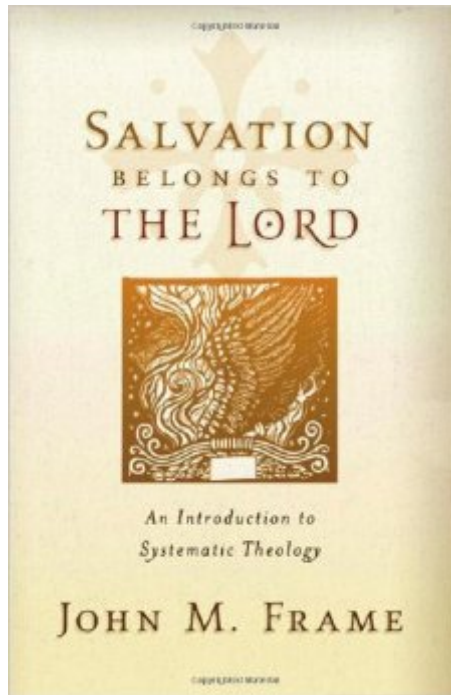


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Salvation Belongs To The Lord: An Introduction To Systematic Theology



Synopsis

Beginning students of theology and church leaders looking for a theological refresher or teaching tool will welcome this remarkably clear introduction to the doctrines of Scripture. In an almost conversational style, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord* explores all the major biblical truths, explains key terms of systematic theology, and reflects on their implications and connections under the lordship of Christ.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have a good selection of systematic theologies on my bookshelf. They range from the very readable to the almost hopelessly complex. Some of the authors are clearly very knowledgeable but have not been blessed with the ability to easily communicate that wealth of knowledge. Others are great communicators but, unfortunately, do not have as great an understanding of theology. Sometimes, though, these gifts come together in the form of a person who both knows a great deal about theology and is able to communicate his knowledge in a clear, understandable way. The latest addition to these volumes is *Salvation Belongs To The Lord*, written by John Frame. While smaller than most systematics, at only 360 pages, it is, to borrow the words of William Edgar, both "vigorously orthodox and sweetly pastoral." Frame is a professor at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida where he teaches Systematic Theology and Philosophy. He previously served several decades on the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary. A number of years ago, Frame began to write a multivolume series of studies that examine major biblical concepts from the perspective of the Lordship of God (*The Theology of Lordship* series). Since that work had begun,

he had often been asked if he would compile this series into a complete systematic theology and had always answered "no." But then, in 2003, he was asked to teach a survey course in systematics for the Institute for Theological Studies in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He delivered the lectures in 2004 and they formed the basis for *Salvation Belongs To The Lord*. The systematic theology came into being despite his best efforts to the contrary. This book is related to his ongoing *Theology of Lordship Series* but is not part of it.

Salvation Belongs to the Lord is an introduction to systematic theology that grew out of a class John Frame recorded for the Institute of Theological Studies. Mr. Frame wrote it for those who are beginners in theology, though he considers "this work to be college or seminary level in difficulty." (x) After the preface, the book is comprised of twenty-five chapters covering the broad range of theological topics. These include who God is, who man is, the relationship between God and man, salvation, the church, end times, and how to live. At the back of the book is a list of recommended reading as well as subject and scripture indexes- which are rather important for a book of this nature. This introduction to systematic theology applies John Frame's multiple-perspective approach to the wide scope of theology. Specifically, he perceives all things through normative, situational, and existential perspectives. "When you ask directly what God's revelation says, you are using the normative perspective... When you ask about God's world, trying to understand situations we get into, I call that the situational perspective... Then when you ask about yourself, when you seek to know yourself, you are seeking to know from what I call the existential perspective." (77) Though Mr. Frame claimed this was seminary level in difficulty, I did not think it was that difficult. He does an outstanding job of explaining complex terms and concepts in a manner that requires no prior introduction to the material. I appreciated that though he quotes from other theological works and confessions, the vast majority of references are to Scripture as the foundation for good theology. Most of the book is very well thought out and explained on the basis of Scripture.

(Four-and-one-half stars) This spring I took an introductory class at Reformed Theological Seminary, where Dr. Frame teaches (albeit at a different campus). One of the texts we were assigned was Frame's *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God (DKG)*, a rather dense tome on Christian epistemology (what and how we know things). I ended up finding what first seemed a daunting book to be in fact a very clear and relevant book. I couldn't help but find implications of what Frame wrote in *DKG* even in phone discussions with friends and in my everyday life. At the same time I had also purchased the book featured here, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord (SBL)*. After reading *DKG*, I am

amazed at how simply Frame distills his theology there into easy-to-read wording. I think this is the mark of a good theologian and communicator: knowing the details and yet being able to state it clearly and succinctly. Frame excels at that in every chapter of this book. SBL takes the format of many Reformed systematic theologies, but Frame departs somewhat by beginning not with the Word of God, but with his doctrine of God himself--who He is as covenant Lord. This, Frame argues, affects how we can know God and what our role is in doing so as his covenant servants. Frame sets up an interesting triad of God's Lordship--control, authority, and presence--to which he ties almost everything in the rest of the book, usually in quite convincing fashion. Everything that happens is because God is Lord. Frame also sets up another triad of "perspectives" from which to view aspects of life and theology (normative [authoritative laws], situational [historical circumstances of life], and existential [personal subjectivity]).

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