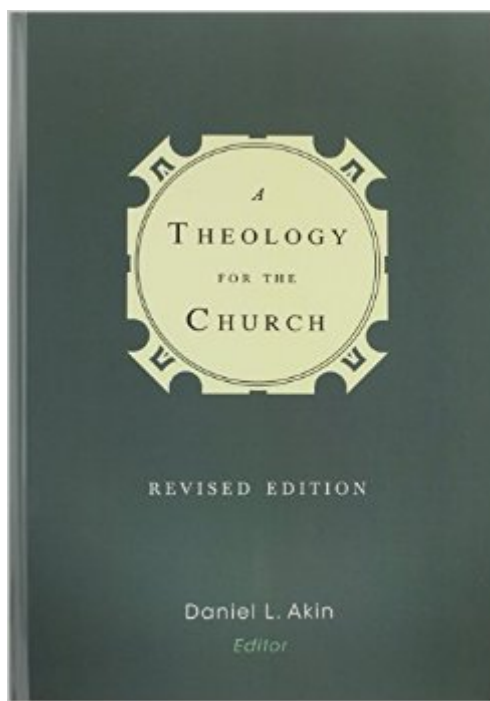


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A Theology For The Church



Synopsis

The revised edition of *A Theology for the Church* retains its original structure, organized under these traditional theological categories: revelation, God, humanity, Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, and last things. Each chapter within these sections contains answers to the following four questions: What does the Bible say? What has the church believed? How does it all fit together? How does this doctrine impact the church today? Contributions from leading Baptist thinkers R. Albert Mohler, Jr., Paige Patterson, and Mark Dever among others will also appeal to the broader evangelical community. Included in this revision are new chapters on theological method from a missional perspective (Bruce Ashford and Keith Whitfield) and theology of creation, providence, and Sabbath that engages current research in science and philosophy (Chad Owen Brand). Chapters on special revelation (David Dockery) and human nature (John Hammett) have also been updated.

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Customer Reviews

A Theology for the Church is a unique book. It's a systematic theology by multiple authors, written on an academic level but with the goal of impacting the church as a whole. It is written by Southern Baptists but is applicable to all thinking Christians. The contributors disagree on some points, although they are united by their "passion for a revival of theological knowledge and understanding in the church." The goal of the book is to present to the church a guide to the major headings of theology that will help pastors and laypeople both to learn sound doctrine and to see the importance, the relevance, of that doctrine. Toward that end, each chapter asks four questions

about the doctrine at hand: 1. What does the Bible say? 2. What has the church believed? 3. How does it all fit together? 4. What is the significance of the doctrine for the church today? This is a great approach, integrating exegesis, history, systematic theology, and application. This last section was especially great in most of the chapters I read. It's true that the study of theology involves the danger of divorcing the knowledge of God from "real life," but it's also true that the true knowledge of God, the ground of all reality, is invaluable in living in the real world. The application sections are dead-on in showing how our theology, good or bad, shapes our behavior, whether we admit it or not. Because this book was written by a variety of authors and covers a vast amount of material, it's inevitable that everyone will disagree at some point. That was the case for me, although at most points I thought the treatments were fair even when I disagreed with the author. The chapter on salvation, for example, contained some misunderstandings of the doctrine of predestination (including an out-of-line comment that R.C. Sproul's doctrine of God is similar to that of Islam!). But it avoided many of the common errors, and was a pretty good treatment of the Reformed view of predestination, considering that the author doesn't hold that view. A second criticism is that the book is not really written on quite the popular level you might expect from the title. I still think Grudem's *Systematic Theology* is the best reference for most churchgoers (without sacrificing academic rigor). Of course many laypeople will read *Theology for the Church* and profit from it, but it will probably be more useful to pastors with some theological training. Criticisms aside, though, this book really is a gift to the church. The chapter "Introduction to the Task of Theology" is great; other standouts are "Special Revelation" and "Human Sinfulness." The contributors are a who's-who of bigshots in the SBC, but they quote extensively from outside that tradition, so the relevance isn't limited. The historical overviews are a great resource, and the general zeal for the importance of theology in the life of the church is catching. *A Theology for the Church* deserves a spot on the thinking Christian's shelf.

A Theology for the Church is a scholarly systematic theology text book with a decided conservative and evangelical orientation. The book is edited by the President of a Southern Baptist seminary which should be a big clue as to the book's theological composition. However, it is an excellent book with chapters by some of the finest theologians in America. The book's major challenge is its huge size (over 900 pages) which makes it a difficult read. *A Theology for the Church* provides a wealth of rewarding theological insights for those willing to work through its voluminous size.

A Theology for the Church edited by Daniel L. Akin is one of the best if not the best Baptist

Theology book in print. It is clear in its presentation of the different views within the evangelical context but is bold enough to take a stand on a view. This is for the serious student of theology.

I'm going to start off with the bad, and you are probably wonder why I gave this 4 stars. This book has an extreme amount of irrelevant quotes. Like calling Job 26:8-14 a "magnificent hymn" or saying that Hegel is the "greatest of the German Idealist". There are many that are like this. There are ones add no extra information and/or are not explained as having anything. It seems to me that the writer is either adding in quotes to make it more impressive or to lend credence to something the author agrees with. Hegel is one of the greatest Idealists there is no need to quote someone to make this point in quoting Livingston. Who most people would be less familiar with than Hegel. This book doesn't do a good job of developing the concepts I think are important. Specifically strengths and weaknesses of the view it is presenting. It will offer views that are in opposition to the one it proposes is correct. It doesn't offer sufficient reasons why these are wrong. The author often just claims that a view is liberal or unbiblical or uses a wrong hermeneutical principle. I understand that the author can't refute every claim that opposes his view, but I do expect that when he brings one up that he should at least try to deal with it. This book has a misleading title. It could have easily been titled "a theology for the Baptist Church" or "Baptist Systematic theology 101" or "Theo101 required reading" or "theology written to be accessible everyone that only theology students will ever read". The last bad thing about this book is that it doesn't offer enough information on theology proper. This is probably the most important section of the book and it felt severely lacking. Now for the good things which overshadow the bad by a lot. This book on the whole is very well written. It is in a format that is accessible by most laypeople while still offering nuggets for nerds like me. I didn't grow up Baptist so some of these ideas new and kind of interesting. I am one of the dirty liberals who reads Pannenberg, Barth, Moltman, Cobb, Just Catherine, and Schleiermacher. But I enjoy reading from conservatives as well as liberals, because neither has the corner on truth.

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