

## Contrast of Theology

Theology has shaped our Christian faith for all of humanity. The very essence of what we as believers have dealt with theology and even though scholars may have not seen eye to eye as to what the little details that goes into what we read in the word of God, we still have a manual as to how we should be living our lives called the word of God. This bible contains so many truths as to how we should believe, that you spend your entire life learning about this truths and principles. Many wars were fought over this faith and many people died defending this deity. When you ask yourself just what exactly does theology mean, then you have to ask yourself what is the definition of truth. You can't believe something and live by it if its false, you would be living your whole life based on a lie. I looked in the biblical dictionary and theology is defined as this, "Discussion of what the bible itself teaches about God and his dealings with human beings and the rest of creation<sup>1</sup>". This definition is very interesting because it poses so many questions but my main focus is contrasting theology seen as absolute truth, and theology understood as testimony conditioned by time and place. Can they be similar or are they so different that biblical principles you are reading and living by changes over time and the word of God can be seen conditional? As we dig deeper into these two ideologies of thought we will try to unravel the views of these two schools of thought and come out with our answer. My vote would be that theology is seen as testimony conditioned by time and place.

The first school of thought we are going to dig into is theology seen as absolute truth. What is truth? What is absolute and how does this pertain to theology? According to the New American Oxford dictionary, truth is defined as a fact or belief that is believed to be true.<sup>2</sup> Absolute according to the Dictionary means final so when you put these two words together, you are saying that absolute truth means believing in a fact that is to be the final say in the matter.

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1 Bible Dictionary

2 New American Oxford Dictionary

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How does this school of thought pertain to theology? When you are saying that theology is to be considered as absolute truth you are saying that your belief has the final say over your moral and values as to which you live by. Theology is the very rock as to what you stand on as a believer. If God says in his word to live holy and take care of your body because it is a temple, if you believe that as absolute truth then that is exactly what you are going to do without question. Your whole life is geared a certain way and you tend to do things that may even be at times against what your will wants to do because you don't have the final say in your life, God does. According to a scholarly peer reviewed article, "Even those who remain securely within a given tradition no longer imagine that tradition to be the only one that has truth on offer. For that reason, persons are, as I have said elsewhere, practicing "Eucharist upstairs and yoga downstairs."<sup>3</sup> This article made me think about the fact that everyone may have their own version of just what exactly truth is. In today's church the state of Christianity is changing due to the advancement of social media. You can stream and view the church service from home on your computer or phone. When you still manage to step foot in church, you can see everyone with their phones out. Also in this article that I read it talked about people classifying their selves as more spiritual than religious. When you go n social media, everyone has their views and beliefs out in the open due to the platform social media has given them. This platform allows a lot of people with different thoughts and theories to question theology and biblical doctrine. I am reminded of the scripture 1 Timothy 4:1 it says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."<sup>4</sup> This scripture according to the New Mathew Henry Commentary, "The instruments of promoting and spreading this apostasy and delusion. It will be done by the hypocrisy of spreading lies who are lost to the basic

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<sup>3</sup> Theology without walls

<sup>4</sup> The NLT Bible

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principles of virtue and moral honesty.”<sup>5</sup> The very morals and Christian principles are questioned today and people are having so many views of what truth is and what is to be deemed as absolute truth.

Diving into the second school of thought which is theology conditioned by time and place. This form of thinking is basically saying that the principles as to what God is saying to live by can change over time and new laws can be implemented. I think about when Peter was on the rooftop and God told Peter to eat what was contrary to Jewish culture dietary laws established in Leviticus. Peter was going off of what the word of God told him and his descendants but God said that now he can eat these items which were considered to be unclean. Did that mean that what he was doing would have been ok in Moses’s time? The answer would be no because at that time God said that they had to eat a certain way. In today’s time, we live totally different than how people who walked in our faith lived. The principles of theology changed over time and different things are now acceptable. Christ came and fulfilled the law and in him we as believers are fulfilling the laws through our faith in what he has done for us.

In Conclusion Should Theology be seen as absolute truth or understood as testimony understood by time and place? My answer would be that they go hand in hand. If God says for the time being that something is just, then because his word is final and he never lies then his word is always true. If it’s cold outside and I say put on a jacket but then when the season change I say you don’t need a coat, I never lied it’s just when the seasons changed it caused for different instructions. That how I see God’s word to be and I believe that for different times, seasons, reasons, and instruction, God was looking out for his people and his words are for protection and salvation.

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