

On the Relationship between Biblical and Systematic Theology

Pierre Gilbert, Ph.D.

Roadmap

A. Definitions

Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology

B. A Case-Study

Sanctity of Human Life



#MBEQUIP2019

Anabaptists and Systematic Theology

People of the Book

Exegesis

Biblical Theology

Systematic Theology: The Jury is Out.

Goal of Hermeneutics

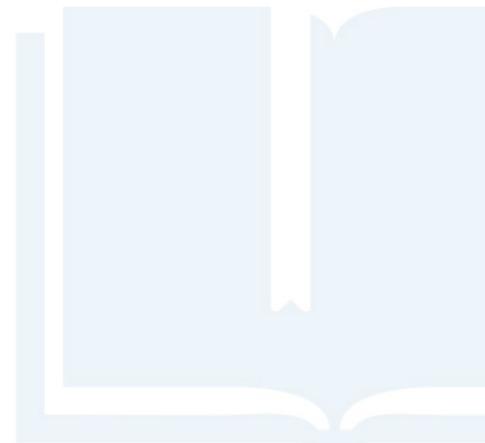
**The end game of Hermeneutics is not biblical theology or systematic theology but the sermon.
(Grant Osborne)**



This is so because the Bible is ultimately God's word to humanity. And effective communication is at the core of this Word from God. Because God wishes for his message to be heard, understood, and acted upon, the hermeneutical process must result in a prophetic discourse.

The Hermeneutical Process

- **Meaning**
 - **What the Text Meant.**
 - Exegesis
 - Biblical Theology
- **Significance**
 - **What it means today.**
 - Systematic Theology
 - Contextualization



Biblical Theology

We may define biblical theology as that “branch of theological inquiry concerned with tracing themes through the diverse sections of the Bible (such as the wisdom writings or the epistles of Paul) and then with seeking the unifying themes that draw the Bible together.”
(Hermeneutical Spiral, 349).

Biblical Theology

Two Approaches

- **Synthetic**
 - Articulation of Doctrine
 - (Confession of faith)
- **Analytical**
 - Individual Texts
 - Pericope
 - Book
 - Corpus



Analytical Approach

Method

A. Text to Biblical Theology

B. Objective: Biblical Worldview

- What does the text teach about God?
- What does the text teach about humanity?
- What does the text teach about creation?
- What's the relationship between the three?



Benefits

- A. Helps clarify some exegetical issues such as why is the text generated in the first place?
- B. Creates a new level of abstraction that still has the text as the center of gravity.
- C. This new level of abstraction creates a bridge between
 - 1) a systematic theology that is based on biblical theology and
 - 2) the contextualization of the text.

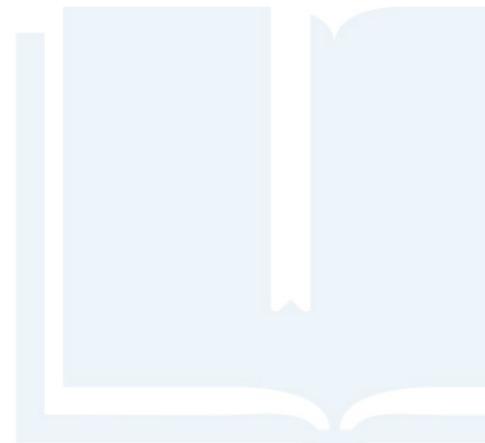
Systematic Theology

Benefits

Historical Perspective

A Broadening of Community Hermeneutics

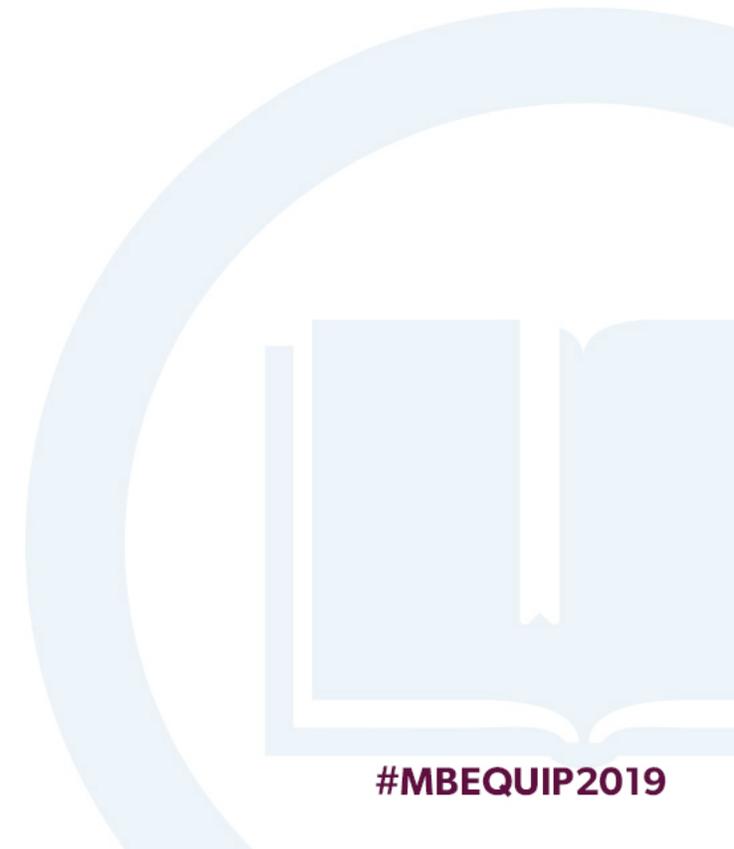
A Systematic Theology Based on Biblical Theology



#MBEQUIP2019

A Case-Study

The Sanctity of Human Life



#MBEQUIP2019

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (NRSB)

Methodological Note

A Primary Text

Genesis 1:26-28—Foundational
(Creation Account)

Secondary Texts

Genesis 9:6, Psalm 8; 139:13-16, Jer 1:5

The Incarnation

Exegesis: What Does the Text Say?

- *Humanity is made in the image of God
 - *Messenger language.
- *Humanity represents God in the world.
- *Humanity is given a position of authority over the rest of creation.

Biblical Theology

- *Humanity is made in the image of God.
 - *Collective dimension.
 - *Individual dimension (“male and female he created them”).
 - *The image applies to all human beings, not just the Hebrews.
 - *The image equally applies to men and women.
- *The collective dimension clarifies humanity’s distinct status and represents a statement of inclusivity.

- *Assigns a special status to human beings that is exclusive to humans.
 - *Special relationship with God.
 - *Differentiation from nature.
- *An irreducible distance between humans and nature.
("And God said...")

Systematic Theology

So What?

Addressing the Seminal Issues of Our Time.



#MBEQUIP2019

The Contemporary Question: What is a Human Being Worth?

The Verdict of History?
Next to Nothing.



Why?

1. The Absence of a Universal Foundation.
2. The Prevalence of Identify Politics.
3. The Status of the Unborn.



Elements of a Systematic Theology

1. An Ethical Foundation.
2. Universality.
3. The Importance of the Individual.
4. A Critique of Scientism and Secularism (J. P. Moreland)
5. A Critique of Reductionistic Ideologies.

Conclusion



#MBEQUIP2019