of Jesus, is a life in which every aspect of our being becomes an integrated whole... In the spiritual life, guided by the Holy Spirit, all is united in an integrated whole: interior and exterior, individual and corporate, soul and body, contemplation and action, commitment and practice, emotion and the day-to-day life of the church. (p. 177f.)

Output

Fruit Note context in Galatians is asking *Christians* what they will choose, what they will do with their freedom in Christ. Will they choose fruit or works of the flesh?

Question: do we see the listed fruit in us and the Church?

‘²² But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ humility, and self-control. There is no law against such things as these. ’ (Gal 5:22–23)

Gifts

Question How did you react to the description of the use and abuse of the gifts (and the impact this has on others, especially their acceptance or rejection of spiritual gifts)?

‘It is quite easy for us to be seduced by power and convert the Spirit into a servant to do our bidding or, worse, a power given us to be used as we please for our own benefit.’ (Norberto Saracco, cited in Felker Jones, p. 183)

10.2 Additional Reading (Macchia, 2006, chapter 2)

Centrality of Spirit Baptism trend away from its centrality in Pentecostal scholarship.

Definition ‘Spirit baptism [is] an empowerment for ministry distinct from regeneration or initiation into Christ.’ (p. 21). Note however variations in belief described later in this page.

Note the negative motivation for promoting spirit baptism—it’s something we have which you don’t and you’re wrong (p. 22).

He then challenges Pentecostals concerning how the distinctive can remain while engaging ecumenically.

He is not calling for removal, but reworking of the doctrine (cf. bottom of p. 25f.).

4 reasons for displacement of Spirit baptism (pp.25ff)

1. Separation from Christian initiation, creating an indefensible model of two or threefold initiation.
2. Diversity of Pentecostalism historically and globally.
3. Shift toward eschatology as a defining characteristic
4. Shift from doctrine to methods in describing distinctives (‘orality of liturgy, narrative of theology and witness, ...experiential and oral theologising’ (p. 43)).

Objection: On the middle of page 28, Macchia draws parallels between baptism–confirmation and conversion–Spirit baptism. The problem is that this is equating paedobaptism with adult baptism. In that case, confirmation more closely aligns itself to conversion.

Experience is a key contribution of Pentecostals (p. 29).

10.3 Additional Reading (Menzies, 1993, chapter 7)

Key idea Baptism in Spirit for mission, not just personal holiness (p. 123).

Question Are the disciples part of the Church in the way described by Menzies on p. 124? (When is the church inaugurated?) If not, what can we say about his argument? (Weakened)

Question Does the text of Acts 2 support the characterisation that it was the immersion in the Spirit which led to the characteristics of the believers and their growth (pp. 126–127)? (The Spirit was involved, but how?)

10.4 Lectures

11 Church

11.1 Reading (Jones, 2014, chapter 9)

Note that the story of the church mentioned in Acts 15 (p. 193) is an extension of the mission of Israel—it was never just about them, and it's never just about us!

See, for example the promise to Abram at the start of Genesis 12, or the description of the ideal city of Jerusalem at the start of Isaiah 2.

Circumcision a key challenge for the early church.

Discuss Why was it such a big deal?

Question Do we have similar 'sacred cows' which we enforce?

Question Why did the council require the following limitations, 'abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication' (Acts 15:29)?

See v. 20. The link with idolatry is part of the answer. Bruce (1984, pp. 311, 315) also remarks that there were several elements in respecting 'their Jewish brethren's scruples' (p. 311), in addition to concerns about links with idolatry, they were to avoid actions which broke Jewish law about not eating meat with blood still in it, and to conform to rules about sexual relationships, especially familial taboos (cf. Leviticus 18), rather than following pagan practices. Paul restates this principle in his letter to the church at Corinth.

Note: They were included graciously, but not without clarifications of what it meant to have their new identity.

Communal identity Note how this is emphasised in the book and in scripture's imagery.

Exercise Draw an illustration for the armour of God passage in Ephesians 6:10–17.

The challenge is you is both singular and plural in English. See figure 6 on the next page.

The communal nature of the Body of Christ means diversity within unity.

Important quote 'We need to proceed with ecclesiology in a way that tells the truth about sin but also tells the greater truth about Jesus, whose body and bride we are.' The truth about sin Jones (2014, p. 198) is referring to is the sinfulness, the fallen-ness of the church itself!

Marks of the church arise from the Nicene Creed:

1. one
2. holy
3. catholic
4. apostolic

media/Testudo_formation-700x390.jpg

Figure 6: Testudo Formation

Unity Note John 17. Unity vs uniformity. Picked up later by Jones (2014, p. 209)—diversity is a strength, uniformity would limit the Church’s work. To be faithful, the church must be contextual.

Question If this is a mark of the Church, what are the implications for relationships and actions among congregations and denominations? (Notice how this is linked with the mission of the church in John 17.)

Holiness Notice how much Jones emphasises the work of the spirit in this (pp. 200–201). Perhaps understating our partnership with the Spirit. Again, notice how holiness is missional.

catholicity This is about the universality of the Church, across both time and space. It links closely with unity, but also has implications for classism and racism.

Question When we think of the gifts being given to the church, or the church’s mission, do we think catholicly?

One implication is that if we don’t we miss out on what we need to be whole and effective in mission.

Apostolic in it’s basic sense this is about following the apostles’ teaching, as mentioned in Acts and 2 Peter 1:16.

Note box on page 202. Protestants locate apostolic authority in Scripture. Catholics in apostolic succession, which gives great authority to church tradition. Perhaps we need to add Pentecostalism to this. What would this mean?

‘Two competing realities. First, the visible church matters, and second, in a world of sin, there is no pristine church.’ (Jones, 2014, p. 205)

Note the implications for those who go church shopping!

Note that our very fallibleness is a witness to God’s grace, so we don’t need to be perfect or put on false, hypocritical masks.

Demographics Jones notes that by 2050, Jenkins expects there to be six nations with 100+ million Christians. The only one of these which is part of the industrial West is the USA.

Question What might this mean for Christian practice and thought?

Sacraments

‘A **sacrament** is a visible sign of spiritual grace. In the sacraments, there is a connection between visible, material creation and the grace of the Spirit.’ (p. 212, emphasis in original)

Three features

1. Tangible
2. Communal
3. God has made gracious promises about them

Notice the three positions of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin—consubstantiation, symbol, real spiritual presence.

Exercise Listen to what people say about communion in various churches/various presenters, which theology do they reflect?

12 The Mission of the Church

12.1 Reading: Wright (2007, chapter 13, pp. 144–159)

Note the tension, ‘God builds God’s church’, but uses humans.

Note connection with *imago Dei* (p. 144).

Post-fall the task is to get ‘the project back on track’ (p. 144). That is, to return to a good creation.

1 Cor 15:58 tells us our work is not in vain = not empty, of not value.

Before the Kingdom comes, we build *for* the kingdom (towards it).

Therefore, we cannot have an attitude that says ‘It’s all gonna burn’ and ignore our responsibilities here-and-now.

Discussion How might we determine what it is we should be doing to ‘build for the Kingdom’?

Bring signs and symbols of the coming Kingdom. (p. 145). Two rationales:

1. Per Wright (2007, 145f.), we are bringing something into being, which will have continuity.
2. Regarding the discontinuity he mentions, there is still the benefit of witness, fulfilling the mission of the people of God. (And in general the doing of good.)

Note the challenge to Christians who oppose creation care/environmentalism.

Question: What is wrong with caring for a gift God has given to us?

Note the Lord’s Prayer, God’s will be done on earth as well in heaven.

Important: We are not called to some disembodied spiritual existence in the future.

Note Wright’s mention that the guide is what will eventually come to be. (p. 146).

Categories for considering what to do

1. Justice
2. Beauty
3. Evangelism

Justice Do what is right/just a key call of the OT prophets—so this has been an ongoing concern God has had.

Cannot be only concerned with ‘spiritual’ matters. Bible assumes all of life is spiritual.

Capitalism/consumerism challenged (p. 150)—yet many parts of the Western church blind to it. Again, in the Prophets, the powerful are judged for how they haven’t cared for the weak and powerless (widow, foreigner, orphan).

Discuss Christians should be conservative theologically, but liberal politically/ethically (paraphrasing his statement on p. 152).

Beauty

Notice here how he says Christians' perspective may have something to say to our culture (p. 154).

This is where we can incarnate something of what should be, conveying hope and surprise (p. 155).

Evangelism

Note the confusion of terms, evangelism, evangelical, evangelicalism (p. 155).

The power of the gospel lies, not in the offer of a new spirituality or religious experience, not in the threat of hellfire (certainly not in the threat of being 'left behind') which can be removed if only the hearer ticks this box, says this prayer, raises a hand, or whatever...but in the powerful announcement that God is God, that Jesus is Lord, that the powers of evil have been defeated, that God's new world has begun...Doesn't this seem laughable? Well, it would be if it wasn't happening. But if a church is working on the issues we've already looked at – if it's actively involved in seeking justice in the world, both globally and locally, and if it's cheerfully celebrating God's good creation, and its rescue from corruption, in art and music, and if, in addition, its own internal life gives every sign that new creation is indeed happening, generating a new type of community – then suddenly the announcement makes a lot of sense. (p. 156)

Note how this emphasises the Lordship element—one cannot be in a relationship with Jesus without *following* him (p. 157f.).

12.2 Optional reading: Fee (2002)

Notice how understanding the context informs our reading of Paul's instructions.

Being filled with the Spirit is described in vv. 18–23 (p. 3).

Second party is same person husband = father = master—a fairly unique situation (p. 4).

One of this passage's more common abuses 'using it to tell modern husbands that they should assume their proper role as head of their wives' (p. 7).

p. 8

'It is assumed that he will continue to provide leadership to the household, but his role will be radically transformed into one of caring for the people within the household for their own sakes, not having them around to serve his own self-interests.'

12.3 Lecture notes

Mission of the church concerned with justice, mercy, human dignity and flourishing.

Important verse Micah 6:8—echoing concerns of the wider prophetic writings.

What is mission?

The Great Commission? Matt 28:18–20. Note that call to make *disciples*.

Acts 1:8 power...become witnesses...Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Pentecost Speaking in others' languages.

Paul, et al.'s missionary journeys/works.

John's great commission John 20:21–22. 'As the Father has sent me so I am sending you.'

Luke 4:18–19

¹⁸'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and the regaining of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' (Luke 4:18–19, NET)

quoting Isaiah

¹The spirit of the sovereign LORD is upon me, because the LORD has chosen me. He has commissioned me to encourage the poor, to help the brokenhearted, to decree the release of captives, and the freeing of prisoners, ²to announce the year when the LORD will show his favor, the day when our God will seek vengeance, to console all who mourn, (Isa 61:1–2 NET)

Mark 1:14–15 Good news about the Kingdom—which he then demonstrated.

missio/ἀποστελλω sending/send—mission based in God's own action, the Son is sent, as is the Spirit.

Justice a key element of Christian mission. In conjunction with, not opposed to or replacing proclamation of the Good News.

OT concern carried through into NT church.

13 Eschatology—Christian Hope

13.1 Reading Jones (2014, 217–238, chapter 10)

Eschatology ‘teaching about last things: heaven, hell, death, judgement, the second coming of Christ, and the kingdom of God’ (p. 217).

Ends About how things ends, but also about God’s *ends* in terms of his goals.

Tension between what is happening now, and what will become, about future *and* the present—the already and the not yet.

Note the danger of omitting the not yet—injustice and suffering can be ignored (p. 219f.).

Note the challenge to individualistic and dualistic eschatologies in the text box on p. 220f. (Docetic in that box refers to docetism, an early heresy which said Christ only appeared to have a physical body. Was developed later by the gnostics into a form of dualism which sees matter as evil and spirit as good.)

Western eschatology frequently focuses on what we are saved *from*, rather than asking what are we saved *for*.

Eschatology often reduced to one’s millennial theory (arising from Rev 20:6). This is a small part of it, and a parody. Three positions described in text box on page 222.

1. Pre-millennial
2. Post-millennial
3. Amillennial

Historically, pre-millennialism is a fairly recent emphasis, even in Pentecostalism.

Numbers Notice the nice, round 1000 years. A good candidate to consider for a symbolic, rather than literal reading. (Note that a symbolic reading here does not require an amillennial interpretation.)

Resurrection Scripture’s emphasis on the resurrection is a strong argument against spiritual dualism.

Question How does your experience compare with Jesus’ comment that no-one knows the day or hour—not even him! (I’ve often found people so caught up in trying to predict, that they lose focus on mission in the now.)

False prophets Note that the Bible is quite clear that those who predict and get it wrong are false prophets—an no excuse is allowed!

Revelation Ask why the book was written and to whom, before you interpret it. Also asking what the type of literature is it contains is also very helpful.

Resurrection involves transformation (p. 226). It is a redemptive, not an escapist belief (p. 227).

Interpretive tradition can be seen in how Jesus' appearance is understood. 'His relationship with the stuff of material creation also is transformed, as he passes through doors that had been "locked for fear" (John 20:19) .' (p. 228) Why must he be able to pass through doors—why not just appear?

Description of two bodies. Jones suggests 'selfish' vs 'Holy Spirited' bodies rather than 'flesh' vs 'spiritual', or 'natural' vs 'spiritual', to avoid implied dualism. Perhaps just change the language to 'fallen' vs 'redeemed', or 'flawed' vs 'renewed' bodies. (Sometimes trying to keep to biblical words can obscure, rather than reveal the underlying meaning.)

Death Note that the Christian attitude to death is fairly unique. Many faiths accept it as natural. Christianity see it as abnormal—an enemy who has been and will be defeated. (p. 233)

Waiting between death and resurrection. Often intermediate state without bodies, *where we are not truly human*. Yet note the issue of the comma in Luke 23:43 (Paroschi, 2013). it's not the only interpretation. Jones (2014, p. 234) mentions the minority opinion of soul sleep. To some extent one's position is determined by other aspects of your theology, particularly theological anthropology. If a monist, soul sleep becomes the only viable option.

Day of the LORD can be described in two ways in scripture, both judgement and hope.

Hell More recent writers (Like McLaren, 2010) have removed or refashioned hell, as they cannot reconcile a loving God with conscious eternal torment (CET). Note that this is not entirely new—Marcion's (85–160) savaging of scripture is driven by similar impulses. McLaren has a modified form of purgatory, dealing with the 'eternal' part of the problem. This is different from the Catholic view in that the Catholics have the elect in purgatory, McLaren has everyone, a universal salvation. Jones (2014, p. 236) suggests that this does not take the evilness of sin seriously, nor the goodness of God's gracious gift. My take is that much is being driven by a cultural squeamishness against pain and suffering.

13.2 Optional reading Grenz and Smith (2014, 213–234, chapter 11)

Telos a key idea. Corporate, personal and cosmic (p. 215).

History While Christians and Jews have a linear view of time, with the telos being God's goals there are two other main views of history. Cyclical, seen in Israel's neighbours and other religions. Secular progressivism, which is linear but places humanity at the centre. (p. 217f.)

Note the hope present in the Christian view, but absent from the others.

Community is a key element (p. 218)

‘Wherever people are promoting wholesome relationships in the midst of a fallen world, Christians should be providing active assistance, for this is “kingdom work”.’ (Grenz and Smith, 2014, p. 219)

Millennialism The order of final events is something on which Christians differ (pp. 219ff.). Note that this discussion has been ongoing since the second century—less than 100 years after Revelation was written!

Premillennialism has two types. Historic premillennialists have the tribulation and millennium focusing on the church. Dispensational premillennialists view these in terms of Israel and its redemption. For each, Christ returns before the millennium.

Postmillennialism Christ returns after the 1 000-year golden age.

Amillennialism do not believe in any golden age of 1 000 years. Some see it as a general expression of the age of the Church. Others a metaphor for the life of the converted, others for the life of the dead in Christ in heaven.

Conclusion The millennium is not the point—God achieving his ends in history is.

These are the last days since we are in the time after Christ—the time prophesied in the OT (p. 224).

Chronology The bible does not provide details so that we can provide a chronology of the last days (p. 225). Because we were not meant to focus on it!

Monism Grenz and Smith (2014, p. 228) use the term in a different way from the theological anthropologists. Here they talk about it as union with the divine.

References

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