

Theological Systems ▣ Roman Catholic Theology

Nature of Theology: Theology is constantly evolving in its understand of the Christian faith. Catholicism's trait of change is due mainly to the authoritative position given to church teaching.

Revelation: The Bible, including the Apocrypha, is recognized as the authoritative source of revelation as well as tradition and church teaching. The pope also makes authoritative pronouncements *ex cathedra* (from the chair) on issues of doctrine and morals; these pronouncements are immune from error. The church is the mother, guardian, and interpreter of the canon

Salvation: Saving grace is communicated through the 7 sacraments, which are means of grace

1. Baptism (Initiation into the church)
2. Confirmation (Initiation into the church)
3. Eucharist (Initiation into the church) – transubstantiation
4. Penance (Healing)
5. Anointing (Healing)
6. Marriage (Commitment & vocation)
7. Orders (Commitment & vocation)

Church: The four essential qualities of the true church are: unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. The church is the mediator of Christ's presence in the world. God uses the church as his agent to move the world toward his kingdom.

Mary: At the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) Mary was declared to be the mother of God as well as the mother of Jesus in the sense that the Son she bore was both God and man. Immaculate Conception – Mary was without original sin or personal sin due to the intervention of God

Theological Systems ▣ Lutheran Theology

Theology: Theology builds around the 3 fundamental doctrines of *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone), *sola gratia* (grace alone), and *sola fide* (faith alone).

Christ: Christ is the center of Scripture. His person and work, especially his substitutionary death, are the basis of Christian faith and the message of salvation.

Revelation: Scripture alone is the authoritative source for theology and for church life and teaching. Scripture is the very Word of God and is as truthful and authoritative as god himself.

Salvation: Salvation comes only by grace through faith. The source of salvation is God's grace shown through Christ's work, the ground for salvation. The means for receiving salvation is faith only. People

contribute nothing toward their salvation. They are totally without a free will in respect to salvation, and thus God is the efficient cause of salvation. The Spirit works through the word of the Gospel (including baptism and the Eucharist) to bring salvation. The Spirit uses the baptism of infants to produce faith in them and bring them to salvation.

The Eucharist involves the actual presence of Christ with the bread and the wine through these elements remain bread and wine (Consubstantiation)

Theological Systems ▣ **Anabaptist Theology**

Theology: Anabaptists did not stress systematic theological studies. Rather, doctrine was forged as it applied to life. Anabaptists were characterized by missionary zeal, separation of life, and an emphasis on ecclesiology.

Revelation: The Bible is to be obeyed completely in one's life. It is the sole authority and guide. Interpretation of Scripture is discerned primarily at church gatherings. Anabaptists tend to focus on the teachings of Christ and the New Testament more than on the Old Testament.

Salvation: Sin is not so much a bondage of the free will of man as it is a lost capacity to respond to God. The free will of man allows him to repent and be obedient to the gospel. When one repents and believes, God regenerates him to walk in new life. The emphasis is more on obedience than on sin, more on regeneration than on justification.

Church: The church is a visible body of believers obedient to Christ. The church exists as a visible fellowship, not an invisible body or a state church.

Only believing adults can participate in baptism. Baptism testifies to the believer's separation from the world and commitment to obeying Christ.

Theological Systems ▣ **Reformed Theology**

Theology: Reformed theology builds around the central theme of the sovereignty of God. The whole of reality falls under the supreme rule of God

God: God is sovereign. He is perfect in every respect and holds all righteousness and power. He created all things and sustains them. As the Creator, he is in no way limited by creation.

Revelation: Reformed theology rests on Scripture alone (Sola scriptura). The Bible is God's Word and as such remains without error in every aspect. Scripture guides all of church life and teaching. The Bible is authoritative in every area it addresses.

Salvation: God in eternity past chose a number of fallen creatures to be reconciled to himself. In time Christ came to save the chosen. The Holy Spirit enlightens the elect ones so that they can believe the Gospel and receive salvation. The elect can never resist the work of the Spirit nor fall away receiving salvation. TULIP.

Church: The church is composed of God's elect who have received salvation. They are bound by God's covenant to serve him in the world. Baptism symbolizes entry into the covenant body for both children and adults though either can renounce their baptism.

Theological Systems ▣ **Arminian Theology**

Theology: Arminian theology is concerned to preserve the justice (fairness) of God. How could a just God hold individuals responsible for obedience to commands they are powerless to obey. Emphasizes divine foreknowledge, human responsibility and free will, and universal (common) enabling grace.

God: God is sovereign but has chosen to grant free will to human beings.

Salvation: God predestined to salvation those who he foreknew would repent and believe (conditional election). Christ suffered for the sins of all mankind, thus the atonement is unlimited. Salvation can be lost by a believer, and so one must strive not to fall and be lost. Christ did not pay the penalty for our sins, for if he had, then all would be saved. Rather, Christ suffered for our sins so the Father can forgive those who repent and believe. Christ's death was an example of the penalty of sin and cost of forgiveness.

Theological Systems ▣ **Wesleyan Theology**

Theology: Wesley theology is essentially Arminian but has a stronger sense of the reality of sin and of dependence on divine grace.

Revelation: The Bible is divine revelation, the ultimate standard for faith and practice. However, there are 4 means by which truth is mediated – Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience (the Wesleyan quadrilateral). Scripture has supreme authority. Next to Scripture, experience stands as the best evidence of Christianity.

Salvation: Salvation is a 3-step process of grace: prevenient grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace. Prevenient grace is the universal work of the spirit between one's birth and salvation. Prevenient grace prevents one from moving too far from God and enables one to respond, positively or negatively, to the gospel. To those who receive the gospel, justifying grace produces salvation and begins the process of sanctification.

*Taken directly from: *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine* by: H. Wayne House

