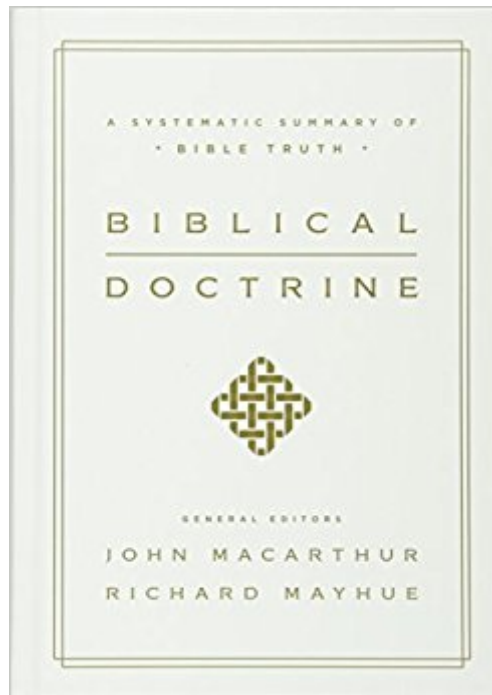




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Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary Of Bible Truth



Synopsis

Doctrine isn't just for theologians—it's important for every Christian because it shows us who God is and how we should live. Systematizing the robust theology that has undergirded Dr. John MacArthur's well-known preaching ministry for decades, this overview of basic Christian doctrine covers topics such as God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, salvation, and more. Comprehensive in scope yet written to be accessible to the average reader—with non-technical vocabulary, minimal footnotes, and a helpful bibliography—this volume offers Christians a solid foundation for what they believe and why.

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Customer Reviews

"The ministry of John MacArthur has had a worldwide impact. MacArthur and Mayhue clearly unfold the doctrines that are at the heart of this ministry, which has touched so many. Here we see a ministry built on truth, the truth of God's Word and the truth of the gospel. A wonderful resource for students, pastors, and professors."—Thomas R.

Schreiner, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Professor of Biblical Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky "This book comes from a lifetime of studying and from the garnered wisdom of centuries. In combining devotion to Scripture with commitment to biblical doctrine, it addresses a great contemporary need. Strong beliefs make strong churches. One does not have to agree with the esteemed authors on every subject to be thankful for a volume of rich and enduring importance."—Iain H. Murray, author, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* and *Evangelical Holiness*; Founding Trustee,

Banner of Truth Trust

“This new resource is a rich and compelling presentation of Christianity’s theological foundations, providing readers with an accessible but compelling systematization of biblical truth. As the last vestiges of Christian influence erode in the West, rich theological resources like Biblical Doctrine will edify and strengthen the church as it faces stiff opposition from the world.”

•R. Albert Mohler Jr., President and Joseph Emerson Brown Professor of Christian Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“It is a delight to wholeheartedly recommend John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue’s Biblical Doctrine. It will be celebrated for the clarity of its outline and description of the Bible’s doctrines. It is just too good to miss.”

•Walter C. Kaiser Jr., President Emeritus and Colman M. Mockler Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

“The emphasis of John MacArthur’s ministry has always been preaching—unleashing God’s truth by preaching God’s Word. All the while, his ministry has been undergirded by doctrine—doctrine drawn carefully, consistently from the Bible. His thousands of expository sermons stand as proof of his faithfulness to the work of the preacher; Biblical Doctrine stands as proof of faithfulness to the work of the theologian. May both be used to encourage a new generation of preacher-theologians to commit their lives to the high calling of teaching and equipping Christ’s church.”

•Tim Challies, blogger, Challies.com

“Clarity ought to be an essential requirement of books on systematic theology. And this one offers just that! A comprehensive summary of all that a Christian needs to know—sounds like something every Christian should have available, doesn’t it?

And written by a name that epitomizes orthodoxy and truth—John MacArthur. Enough said. It speaks for itself.”

•Derek W. H. Thomas, Senior Minister, First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, South Carolina; Robert Strong Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary—Atlanta

“This volume is the life achievement of almost fifty years of preaching in one pulpit by this world-class expositor, John MacArthur. He has stood, week after week, even decade after decade, plumbing the depths of the biblical text and connecting its truths together, leading to this well-constructed body of divinity. Here is the crown jewel from this brilliant pastor and author that will cause the truth of Scripture to shine even brighter before our eyes.”

•Steven J. Lawson, Director of Doctor of Ministry Program and Professor of Preaching, The Master’s Seminary; President and Founder, OnePassion Ministries; author, The Kind of Preaching God Blesses

“For decades John MacArthur has exemplified expository preaching, putting on full display the Word of God for the people of God. Now MacArthur, teaming up with Richard Mayhue and the Master’s Seminary faculty, has written a

systematic theology, demonstrating how his verse-by-verse exposition naturally blossoms into a robust, colorful theological mosaic. This book is the theological dessert at the end of an expository meal. Regardless of your theological heritage, I encourage every Christian to sit under the doctrinal teaching of MacArthur and Mayhue. Certainly, you will walk away saturated in Scripture, left in total awe after relishing the majesty and glory of our gracious God.

—Matthew Barrett, Associate professor of Christian theology, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

“In addition to presenting orthodox theology common to historic Protestants, MacArthur and Mayhue defend an unusual combination of views that evangelicals debate, such as young-earth creationism, Calvinist soteriology, credobaptism, elder-rule polity, complementarianism, cessationism, and traditional dispensationalism (or what they call futuristic premillennialism). They argue in a clear and orderly way that is worth engaging even if you disagree.”

—Andrew David Naselli, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology, Bethlehem College & Seminary, Minneapolis, Minnesota

“As a professor of theology, I am able to recommend this single volume on systematic theology by MacArthur and Mayhue to my students and tell them with confidence that this is a book I can endorse from cover to cover. I especially appreciate the dispensational aspects of this work and the way the authors consistently and firmly ground the doctrines in the biblical text.”

—Kevin D. Zuber, Professor of Theology, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Illinois; contributor, Evidence for the Rapture and The Moody Bible Commentary

"Doctrine isn't just for theologians—it's important for every Christian because it shows us who God is and how we should live. Systematizing the robust theology that has undergirded Dr. John MacArthur's well-known preaching ministry for decades, this overview of basic Christian doctrine covers topics such as God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, salvation, and more. Comprehensive in scope yet written to be accessible to the average reader—with non-technical vocabulary, minimal footnotes, and a helpful bibliography—this volume offers Christians a solid foundation for what they believe and why."

In the modern era it would seem that the pinnacle of a theologian's career is defined by the release of a systematic theology book. Many years of study yield many pages to study. This week offers the much-awaited systematic theology, Biblical Doctrine, edited by Drs. John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue. Although the work is a lifetime in the making, for the last several years believers have known that this volume was coming forth and so they eagerly looked for it. Today it is here.

pages and weighing in at 4.3 pounds, it finds itself in the heavyweight class of systematic theologies (with the likes of books by John Frame and Norman Geisler). Of course, sheer size conveys nothing about the content. The content in many ways is not surprising. The volume is laid out like many other systematic theologies with 10 chapters covering the following: 1. Prolegomena 2. Bibliology 3. Theology Proper 4. Christology 5. Pneumatology 6. Anthropology & Hamartiology 7. Soteriology 8. Angelology 9. Ecclesiology 10. Eschatology. While laid out in similar formats, each systematic theology comes with own emphasis and style in a manner that convey points that may not be covered by others. At the beginning of the book, the editors lay out several distinctives that they follow over the course of their presentation. First is that they presuppose the existence of God. Biblical Doctrine is not a book appealing to unbelievers by trying to prove that God exists, but instead presupposes this point in order to present God's truth. Second is that the hermeneutics employed utilize five principles: literal, historical, grammatical, syncretical, and clarity. With that in mind, readers can embark on a journey through systematic theology that will be challenging to one's worldview, delve deep into the Scriptures, and cause significant pondering on the things of God.

Beneficial Attributes

The profundity found within Biblical Doctrine is substantial and even reading through the introductory material of chapter one will force a person to contemplate how the truth impacts all aspects of a person's life. There are four primary characteristics that readers will benefit from:

- * **Comprehensive:** While no systematic theology book can cover every aspect of theology, some can certainly be more comprehensive than others. Certainly this is one of the comprehensive ones, not only teaching theology but at times goes in great depth where others stick to the basics (just look at the section on God's names, which explains far more detail than most of us have ever been taught), reviews alternate views on select topics (whether Christian or secular), and even shares a wide breadth of quotations and thoughts from previous theologians.
- * **Concise:** While long and comprehensive, the authors and editors have sought to convey the information by only covering what is absolutely necessary and avoids rabbit trails. Thus readers are well-informed without being inundated.
- * **Clear:** Readers will also appreciate the authors clarity in writing. The topics are complex, however they don't have to be difficult to understand. There is great care in using language that is not overbearing and when biblical terms are used (that some find confusing) they are well-defined both in the text and in the basic glossary.
- * **Constructive:** Unfortunately there is often a great disconnect between theology and application. One of the aspects of this book that I found myself really appreciating was the ability to weave in points and descriptions of how theology is lived out. It is not as though the authors are tacking on this information at the very end, as we often hear in sermons, but instead are subtly reminding readers throughout about the importance of

biblical doctrine for the Christian life. Adverse Attributes My one lament with this book is the writing itself. While concise and clear, at times it is very weak writing, using phrases that have little impact upon the depth of what is being conveyed. This can be noted by the repeated use of the phrase 'it is' which is often the first sign of weak writing. I know this is a minor point when we consider what this volume is and what it conveys, but nonetheless it is an area that the authors and editors could have improved upon slightly. Theological Attributes Under normal circumstances a book critique includes thoughts about the theology in an evaluative form, however, this is a unique situation because the whole book is about theology. As a result, I have chosen to deal with the theology of the book in a different way. I recognize that not everyone shares the same theological leanings of Drs. John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue and that may impact one's desire to utilize this book. Admittedly I studied at The Master's University (so know that as I review this book) but even I do not agree with every detail of the theology. However, know this: the book is extremely solid and well-reasoned. While there are some areas that there may be disagreement, on the major issues of the Christian life the information provided here are generally solid and standard for those who have a high authority of the Bible in their life. Even on points that you may disagree the editors have done well and ensuring their position is backed up with Scripture and thus compelling you to define and defend your own position with the same level of detail as well. In other words, even when you disagree there are great points in reading the book because it compels you to think about why you believe what you believe. Going into the book, here are the distinctives of the book that most people will want to know and find themselves most considered about:

- * Scripture's Center: The center of Scripture has long been debated and the editors here have declared that they see the King and Kingdom as the primary center.
- * Purpose of Salvation: While many consider the purpose of salvation to be to rescue fallen men (man-centric) the doctrine of salvation presented here is from the viewpoint that the purpose is to glorify God (God-centric).
- * Calvinism: Most people recognize that John MacArthur is identified with Calvinism and the doctrines of grace do impact the book. In particular there are sections on election and particular redemption.
- * Pretribulational, Premillennial: While presenting varying views of eschatology, the primary emphasis of doctrine presented in the book is from a pretribulational, premillennial view.
- * Israel & the Church: The book treats Israel and the Church as separate entities. Many people find it important to understand the perspective that are being presented and these points in particular are helpful to that understanding.

However, I would urge one caution to readers. If you disagree with even a portion of the points presented here, do not let that stop you from purchasing and reading through the book. While the defenses presented may presented particular doctrines in ways that you have not understood before and thus causing you to

change your position, my major urging goes beyond just that. By simply avoiding the book you will miss a tremendous opportunity of being blessed by the knowledge and wisdom of scholars well-versed in ministry and life. Unique Attributes Finally, Biblical Doctrine differentiates itself in some unexpected ways that add great value to the book. First, spread throughout the book are hymns. Hymns are slowly falling to the side, yet here they have allowed them to play a role in speaking to the readers. The use of hymns allows readers to see once again connection between faith, doctrine, and application. It also develops an appreciation for the hymns that is lacking. Related to the hymns are the closing prayers of each section. The editors have chosen the written prayers of various godly men throughout church history and included them within this edition. These prayers force readers to see not only some great examples of prayer but also to fixate upon the Lord. These attributes are small in terms of inclusion into the book, but the effect is well-noted. Attention to such details should cause readers to grow in their appreciation of this volume. Biblical Doctrine is a profound systematic theology that is sure to stand apart from the many others that are out there. My urging is that readers would be certain to pick up a copy of the book and work through. Once again I reiterate, you may not agree with everything and that's OK, but don't miss out on some extraordinary teaching simply because of those differences (like anything you should read with Scripture and discernment anyway, and therefore those parts you find to be wrong will not be as important). Disclaimer: As mentioned earlier, I was a student at The Master's University of which Dr. MacArthur is the President. Please also know that I received this book from the publisher at no cost for the purposes of review. Neither of these notions has affected my recommendation of this book, but are the result of my own reading of the book.

John F. MacArthur, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2017, 1,024 pp. \$41.43 A theological tour de force. A magnum opus. A breath-taking panorama that leaves the reader in awe. These are only a few descriptions of *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*. by John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue. The book is arranged as one might expect, according to the various branches of systematic theology: Prolegomena God's Word: Bibliology God the Father: Theology Proper God the Son: Christology God the Holy Spirit: Pneumatology Man and Sin: Anthropology and Hamartiology Salvation: Soteriology Angels: Angelology The Church: Ecclesiology The Future: Eschatology A comprehensive glossary is included which helps beginning students with cumbersome theological language. Also included is an excellent topical and Scriptural index for instant access to this treasure trove. Each branch of theology is carefully explained and biblically

defended. Opposing views are highlighted and refuted with grace and tact. MacArthur and Mayhue never leave the reader guessing. As such, there is never a hint of ambiguity here. Several terms characterize Biblical Doctrine. These terms will either attract or repel readers, but will nonetheless provide a helpful template for evaluating the prospect of plopping down almost \$50.00 for a book! Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith. This book is literally drowning in Scripture. Anyone familiar with MacArthur's writing, in particular, will not be surprised to find a dogmatic edge. But dogmatism undergirded by humility and informed by Scripture is surely a path worth tracing out. Evangelical Doctrine: A Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith. This book is guided by a commitment to the gospel. Look elsewhere for a pragmatic approach. Readers will be blessed by the relentless pursuit of Jesus and his resplendent glory. Orthodox Doctrine: A Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith. This book is committed to historic orthodoxy, which is grounded by a literal, grammatical hermeneutic. Liberalism is soundly defeated and relegated to the ash heap. Reformed Doctrine: A Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith. This book is informed by the infrastructure of the Reformers of the sixteenth century. Weaving throughout this volume is a commitment to grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone, and to God alone be the glory. John MacArthur helpfully sums up the essence of the Reformed faith: "It is the marvel of marvels that the King of kings, whose glory is exalted above the heavens, should lift a finger to rescue even one of such vile traitors as the sons of Adam. Then to learn that this infinitely worthy King has purposed to redeem not one but countless multitudes at the cost of the life of his own dear Son bows the sinner's heart in humble wonder. I cannot recommend Biblical Doctrine highly enough. It is an outstanding addition to the growing number of books committed to teaching systematic theology. Students will be challenged and stretched; spiritual growth will no doubt occur as they pour over the many pages of this tome. But most significantly, their hearts and minds will be drawn to worship and glorify the Triune God. Soli Deo Gloria! I received this book free from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review.

A wonderful tool for Bible study. Must have for your library

Probably the best current Systematic Theology on a biblically reformed/premil position. I'm on my second read through it now where I highlight and extract quotes and having studied Bekoff, Hodges, and Chafer I think has added to those great theologians with clear systemized thought. At the end of the day we are all called to be "Biblicists" and this helps accomplish that.

Excellent Biblically accurate book of Biblical doctrine, so desperate needed in the Christian body!

Excellent for solid theology. Comprehensive in scope. Well-written.

An excellent resource by one of the best Bible expositors.

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