



Southeastern
Baptist Theological Seminary

Systematic Theology Entrance Exam Study Guide

The entrance exam for the Ph. D. in Systematic Theology will consist of essay questions in two parts, each part approximately three hours in length.

The essay questions will be chosen from the list below. The bulk of the preparation for answering these questions should have taken place in the student's M.Div. studies, but a number of books are listed below to help students review and fill in some gaps.

Applicants are expected to be prepared to write for 90 minutes on any of the following questions. Essays will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Relevance and Argumentation

- Students should give careful attention to the question and outline refined arguments. Student should incorporate & critically interact with relevant resources related to the field.

Writing Mechanics

- Students' responses should be intelligent, and precise. Reasonable arrangement of paragraphs and ideas should enhance a reader's understanding. Responses should be focused, and vocabulary varied. Responses should contain very few grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

Awareness of Relevant Scholarship

- Students should show awareness of seminal sources, major figures and pivotal events related to the field and incorporate and properly interact with resources related to the question.

Reading List:

Read (or review) one of the following standard theology texts:

Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology*. 3rd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.

Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Akin, Daniel L., ed. *Theology for the Church*. Rev. edition. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2014.

Read the following texts:

Clark, David. *To Know and Love God: Method for Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2003.

Cole, Graham. *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2007.

Demarest, Bruce. *The Cross and Salvation*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1997.

Feinberg, John. *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2001.

Frame, John. *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. P & R: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2010.

Hammett, John. *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches*. 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2019.

Hoekema, Anthony. *Created in God's Image*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

Kapic, Kelly and Bruce L. McCormack, ed. *Mapping Modern Theology: A Thematic and Historical Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.

Keathley, Kenneth and Mark Rooker. *40 Questions on Creation and Evolution*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014.

McGrath, Alister. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought*. Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998.

Wellum, Stephen. *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016.

Questions:

1. Construct a succinct Christology showing awareness of Christological passages in the Bible. Then identify and assess the classical Christological heresies.
2. Develop an eschatology showing awareness of major contemporary perspectives. Specifically, include views on the issues of tribulation, rapture and millennium.
3. Discuss the doctrine of natural revelation, especially as it relates to the question of the destiny of those who never hear the gospel. Can such a person be saved by a positive

response to natural revelation?

4. What are essential aspects of a Christian doctrine of creation, both the creation of the universe and the creation of humanity? How did the fall affect God's good creation, including both the human and non-human aspects of creation?
5. Trace the tension in Christian theology over the relationship of divine sovereignty to human responsibility from the patristic era to the present era. Note key figures and their contributions to this ongoing debate.
6. Construct a biblical ecclesiology. Comment specifically on the nature, marks, ministries, polity and ordinances of the church, noting ecclesiological issues where Baptists have distinctive views. What issues have particular importance for the theology and practice of Baptist churches today?
7. Provide an overview of sound evangelical theological method, giving special attention to the approach of David Clark in *To Know and Love God*. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of Clark's approach?
8. Discuss the doctrine of salvation, focusing on the following aspects: union with Christ, justification, and sanctification.
9. Make a case for the position that Scripture is the sole normative source for Christian theology. Discuss the biblical basis for this claim, historical debates over this issue, and theological corollaries such as inspiration, inerrancy, and the canon.
10. What are the attributes of God? Discuss different methods of categorizing them (communicable and incommunicable, etc.) and list and explain the meaning of each attribute.
11. What would be the major themes to cover in developing a doctrine of the Holy Spirit? What are the specific contributions from the Old Testament, Gospels, Acts and Paul?
12. What does it mean to say humans are created in the image of God? Trace biblical teaching, historical understandings, and its practical importance in Christian life and ministry. Specifically, evaluate Anthony Hoekema's composite view of the image of God.

