BUILDING SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY
STUDY GUIDE 1.2
Lesson 1: What Is Systematic Theology?
Section 2: Historical Developments

1) Either copy this document and paste it into a new document in your word processor, or save it as a text file, then open it in your word processor.
2) Resize the window of your word processor to occupy part of your screen.
3) Open the video, resize it to another part of the screen, and write notes as you watch the video.

(If you are new at doing this kind of thing, you may want to watch the video tutorial, "Taking Notes.")

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

II. Historical Developments

A. Patristic Theology

  1. Cultural Changes

  2. Theological Changes

B. Medieval Theology

  1. Cultural Changes

  2. Theological Changes

C. Protestant Theology

  1. Early Reformers

  2. Classical Confessions

  3. Modern Systematics

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did systematic theology become necessary?

2. Describe the unique theological emphasis of the three areas studied in the lesson: patristic theology, medieval theology, and Protestant theology.

3. What is syncretism? Explain how syncretism is shown in the theology of Philo.

4. What is Neo-Platonism? Describe its characteristics.

5. Explain how Christian theologians responded to each main aspect of Neo-Platonism.

6. Explain the characteristics of medieval scholasticism.

7. How did the reformers respond to the tendencies of patristic theology and scholastic theology? Describe especially the characteristics of the theology of John Calvin, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Charles Hodge.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. With which of the three periods of theology do you identify most? Patristic theology? Medieval scholasticism? Or Reformed theology? Why?

2. What place would you give to reason in building systematic theology? To spiritual intuition?

3. What dangers or errors do you see in the tendencies of patristic theology? Of medieval scholasticism? Of reformed theology? Explain why.

4. What can we learn from the way Christian theologians fit into their historical context? What are the good examples they give us? What are some of the errors they committed as they dialogued with non Christian thinkers of their day? How does this help us dialogue with non believers today?