



# Theology: The Basics

By Alister E. McGrath

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Completely updated and expanded, this third edition from one of the world's leading theologians introduces students to key theological issues, contextualizing them within the bible and the works of seminal theologians.

- Introduces readers to key theological issues such as God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, faith, creation, salvation, atonement, religious history, and heaven
- Thoroughly updated, with the addition of a new chapter on the Holy Spirit
- Now includes images and more pedagogical features to engage the reader
- Each chapter offers an overview of an important theme, presents relevant biblical passages, and summarizes the contribution of a major theologian
- Expands the range of theological positions discussed within the book, especially those of contemporary and feminist theologians
- Maintains the user-friendly structure of the previous edition, with the Apostle's Creed as a framework
- Concludes with suggestions on how readers can take their study further
- Can be used alongside the new edition of *Theology: The Basic Readings* for a complete overview of the field

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**Editorial Review**

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	An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought	An Introduction	The Basics	An Introduction
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<b>Brief Description</b>	An authoritative exploration of the history of Christian theology from the Patristic period to present-day developments.	An ideal introduction to the history, sources & methods, and key figures of Christian thought.	An engaging introduction to core topics of Christianity discussing them in relation to the Bible and key theologians.	This classic text introduces the central ideas and developments of the European Reformations to readers of history and theology.

**Why Study Theology? Insights from author Alister E. McGrath**



Author Alister E. McGrath

There are a number of reasons why it's both important and enriching to study theology and here I have listed what I think are three of the most important.

Firstly, studying theology is about making sense of some of the great debates and themes of history. It is impossible to study the religious art of the Middle Ages, the great literature of the Renaissance, the history of the sixteenth century, or the novels of J. R. R. Tolkien without knowing something about theology. To study theology is to pass through a gateway which offers an enhanced vision of human thought and history. It's like a lens that helps bring things into focus.

Secondly, theology enables us to see things through the eyes of others, so that we can gain fresh perspectives on some of the great questions of faith. One of the leading themes of C. S. Lewis's late work *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961) is that reading literature enables us to see with the eyes of others, deepening and sometimes challenging our own ideas. To read Augustine, Athanasius, Thomas Aquinas or Karl Barth is to have our eyes opened to other ways of seeing things. We may not agree with them, but their insights help us forge and enrich our own approaches.

Thirdly, studying theology brings new depth and vitality to faith. When the novelist Evelyn Waugh discovered Christianity in 1930, he spoke of beginning the "delicious process of exploring it limitlessly." Theology is about mapping the landscape of faith, discovering its landmarks, appreciating its inner logic, and experiencing its beauty and richness.



*The Triumph of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, painting by Benozzo de Gozzoli, ca. 1420-97, tempera. Musée de Louvre, Paris. The Art Archive / Musée de Louvre, Paris/Gianni Dagli Otti



William Blake's *Ancient of Days*, 1794, relief etching with watercolor, 23.3 x 16.8 cm. British Museum, London. AKG Images/Erich Lessing



C.S. Lewis. Getty Images

## Review

"This is an excellent and extremely helpful introduction to Christian theology. Believers of all familiarity with theology will find McGrath's explanations helpful and clarifying. This would be an excellent text for a Sunday school or church Bible study. I would even include this as a text for an introductory course in theology." (Jacob Sweeney's Blog, 16 December 2011)

"McGrath's approach is creedal and biblical. The chapters are lucid, engaging, and thought-provoking in so far as they serve as gateways into a complex (if not at times convoluted) field of study." (*Religious Studies Review*)

"The publisher's blurb reports that the first edition was 'an international best seller' ...It deserves this success. Students need such a clearly presented, sure-footed account of the theological basics." (*Theological Book Review*)

## Review

"What makes this book such an effective introduction to the essential ingredients of the Christian faith is the way in which Alister McGrath interweaves leading theological ideas with the views of major theologians. The result is a compact but thorough volume that is sound, useful, and remarkably appealing. Highly recommended as a basic text for both beginning and intermediate classes in Christian theology."

—**David Hein, Hood College Maryland**

"McGrath has successfully created a theology which is both inviting to the beginning student and informing to the more advanced student. His approach often offers a unique perspective on how to warmly introduce a student to complex discussions on theology. This book will be useful on many levels in the church and the academy as an introductory theology."

—**David Talley, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University**

"At one point, Professor McGrath aptly describes this book as a handshake of welcome for those who want to begin the study of Christian theology. Written in a style that is friendly, clear and accessible, it inducts the novice into a masterly overview of the subject and into the lively, questioning conversation that it represents."

—**Jeremy Worthen, South East Institute for Theological Education and University of Kent**

"This book is ecumenical in the best sense of that word. McGrath appeals to the breadth and depth of the Church's witness in order to explain its faith, and in so doing he has produced a superb guidebook for the study of theology. The book should engage students of all stripes. It raises as many questions as it answers, and it provides the foundation for a deeper exploration of the Church's common mind."

—**Mark Weedman, Crossroads College**

"*Theology: The Basics* offers a masterful simplification of the central themes, complex history, and creative giants of Christian thought. McGrath provides a scholarly introduction to the discipline of Christian Theology that avoids partisanship without sacrificing profundity."

—**Lonnie D. Kliever, Southern Methodist University**

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