

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

in the Kingdom of Cambodia

Spring, 2018

From Systematic Theology to Biblical Theology

Systematic Theology takes the content of the entire Bible and divides it into various “systems” or subjects, such as the Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Angels, The Doctrine of Man, The Doctrine of Revelation (Scripture), and the Doctrine of Salvation, to name a few.

Because we believed that a more narrative, chronological approach to Bible teaching would be more understandable in our tribal context, we delayed teaching theology in this systematic way for many years—in fact, until last year.

Biblical Theology

With Systematic Theology behind us, it's now time to tackle *Biblical* Theology. Biblical Theology studies the same wonders of God and His plan in Scripture, but it does it in an unfolding way, as if we were actually living out the chronology of Genesis to Revelation one book at a time, one revelation of God at a time, one period of salvation history at a time, from beginning to end.

Systematic Theology can be likened to a huge, detailed map on the internet, a map that divides and categorizes every aspect of your trip from, say, Chicago to Seattle. Every restaurant along the way is already listed under the “Restaurants” category, including its exact location and menu. Click on an icon and you'll see every gas station and rest stop and hotel and hospital and scenic view and garage from Chicago to Seattle. You can see your entire trip from beginning to end in one detailed map.

But no map can take the place of actually taking the journey itself from beginning to end! And that's what Biblical Theology is: getting in the car and starting the trip!

The fact is, God didn't drop a Systematic Theology book from heaven. He didn't give us a concordance that lists every verse in the Bible under every subject in theology. Instead He gave us a story. Biblical Theology traces that story as if we were experiencing God's gradual unfolding of Himself and His plan from Genesis 1 onward. Rather than dividing the Bible

into subjects, Biblical Theology notices prominent themes that keep rising and falling in God's salvation story.

In his soon-to-be-published textbook on Biblical Theology for Cambodia, our colleague and Old Testament prof, Jeremy Farmer, has isolated 10 major Old Testament themes (and many more minor ones) that we will be looking for in the biblical story line, themes like The Presence of God, The Word of God, Dominion, Land, Offspring, Salvation (and Judgment), and Opposition. (See picture to left.)

As Jeremy was penning his book this year and sending me chapter after chapter to read, I found God looming larger and larger in my mind and heart, and the Old Testament growing smaller—that is, more understandable and less formidable. This is our goal for this session, that God and his amazing story of mercy would increase, and that the pastors and future pastors and Bible translators would begin to see that the Old Testament is a book that is meant to be read, understood, relished, and taught. Pray to this end.

(Perhaps you'd like to help with the expenses of Pastors School. Cost of meals for 80 people for the week is around \$1200, a real bargain. Printing a draft copy of the textbook for each student will be around \$200. Rent is \$350. We do require tuition of \$10 a student. This pays for about half of the Pastors School costs, and we rely on offerings for the rest of the expenses. Already \$700 has been pledged. You can give online at emuinternational.org, or send a check to the address below. Thank you.)

God keeps answering your prayers

- **God loves Bible translators.** We asked you to pray for our Bible-translator colleague who was suffering from debilitating chronic fatigue. Others around the world joined you in prayer, and five weeks ago God began to heal him. He's at around 100% now! What a miracle. Thank you for praying.
- **Pray for me and two Tampuan colleagues** as we preach Creation-to-Christ at a remote Tampuan church in the southeast corner of Ratanakiri. Praise God for Christians there!
- **Pray for Kim** who continues to mentor women every week.



The icons we've created for our major themes: Land, God's Word, Offspring, Opposition, God's Presence, Dominion, Salvation, Heart Obedience, Covenant, and Blessing to All Nations.